

An Attempt To Listen To God On
Survey of The Gospel of Matthew

By

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Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

Introduction

It is always interesting to learn the skeptics view of the Bible or any book in it. Renan the French philosopher (1823-1892) in his book "Life of Jesus" wrote concerning the Lord. "There is no one greater than Jesus" "a truly remarkable person but not the Son of God". Yet this man said concerning Matthew, "The most important book of Christendom, the most important book that has ever been written". As a believer I would disagree and say, "Matthew is one of the most important books ever written"

The grace of God

If we were to learn nothing else from the gospels beyond the fact that God used various men to write specialized summaries¹ of the Lord, it would be a manifestation of His infinite grace. For God, who is perfect in all His ways (Deut. 32:4), to deign to take a man such as Mark, a servant who failed, and use him to record the life of one who never failed, was gracious. Add to this Matthew, a despised tax collector, yet God used Him. In the words of another context: "Not many mighty . . . are called" (1 Cor. 1:26).

The Author

Matthew is a man of whom we know almost nothing about. There is no record of a single word he spoke, yet he records in detail seven major sermons of the Lord.

Matthew was:

- 1) Known by two names, Matthew and Levi. (Mk. 2:14; Lk. 5:27)
- 2) Religiously he was a Jew and a Levite². Being a Levite He ought to have been, to some extent, in priestly service, but had lost out to the things of this world. Yet, God used him to record the life of the man who always had the right perspectives, and fulfilled his role for the glory of God.
- 3) Being a publican by vocation, (a hated tax collector (Matt. 10:3) who was converted (Matt. 9:9)) and two truths come into focus here:
 - a) He was accountable to Rome for collecting taxes, thus he had to be a very careful record keeper of all the financial dealings.
 - b) The Lord chose a man who was despised and rejected by the community, as He Himself would be, to follow Him.
 - i) To the Jewish community he was a traitor to Israel, working with the despised Romans.
 - ii) He was also seen as a thief. The tax collectors were able to charge that which they wanted and keep the extras.
 - iii) Since tax collectors were associated with the Gentiles, they were seen as being unclean.
- 4) He came from Capernaum, a city that had rejected the Lord (Matt. 11:23), but when the Lord called him he immediately followed, not just outwardly, but he was a changed man.
- 5) Matthew opened his heart and opened his house, making a great feast (Lk. 5:29), inviting all his associates and those who were despised to come (Lk. 5:32). It seems that he was not only a man of means but also humility, for he makes no reference to this in his gospel.

¹ So called because each gospel was written for a particular reason and was a gathering together of truths that focused in on their purpose.

² These people are mentioned twice in the Gospels (Lk. 10:32; Jn. 1:19). They were from the tribe of Levi and had the responsibility of the Tabernacle and its services. They were not numbered with Israel (Num. 3), having been given the place of the first born in Egypt and paid to Aaron their redemptive price.

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

Matthew means “Gift of God” and surely that was what he was. Considering Eph. 4:11, this man was a gift given to the church.

When Written

We cannot determine exactly when the book was written but the expression: “Unto this day” (Matt. 27:8; 28:15), indicates a duration of time had passed since the events mentioned. However, the expression: “there shall not be left here one stone upon another” (ch 24:2), indicates a time before AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. It is not known if Matthew wrote before or after Mark, but there are major similarities between the two books.

To Whom Was The Book Written

There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit used this Levite to write principally for the Jews (ch 10:56). His knowledge of the Old Testament is very evident in the number of quotations³ and concepts from the ancient scriptures. Like Saul of Tarsus, Matthew was an exceedingly well taught man (Acts 22:3). While he writes for the Jew, his writing is not exclusively for them, but is for all humanity; Jew, Gentile, man and woman. The following table makes this clear.

