

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Arrival: A Study of Matthew 1–7

STUDY ONE

Let's Meet the King

Selections from Matthew

My hope as we undertake this series on Matthew, which will be lengthy and detailed, is that we will get new glimpses of Jesus, the Son of the Living God, and that our love for Him will intensify as time passes.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

OUR God is full of surprises! He delights in adding a touch of the unexpected to whatever He does. For instance, when He devised His redemption plan, He kept it a mystery, hidden in Himself, until the time of its unveiling. According to 1 Peter 1:12, even the angels didn't know what to expect!

At just the right moment, the King of all creation presented Himself to the world as Savior. A surprise to us all, He did so in the form of a helpless baby born in a stable, not a palace; to peasants, not royals.

Yet, that arrival wasn't the only wonder. He launched His ministry with a ragtag assortment of fishermen, zealots, and outsiders—not the elite or educated. He presented Himself to His own people as their King and Messiah, but they rejected Him and had Him crucified. Then the most unexpected of all happened . . . *Jesus resurrected!*

Surprise after surprise—and they all were part of His plan.

In our study of Matthew, we'll become very acquainted with this God of surprises. We'll hear His astonishing teaching, watch how He dwells among the poor, praise how He invites the outcast to feast at His table, weep over His unjust death, and rejoice at His shocking resurrection.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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At the end, we'll join our risen King on the Galilean mountaintop where He commanded us to “go and make disciples of all the nations” while assuring us that “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20). May Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s series on Matthew spark a fire in your soul to love, obey, worship, and share Christ more deeply than you ever have.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Use the prayer below as your own petition to ready your heart for study.

Father of grace and strength, be with me now to bless my time in Your Word. How precious is Your Word to me. Use it to grow my understanding of Your surprising work in Christ as I draw near to You through Him. In Him alone do I trust. Before Him alone do I bow. For Him alone do I live. Yet, what countless depths of His person and work remain unexplored. So, take me deeper. Increase my awe. For Christ's glory, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Imagine walking up to Leonardo da Vinci’s twenty-nine-foot-wide painting, *The Last Supper*. After taking in the whole, only then do you focus on the table bread, the facial expressions, or the disciples’ postures. It’s best to study any book of the Bible the same way, taking in the big picture before examining each brush stroke. First, let’s compare Matthew with the other gospels then overview Matthew itself.¹

| COMPARISON OF THE FOUR GOSPELS | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
| Portrait of Jesus | Promised King | Suffering Servant | Perfect Man | God the Son |
| Original Audience | Jews | Romans | Greeks | The World |
| Author | Tax collector, one of the twelve disciples | Close associate of and assistant to the disciples | Gentile physician, early convert | Fisherman, one of the twelve disciples |
| Theme | The messianic King has come, fulfilling Old Testament promises. | The Son of God has come to seek, to serve, and to save. | The Son of Man has come to redeem all of humanity. | The eternal Son of God has become incarnate. |
| Response | Worship Him! | Follow Him! | Imitate Him! | Believe in Him! |



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MATTHEW

| | Announcement and Arrival of the King Main Emphasis: His Credentials Birth Baptism Temptation CHAPTERS 1–4 | Proclamation and Reception of the King Main Emphasis: His Message Sermon on the Mount Miracles Discourses Parables CHAPTERS 5–15 | Opposition and Rejection of the King Main Emphasis: His Suffering and Death Spread of opposition Preparation of disciples Final predictions Crucifixion CHAPTERS 16–27 | Resurrection and Triumph of the King Main Emphasis: His Conquest God's power Great Commission CHAPTER 28 |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| The King | His identity: Israel's promised King | | His destiny: "Crucify Him!" | |
| Scope | Teaching the vast multitudes | | Teaching the Twelve | |
| Location | Bethlehem and Nazareth | Ministry in Galilee | Ministry in Judea | |
| People's Reaction | Increased popularity | | Increased hostility | |
| Theme | Jesus is the King, Israel's long-awaited Messiah. | | | |
| Key Verses | 16:16–19; 28:18–20 | | | |
| Christ in Matthew | Jesus, the Messiah, fulfills the prophecies, promises, types, and expectations of the Old Testament Scriptures (16:16–19; 28:18–20). | | | |

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Based on Pastor Chuck's chart, do you notice anything surprising about Matthew's gospel?

