



Chapter 1

WHO WAS MATTHEW?

ΕὐΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

[EUAGGELION /YOO·ANG·GHEL·EE·ON/]

GOOD NEWS, GOSPEL

MATTHEW 4:23

²³JESUS WENT THROUGHOUT GALILEE, TEACHING IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES, PROCLAIMING THE *GOOD NEWS* OF THE KINGDOM, AND HEALING EVERY DISEASE AND SICKNESS AMONG THE PEOPLE.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

THE TERM IS USED IN THE ANCIENT WORLD TO ANNOUNCE THE REIGN OF A NEW KING OR EMPEROR.



Matthew Study

1. ROMAN WORLD (EMPIRE): OCTAVIAN AND MARK ANTHONY: BATTLE OF ACTIUM SEPTEMBER 2, 31 BC

OCTAVIAN = CAESAR AUGUSTUS' BIRTHDAYS

ANNIVERSARY OF IMPORTANT/DECISIVE DAYS IN THE EMPIRE

2. JEWISH WORLD (ISAIAH 52:1-10: BAW*SAR): THE LORD'S RETURN TO ZION

7 HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

ARE THE FEET OF HIM WHO BRINGS *GOOD NEWS*,

WHO PUBLISHES PEACE, WHO BRINGS *GOOD NEWS* OF HAPPINESS,

WHO PUBLISHES **SALVATION**,

WHO SAYS TO ZION, "YOUR GOD REIGNS."

8 THE VOICE OF YOUR WATCHMEN—THEY LIFT UP THEIR VOICE;

TOGETHER THEY SING FOR JOY;

FOR EYE TO EYE THEY SEE
THE RETURN OF THE LORD TO ZION.



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WHEN NEWS IS GOOD...

1. DESIRE, LONGINGS, AND DREAMS

2. SOMETHING DECISIVE HAPPENS:

3. A NEW FUTURE OPENS UP:

4. LIFE IS NOW ARRANGED AND LIVED DIFFERENTLY IN LIGHT OF THE NEW BRIGHT REALITY AND HOPE FILLED FUTURE CONSUMMATION.

SAMARIA THE CAPITAL OF THE NORTHERN TRIBES OF ISRAEL FALLS TO THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE. ISRAELITES ARE SLAUGHTERED OR TAKEN INTO EXILE NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN.

586 B.C. JERUSALEM AND THE KINGDOM OF JUDEA FALL TO THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE. TEMPLE IS LOOTED AND



Matthew Study

DESTROYED AS MANY JUDEAN ARE TAKEN TO BABYLON AS CAPTIVES. (TIME OF DANIEL)

538 B.C. THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE IS CONQUERED BY THE PERSIANS UNDER CYRUS. THE JUDEAN CAPTIVES ARE MADE TO SERVE THEIR NEW PERSIAN MASTERS.

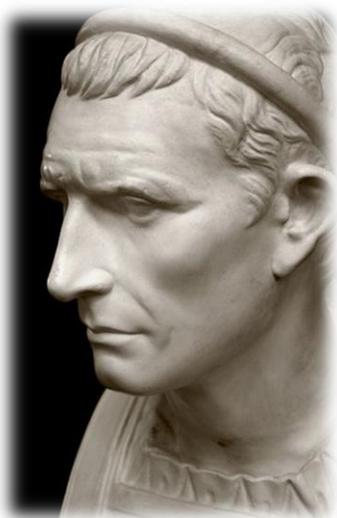
515 B.C. PERSIANS ALLOW THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE AND THE RETURN OF MANY JEWISH EXILES. (TIME OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH)

333 B.C. ALEXANDER THE GREAT DEFEATS THE PERSIAN EMPIRE AT THE BATTLE OF ISSUS. JUDEA, EGYPT AND REST OF PERSIAN EMPIRE FALL TO MACEDONIANS.

323 B.C. ALEXANDER DIES AND HIS EMPIRE IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS. JUDEA FALLS TO THE PTOLEMIES.



Matthew Study



ANTIOCHUS

201 B.C. ANTIOCHUS III DEFEATS PTOLEMY V AND JUDEA BECOMES PART OF THE SELEUCID EMPIRE.

167-164 B.C. ANTIOCHUS IV ATTEMPTS TO ERADICATE JUDAISM, BY OUTLAWING THE TORAH AND DESECRATING THE TEMPLE.