	Matthew
Gentiles came to worship the Baby.	2:1-12
The Lord went into Galilee of the Gentiles.	4:12, 15
The Lord commended the Gentiles.	8:5-13
The Queen of Sheba, a Gentile, was approved by the Lord.	12:42
At a time of crisis, Christ referred to a prophetic reference to the Gentiles.	12:14-21
In some parables the Lord indicated that blessings rejected by Israel would be received by the Gentiles.	22:8-10
In the Olivet Discourse the gospel would go out to all nations.	24:14
The Great Commission is to all the nations.	28:19-20

Furthermore, His Kingship will be over all people over all the earth: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. 14:9). His Kingdom shall be indestructible by corruption or age, non-defeatable, having a king who is divine, it is unpreventable because it will be accomplished by divine power and according to the divine purpose (Dan. 2:44). Not only will the Lord reign universally but He will be “just, ruling in the fear of God” (2 Sam. 23:3); and will “reign in righteousness” (Isa. 32:1). It will not be a return to Edenic idealism for the reigning monarch will not be subject to Satanic power having already defeated him, therefore, there is no possibility of failure.

³ Not all his quotations are exact quotations but it seems he was using the Septuagint and so there are slight differences from the wording in the Old Testament.

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

Style Of Writing

In Matthew's work it was very important to gather data together. For instance, if farmer Jacob came to do some business. Matthew would have to carefully check the animals and the prices, etc. He would gather the ewes together and the bulls together. His money would have been put neatly in drawers, the same as we have in cash registers. Therefore, it is to be expected that he gathered his data and presented everything in an orderly manner.

He records two types of discourses, those which were major messages and those which, while just as important, are considerably smaller.

- 1) The major ones are:
 - a) The sermon on the mount (chs 5-7)
 - b) The sermon of humility and forgiveness (ch 18:15-35)
 - c) The woes of the Pharisees etc. (ch 23)
 - d) The Olivet prophecy (ch 24-25)
- 2) The smaller ones are:
 - a) The invitation to: "Come unto me all ye who are weary" (ch 11:28-30)
 - b) The warning against idle words (ch 12:36-37)
 - c) The commission to go into all the world (ch 28:18-20)

While there are several structures which show his orderliness, the following gives a structure.

Narrative	Teaching	Closing comment or conjunction
Chs 1-4	Chs 5-7 The sermon on the mount and discipleship.	Ch 7:29
Ch 8:1-9:34	Ch 9:35 - 10:42 The responsibility on the disciples as apostles.	Ch 11:1
Ch 11:2-12:50	Ch 13:1-52 The parables of the kingdom, the kingdom in mystery.	Ch 13:53
Ch 13:54-17:27	Ch 18:1-19 The lessons on forgiveness.	Ch 19:2
Ch 19:3-23:39	Ch 24:1 - 25:46 The fall of Jerusalem and future events	Ch 26:1
Ch 26:2-28:17	Ch 28:18 Go ye into all the world	Ch 28:18-20

He will gather things together, consequently he will speaking of gathering.

- a) He will uses the word "gather" 9 times whereas Mark used it 1 time, Luke and John 3 times each.
- b) He will use the word "gathering" once, Mark, LUke and John nevr use it.
- c) He will use the word "gathered" 14 times, Mark 5 times, Like 7 times mad John twice.

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

He gathers the parables, ch 13

He gathers the miracles, ch. 8-9

He alone writes “Where two or three are gathered” (Matt. 18:20)

The Aspects of God

Matthew underlines the fact of the omniscience of God by the prophecies He foretold and then in providence caused their fulfillment. It is a blessed truth that the promises are literal and God means what He says.

Key Verses

- 1) “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” (ch 1:1)
- 2) “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” (ch 16:16)
- 3) “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (ch 28:16-20)

Key Words

The key words in Matthew and the other gospels

Expression	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Son of David	9 (a 10 th time refers to Joseph)	3	3	0
Son of Abraham	1	0	2	0
Son of God	8	3	7	10
Son of man	30	14	25	11
Beloved Son	2	2	3	0
Firstborn son	1	0	1	0

Notable Features Of The Book

The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew speaks a great deal about the “kingdom” and mentions it in two ways, the “kingdom of God” which is mentioned five times, and the “Kingdom of Heaven” which is mentioned 33 times in 32 verses. The questions which have been the subject of much debate are:

- 1) “Is the kingdom of God the same as the Kingdom of Heaven”?
- 2) If there is a difference what is it?

