

ST. MATTHEW

The Gospel according to

1

OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Psalm 63**. In the parched wilderness of this world, only the LORD slakes our thirst and refreshes the soul.

INTRODUCTION

It was common in rabbinic times that young, up-and-coming students would find themselves a Rabbi to learn from. "Find yourself a teacher," was advice to a disciple who aspired to learn.

The Gospel of Matthew shows us how Jesus turned this around completely. On the shores of the lake near Capernaum the rabbi from Nazareth called his first disciples. "Follow me," he said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Matthew's call came in the same way. Finding him in the tax collector's booth, Jesus again said, "Follow me," (Matthew 9:9), and Matthew left behind his former livelihood to serve Jesus.

Matthew's Gospel is written for Jews who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. He shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament messianic prophecies. Over and over again in Matthew's Gospel we read, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet." Jesus is the promised Messiah. The hopes of the ages are fulfilled in him. Matthew's Gospel shows clearly: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

We're going to study the Gospel of Matthew in a little different format. Instead of starting at the very beginning of the book and reading through to the end, we're going to take the book thematically. In so doing, we will cover all of the text of Matthew's Gospel in a way that ties together common threads and unifying themes.

We'll begin with . . .

THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

Read Matthew 4:18-25.

Who initiated the process that led to these men becoming disciples? How is the truth of **Ephesians 2:4, 5** borne out in the call of the first disciples?

What made these disciples worthy of Jesus' call to discipleship?

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

Both in the case of the fishermen and of Matthew, what response did Jesus' call engender in those called?

Apart from the promised task ("fishers of men"), what was Jesus' call a call *to*?

THE ONE WHO CALLS

The genealogy. Read Matthew 1:1-17.

What does the genealogy recorded by Matthew say about who Jesus is?

Why is this absolutely critical to Jesus' person and work as Messiah?

The birth. Read Matthew 1:18-25.

What does the conception of Jesus in the womb of the virgin say about who Jesus is?

Why is this absolutely critical to Jesus' person and work as Messiah?

Two false teachings that surfaced about Jesus, both of them refuted by Matthew's Gospel:

Docetism:

Arianism:

FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECIES

The prophecies. Read Matthew chapters 2 and 3.

Write the prophetic book and the chapter where the prophecy is drawn from:

Jesus' place of birth: _____.

Jesus' return from Egypt as a child: _____.

The slaughter of the innocents: _____.

Jesus the Nazarene: _____.

The forerunner: _____.

THE SCENE

Why was messianic fervor at fever pitch at the time of John the Baptist?

How did John prepare the way for the Christ?

What was the significance of Jesus' baptism?

Where do you see the Holy Trinity represented at Jesus' baptism?

VERSE TO REMEMBER

Matthew 4:19: *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*

For next time read Matthew chapters 1-4.