

Invitation Materials

Author:

Although not named as the author in the book, a long tradition has assigned to Matthew, the tax collector who became an apostle (9:9-13).

Date:

Uncertain, but probably between A.D. 50-70.

Theme:

Jesus, the long-promised Messiah and authoritative teacher.

Historical Background:

- 1 The first three Gospels cover many of the same events in Jesus' life in the same way. For this reason, they are often called the "synoptic Gospels" meaning that they are "able to be seen together".
- 2 It is generally assumed that Matthew and Luke used Mark as their prime source in compiling their writings. In Matthew, nearly 90% of the material in Mark is reproduced. These similarities, however, do not mean that the Gospels are merely a restatement of each other.
- 3 Matthew adds many teaching sections and other details not found in Mark.
- 4 Matthew slants his material to a Jewish readership as he cites numerous Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus' life and ministry. His purpose was to show that Jesus is the promised Son of David, the Messiah, come to establish the Kingdom of God.

Characteristics

- 1 Matthew is built around five teaching sections (chs. 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24-25) which illustrates what life in the kingdom of heaven is all about.
- 2 Matthew's frequent citation of Old Testament prophecies makes it the perfect book to bridge the Old Testament and New Testament.
- 3 While strongly oriented to be a witness to the Jews, Matthew also makes it clear that the Messiah has come for all peoples.

Outline

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| 1:1-2:23 | The King's Birth |
| 3:1-4:25 | The King's Temptation |
| 5:1-7:29 | Kingdom Character |
| 8:1-9:34 | The King in Action |
| 9:35-11:30 | Kingdoms in Conflict |
| 12:1-13:52 | The Kingdom Grows |
| 13:53-16:12 | Kingdom Kindness |
| 16:13-17:27 | Who Is the King? |
| 18:1-35 | Kingdom Greatness |
| 19:1-20:34 | The Kingdom's Cost |
| 21:1-23:39 | The King's House |
| 24:1-25:46 | Kingdom Talents |
| 26:1-28:20 | The King's Victory |

Open

- 1 On a scale of 1-10, how patriotic are you?
- 2 What makes you most proud about being a citizen of your country?
- 3 When you were a child, what did your parents want you to do with your life? How did your hopes match theirs?

Dig

- 1 Skim 1:18-2:23, what facts about Jesus are brought out here? If you were one of the Magi, what expectation would you have for this baby?
- 2 Now skim 27:11-44, if, as one of the Magi, word of this trial got back to you, what would you think must have happened between the time you saw Jesus as a baby and now?
- 3 Matthew is the Gospel of the Kingdom. Read out these passages 5:17-20; 6:25-34; 13:44-52; 18:1-9; 20:20-28. What stands out in each one about the Kingdom? What questions about the Kingdom do these passages raise that you hope Matthew will answer?
- 4 If Matthew were dropped from the Bible, what would be missing from the story of God's redemptive work in history?

Reflect

- 1 When you were a child, what did you imagine Jesus to be like? How did you come up with that picture? What picture of Jesus comes to your mind now?
- 2 What makes a person a good citizen to his country? How might those traits apply to citizens of God's kingdom? How is God's kingdom different? What do you hope to learn from Matthew that will help you more fully become a citizen of God's kingdom?

Invitation materials and discussion questions are taken from Serendipity Bible