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

To these could be added: “the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph. 5:5); “the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13); “The kingdom of our God” (Rev. 12:10) and “the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:1).

Regarding the two being considered, men who have carefully studied these questions disagree as to if they are the same, and if there is or is not a difference between them. Since this is not the theme of this paper, I simply observe that the word “Kingdom” simply is the “King’s dominion”. The expression “Kingdom of Heaven” indicates the sphere from which the King rules, whereas the “Kingdom of God” indicates the character of His rule. Again, among the Jewish people who were exceedingly hesitant about taking the name of God in vain, would have substituted “heaven” for “God”.

At times, it has been suggested that we should not preach the “kingdom of heaven / God” today because it is Jewish and has nothing to do with this age. As a young believer, in the North of Ireland I was taught, if it is presented in the gospels, acted upon in the Acts, and a teaching connected with it in the epistles, then it is applicable to us today. If that is so, then there can be no doubt the Lord preached it (Matt. 4:23; Matt. 21:43); John preached it (Matt. 3:2; Mk. 1:15); and the apostles were sent to preach it (Matt. 10:1-7; Lk. 10:11). After Pentecost and before His ascension, the Lord spoke concerning it (Acts 1:3); Philip preached it (Acts 8:12); and Paul preached it (Acts 19:8, 28:23). It is also spoken of in the epistles (Rom. 14:17; Col. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:5). When we preach John 3:3, it is commonly taught that if an individual wants to go to heaven they must be born again. Yet the passage says nothing about heaven, but seeing and entering the kingdom. At the moment of salvation we were: “Translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13).

There is often a failure to distinguish between the moral and obligatory aspects of the Kingdom and the literal kingdom. The “gospel of the Kingdom” was preached by John Baptist and our Lord, and will be again when the church is gone. It teaches that the Lord is coming to reign on the earth; the promises to Israel and David will be literally fulfilled; but all would acknowledge that salvation will still be by grace. The “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24) lays emphasis on the benevolence of God, and when one accepts Christ as Saviour, there is in their life the characteristics of the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17).

The Christ

The word “Christ” means anointed. Anointed is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word, “Messiah”, and rather than being a name, it is a title, “Jesus is the Christ”, the Anointed of God. This was the message Paul preached to the Jews of Thessalonica (Acts 17:3). He is called “Messiah” in Dan. 9:24-26, and “Anointed” in Psa. 2:2. In Thessalonica Paul opened and alleged that Jesus was the Christ. It is fundamental for John was moved (2 Pet. 1:21) by the Spirit to write the gospel that bears his name to prove this very point (Jn. 20:31). The character of antichrist is to deny this (1 Jn. 2:22), and it is the major evidence that one is born of God (1 Jn. 5:1).

To be the Christ is to be the Anointed of God in several avenues:

- 1) In the Old Testament the Priest, King and prophet were anointed, thus indicating if Jesus is the Christ, he must be the anointed of God as Prophet, Priest and King.
- 2) There is more, Matthew will do that which was not done in Jewish genealogies. He included ladies, and not all of them were reputable!
- 3) Furthermore, immediately after His baptism and temptation, the Lord goes into Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles.

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

The Genealogy

To most of us we know who our grandparents and possibly our great-grand parents are or were, and little beyond that. Our genealogy does not really concern us for we have enough to be concerned about with the present. However, to the children of Israel it was very important, as is seen by certain men who had to declare their "pedigree" (Num. 1:18). Paul saw great importance in his pedigree (Phil. 3:5; Acts 22:25-27). Why was this so important for Matthew and Luke to record?

One major reason is because on it depends the legal and fraternal right of the Lord to the throne of Israel. A person without the right qualifications would be an impostor therefore, since Christ is presented as the king from birth, Matthew presents His legal qualifications before he gives the actual announcement of His birth. Many are the prophecies concerning the man to be king. Some of these are:

- 1) "Unto us a child is born . . . of His government and peace shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom. . . The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6-7)
- 2) "Behold. . . I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper." (Jer. 23:5)
- 3) "One like the Son of Man came. . . to the Ancient of Days, and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him." (Dan. 7:13-14)

His genealogy also shows Him to be a real human being and not a theophany, and being a true man, He is able to be the sacrifice for sins, high priest and advocate.

