

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW

An In-Depth Biblical Study Class and Written Commentary

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Date: August 20, 2014

Class # 1

INTRODUCTION:

Apostle Matthew the Author

SHOW ICON

Name: Levi, probably Christ gave him the name “Matthew – Gift of God”

- Last name Alphaeus – son of Cleopas/Alphaeus

Tax Collector/Publican

- Much hated by the Jews
- Lived in Caparnaum
- Tax booth probably by the waterfront taxing fishing and travelers.
- We will discuss the call of Matthew in detail when we reach that point in Gospel

Brother of Apostle James Alphaeus

- SHOW AND DISCUSS FAMILY TREE OF JESUS
- Matthew also cousin of Jesus

Matthew was with Christ throughout His ministry, death, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, and traveled as Apostle preaching in Syria, Media, Persia (Iran), Parthia and finally martyred in Ethiopia.

READ THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. MATTHEW FROM HANDOUT ON THE APOSTLE.

SHOW HANDOUT PHOTOS OF THE RELIC/CRYPT OF ST. MATTHEW IN SOLERNO ITALY

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL:

- First Book in the NT
- Forms a bridge between the OT and the NT
- It interprets the OT as a Christian Book
- Huge influence on the Early Church
- Most quoted in the early Fathers and Liturgy texts
- Has been called the “Most Important Single Document of the Christian Faith.”
- Contains the most extensive and systematic account of the Life and Teachings of Christ.
- Great Influence on the Church’s Liturgy, Music and Fine Arts.
- It’s version of The Lord’s Prayer, Beatitudes, and Passion Accounts are the most used and common forms.
- J.S. Bach used it for his great “Passion”

THE FOUR GOSPEL AUTHORS/EVANGELISTS & THE FOUR “CREATURES”

Revelation 4:6, 7; Ezekiel 1:10

Attributed by the Church Fathers thus:

- Mark – Lion
- Luke – Ox
- John – Eagle
- Matthew – face of a Man/Angel

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN

According to St. Theophlact, the Number of years after Christ’s Ascension:

- 8 Years – Matthew, first in Aramaic/Hebrew then translated into Greek
- 10 Years – Mark instructed by St. Peter
- 15 Years – Luke The Gospel used by St. Paul in his Missionary Travels
- 32 Years – John after reviewing and proclaiming the Truth of the other 3, wrote his to complete and fill it things not in them.

SEE HANDOUT ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Author: Apostle Matthew, held by the Fathers and the early church even though the Gospel does not state it.

Originally written in Aramaic/Hebrew then later translated into Greek

- Orthodoxy believes it to be the first Gospel written
- Contemporary heterodox critical scholars prefer to see Mark first and then the source for Matthew and Luke
- READ ST. SOPHRONIOS ON THE ARAMAIC VERSION AT THE BEGINNING OF ST. THEOPLACTS COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW.

- St. Clement of Alexandria said St. Bartholomew took a copy to India and then St. Mark brought it with him to Alexandria Egypt, where Clement said he himself possessed a copy. It was kept secret...

Written especially to proclaim and prove Jesus as the Messiah/Christ.

- No less than 65 references to the OT.
- SEE HANDOUT OF 50 DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM OT.

Addressed especially to Jews using much Jewish idiom, culture, history, etc

But also written for the Gentile Christians.

- Only Gospel with the Great Commission at the end.

Three Divisions: “Jesus As”

- Prophet – Matt. 5-7
- Lord & King over the visible and invisible worlds – Matt. 8-25
- High Priest offered as Sacrifice – Matt. 26-27

Theological Content Includes:

- Christological Themes – The Messiah
- Kingdom of Heaven/Kingdom of God
- The Ethics and Behavior in the Kingdom
- Emphasizes the Call to Repentance and Ministry
- Emphasizes the Obedience of Faith
- Emphasizes Discipleship
- The Church
- Characterized by Lengthy Discourses such as the Sermon on the Mount and Parables
- Eschatological/Last Things

ONLY MATTHEW RECORDS:

- Joseph’s vision
- The visit of the Magi
- The Flight to Egypt
- The Slaughter and Martyrdom of the Innocent Infants
- The dream of Pilate’s wife
- The suicide of Judas
- The resurrection of the dead at the Crucifixion
- The story of the bribed guard
- The Great Commission
- “You are Peter and upon this Rock I will build My Church”
- Certain Parables

Free Version of St. John Chrysostom’s Homilies on The Gospel of St. Matthew:

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf110.toc.html>