165 B.C. JUDAS THE HAMMER (MACCABEES) REVOLTS AGAINST THE GREEKS AND WINS INDEPENDENCE.

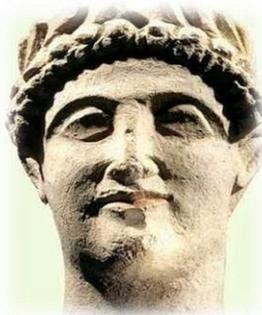
104-103 B.C. JEWISH "KING" ARISTOBULUS CONQUERS THE "GALILEE OF THE GENTILES" AND SENDS JEWISH COLONISTS TO REGION.



Matthew Study

103 B.C. ARISTOBULUS' WIDOW SELECTS HER BROTHER ALEXANDER JANNEUS TO BECOME HIGH PRIEST AND KING. PEOPLE REVOLT AND MASS CRUCIFIXION IS INTRODUCED.

67-63 B.C. SONS OF QUEEN SALOME ALEXANDRA CONTEND FOR THE THRONE. THE YOUNGER SON ARISTOBULUS II WITH THE HELP OF THE SADDUCEES DEFEATS HIS BROTHER HYRCANNUS. HYRCANNUS' ADVISOR ANTIPATER OF IDUMEA CALLS ON THE NABATEAN ARABS TO INTERVENE IN THE CIVIL WAR.



HEROD

63 B.C. ROMAN GENERAL POMPEY INVADES AND GIVES POWER TO HYRCANNUS.

43 B.C. ANTIPATER IS POISONED BUT MARK ANTHONY PROMOTES HIS SONS HEROD AND PHSael TO AUTHORITY.



Matthew Study

40 B.C. THE LAST HASOMEAN PRINCE WITH A PERSIAN ARMY INVADES JUDEA, KILLS PHASAEI, AND DRIVES OUT THE ROMANS. HEROD FLEES TO ROME WHERE SENATE DECLARES HIM KING OF JUDEA.

37 B.C. ROME RECONQUERS JUDEA, DRIVES OUT THE PERSIANS AND CRUCIFIES ANTIGONUS.

5 B.C. YESHUA (JESUS) BEN JOSEPH IS BORN.

4 B.C. HEROD DIES.

Experiencing the Means of Grace in Matthew Week 1

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming **the gospel** of the kingdom.”

– Matthew 4:23

“Our biggest problem is that we have an entire culture shaped by a misunderstanding of **the gospel.**”

– Scot McKnight

Part A (for the entire study of Matthew): Find a Spiritual Friend

The only way that God has given us to be able to know him fully is to align our minds and hearts with God’s Word, to put habits in place in our lives which open us to God’s grace, and to do these things together with the encouragement of others who are seeking God. *For many of us, spiritually healthy relationships are our greatest need.*

Therefore, to allow this study of Matthew to have its fullest effect, you are encouraged to 1) listen to the teachings of the study each week, 2) engage in a corresponding spiritual practice in the days following, and 3) identify a spiritual friend with whom you can process your experience with the teaching and the practices. There is no need for this to be complicated—simply find someone with whom you can mutually answer the following question:

What did you learn about God or yourself through this week’s teaching and practice?



Matthew Study

Part B (this week's practice): Re-encountering the Gospel

Sometimes we have the need of laying aside what we assume about the Gospel in order to be able to encounter it afresh and free it from some of the distortions we may have inherited along with our understandings of it.

To do so, the practice for this week is to **read the Gospel of Matthew in one sitting (or two, or three, or four)**. In the normal ways that we hear sermons or other Bible teaching which focus on a few verses, it is easy to miss the overall message. A good counter to that tendency is to occasionally read the Bible in larger chunks.

Matthew can be read in its entirety in about 2 1/2 hours. Perhaps you can find a sufficient time block this week to read through it at once. Or, you might divide the twenty-eight chapters into two, three, or four readings.

Because Matthew presents Jesus' message as "the Gospel of the kingdom," as you read, notice in what ways Jesus is presented as king—in the story then, and in our world now. What seems like an appropriate response that you can give to God between now and our next session?