Another reason His genealogy is vital is found in the words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). The expression: "The book of the generations" is only found in one other place, namely Gen. 5:1. This gives the genealogy of Adam, the head of humanity. By using the same expression, Matthew indicates that Jesus is the head of a new order of humanity. This is the theme of which Paul writes about in Rom. 5:12-19. Concerning the clauses: "Son of David and Son of Abraham"; with Christ as the Son of David it was prophesied: "There shall not fail thee a man on the Throne of Israel" (1 Kgs. 2:4; 9:5). With Christ as the Son of Abraham is was prophesied: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

Matthew And The Old Testament

Matthew knew that to reach his own people, the Jews, he had to show a very solid relationship between the Old Testament and Jesus. In the recording of his genealogy there is mention of the children of Israel being taken into Babylon, but no mention of them returning. It would seem that in the viewpoint of God, they were still not only in Babylon, but most definitely in the greater bondage to sin and Satan, therefore, Christ is manifested as the one who will, "save" and deliver His people from their sins. By not mentioning the return from Babylon, Matthew takes his readers back to 2 Chron.; Mark takes them back to Malachi, but Matthew goes beyond that.

With his vast knowledge of the Old Testament, he will repeatedly use the expressions:

- 1) "That it might be fulfilled." (ch 1:22; 2:15; 2:23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:35).
- 2) This expression is never used by Mark or Luke and only seven times in John.
- 3) "Then was fulfilled." (ch 2:17-18; 27:9)
- 4) "It is written." (ch 2:5; 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24; 26:31)
- 5) It is used six times in Mark, eight times in Luke, and three times in John.
- 6) "Spoken by the prophet." (ch 3:3; 13:35; 21:4; 27:35)
- 7) "Fulfilled." (ch 2:17; 5:18; 13:14; 24:34; 26:54; 27:9)

He will either use the Old testament by quoting, by allusion or concept some 70+ times.

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

Matthew	Old Testament	Matthew	Old Testament
Matt. 1:23	Isa. 7:14	Matt. 15:4-6	Deut. 5:16
Matt. 2:5, 6	Mic. 5:2	Matt. 15:8-9	Isa. 29:13
Matt. 2:15	Isa. 7:14	Matt. 15:8-9	Isa. 29:13
Matt. 2:23	Isa. 11:1	Matt. 18:16	Deut. 19:15
Matt. 3:3	Isa. 40:3	Matt. 19:4	Gen. 1:26; 5:2
Matt. 4:4	Deut. 8:3	Matt. 19:5	Gen. 2:24
Matt. 4:6	Psa. 91:11-12	Matt. 19:18	Ex. 20:14-16
Matt. 4:7	Deut. 6:16	Matt. 19:19	Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:18
Matt. 4:10	Deut. 6:13	Matt. 21:4-5	Zech. 9:9, Isa. 62:11
Matt. 4:14-16	Isa. 9:1-2	Matt. 21:9	Psa. 118:26
Matt. 5:5	Psa. 37:11	Matt. 21:13	Isa. 56:7
Matt. 5:21	Ex. 20:13	Matt. 21:13	Jer. 7:11
Matt. 5:27	Ex. 20:14	Matt. 21:16	Psa. 8:2
Matt. 5:31	Deut. 24:1	Matt. 21:42	Psa. 118:22-23
Matt. 5:33-37	Ex. 20:7; Num. 30:2	Matt. 22:33-32	Ex. 3:6, 15
Matt. 5:30	Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21	Matt. 22:37	Deut. 6:5
Matt. 5:43	Lev. 19:18	Matt. 22:39	Lev. 19:18
Matt. 7:23	Psa. 6:8	Matt. 22:24	Deut. 25:5
Matt. 8:17	Isa. 53:4	Matt. 22:44	Psa. 110:1
Matt. 9:13	Hosea. 6:6	Matt. 26:31	Jer. 2:30; Zech. 8:7
Matt. 10:35	Mic. 7:6	Matt. 27:9-10	Zech. 11:13
Matt. 11:10	Mal. 3:1	Matt. 27:48	Psa. 69:21
Matt. 12:7	Hosea. 6:6 (This is the second time this is quoted (ch 9:13))	Matt. 27:35	Psa. 22:18
Matt. 12:18-21	Isa. 42:1-4	Matt. 27:39	Psa. 22:7; Psa. 109:25
Matt. 13:13-15	Isa. 6:9-10	Matt. 27:43	Psa. 22:8

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

Matthew	Old Testament	Matthew	Old Testament
Matt. 13:35	Psa. 78:2	Matt. 27:46	Psa. 22:1-2

References in Matthew come from 29 of the 39 books. 89 of them are made by Lord. The books referred to are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Matthew And His Relationship To The Other Gospels

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Christ presented as:	Christ the King	Christ the Servant	Christ the Man	Christ is God
Money	Talent Ch 25:24	Penny Ch 12:15	Pound Ch 19:16	
Commodities	Gold Ch 2:11		Silver Ch 15:8	
Transfiguration	Ch 17:2	Ch 9:2	Lk. 9:29	
Genealogy	Genealogy Ch 1:1-16		Genealogy Ch 3:23-38	
Ascension		Ascension	Ascension	
Joseph of Arimathaea	He was a rich man Ch 27:57	He was an honorable counsellor Ch 15:43	He was a good man and just Ch 23:50	He was a disciple Ch 19:38
Deals with	The past	The present	Death	Eternity
Writer	Matthew was a Jewish disciple	Mark was a companion of Paul	Was a companion of Paul	John was a disciple of the Lord

Matthew Records 26 Miracles:

Chapter	Miracle
8:1-4	Cleansing of the leper
8:5-13	Healing the centurion's servant
8:14-15	Restoring Peter's mother-in-law
8:16	Healing many possessed with devils

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

Chapter	Miracle
8:23-27	Stilling of the tempest
8:28-34	Deliverance of the demonic
9:1-8	Healing of the paralytic
9:20-22	Healing the woman with the issue of blood
9:18, 19, 23-26	Raising of the daughter of Jairus
9:27-31	Healing the blind men
9:32-33	Deliverance of the dumb demonic
12:10-13	Restoration of the man with a withered hand
12:15	Healing of multitudes
12:22	Deliverance of the blind and other demonic
14:14	Healed the sick
14:15-21	Feeding the five thousand
14:25-33	Walking on the sea
15:21-28	Deliverance of the Syrophenician's daughter
15:30	Healing of multitudes
15:32-38	Feeding the four thousand
17:14-18	Deliverance of the lunatic boy
17:24-27	Finding of the coin
19:2	Healing of multitudes
20:29-34	Healing the blind man near Jericho
21:14	Healing the blind and lame in the temple
21:18-22	Withering of the fig tree

Outlines

- 1) The person of the Messiah (ch 1:1 - 4:16)
 - a) From that time Jesus began (ch 4:17)
- 2) The proclamation of the Messiah (ch 4:18 - 16:20)
 - a) From that time Jesus began (ch 16:21)
- 3) The passion of the Messiah (ch 16:21 - 28:20)

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew

- 4) The person of the King in His presentation, legislative rulings, power and program (ch 1:1 - 16:20)
- 5) The rejection of the king in its antagonism (ch 16:21 - 27:66)
- 6) The supremacy of the King in resurrection power and in commissioning authority (ch 28)

Ch 1	The prologue: His genealogy
Ch 1	His birth
Ch 5-7	The Sermon on the Mount
Ch 10	Instructions to the disciples (the mission of the 12)
Ch 13	Parables about response and judgement
Ch 18	Instructions to the disciples (Christian community)
Ch 24-25	Final discourse, the Olivet discourse
Ch 26-28	His passion
Ch 28	Epilogue, The great commission, His generations

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by his Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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