It's the story of the great King who left the riches of heaven to become a commoner on this earth that we, the commoners, after believing in Him, would become the regal children in His family. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Read an introduction to Matthew's gospel. You can find one in your Bible dictionary, Pastor Chuck's *commentary on Matthew* pages 3–10, or at insight.org. Summarize what you find to be especially helpful?

Lastly, we recommend you grab a copy of Pastor Chuck's book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* if you don't have one in your library.² In it, Pastor Chuck unfolds his Bible study method—the same method we use in these studies to help you prepare your own spiritual meals.



Observation: The King of Kings

In observation, we focus on the words of the text. We read—unhurriedly, carefully, repeatedly, meditatively—what God says. Knowing comes first. Then understanding.

Observe [Matthew 2:1–4](#). What two titles did Jesus receive?

1. _____
2. _____

What do you think is the significance of these wise men—delegates from a foreign country—seeking Jesus as “king of the Jews”?



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Observe *Matthew 7:28–29*. What does this passage teach us about Jesus' reception?

Observe *Matthew 16:13–28*. What does this passage say about Jesus' identity?

Observe *Matthew 28:16–20*. The final words of Jesus. How did Matthew decisively and climactically convey Jesus' kingly authority and divine nature in this passage?

We don't have all authority, He does. For anyone to say, "I have all authority over heaven and earth," would be a fool. But not Jesus. He's made the heavens and the earth. None of it is unfamiliar to Him. He's the one in full authority, worthy of our trust.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

He arrived. Many received Him. Some opposed and eventually killed Him. But that didn't end the story. Jesus resurrected and triumphed. He has ascended to God's right hand in heaven and now reigns as King of Kings, our deliverer and ruler.



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Interpretation: The Gospel Writer

What happened in the apostle Matthew's life that led him to record Jesus' story? We explore that now in a few references to him individually in the New Testament.

Review *Matthew 9:9–10; 10:1–4; Mark 2:14; 3:13–19; Luke 5:29; 6:12–15*.

What other name did Matthew have? _____

Which disciple was likely Matthew's brother? _____

What was Matthew's occupation before Jesus called him? _____

How did Matthew respond to Jesus' call? _____

What event did Matthew host following his call from Jesus? _____

The Jews of Jesus' day despised tax collectors, who were like mafia bosses extorting more money from people than they actually owed. They viewed tax collectors as traitors and puppets of Rome, linking them with the worst of sinners. "The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?'" (Luke 5:30 NASB).

James, the probable brother of Matthew and a loyal Jew, probably despised Matthew for his vocation.

Record how Jesus' influence likely changed the dynamic of Matthew and James' relationship.



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Explain how Matthew's profession would have aided his written account of Jesus.

Why four? Why not one? Why wouldn't we just be satisfied with one gospel? Well, these four give us four eyewitness accounts. These four let us see different flavors, different shadings, different scenes from each perspective. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

No matter your past. Regardless your skills. You'll rarely anticipate how God will use you. God redeems. Matthew never expected the King of Kings to walk by his tax booth that day. But He did. Matthew left the old to receive the new. He then penned one of the most important texts in history.



Correlation: The Kingdom

Matthew uses the word *kingdom* fifty-five times in his gospel. Thirty-two times, the word appears in the phrase *kingdom of heaven* which is a reverent, Jewish phrase often meaning “God” or the blissful realm of “God’s rule.” Read the verses below and record how they help us understand Jesus’ kingdom.

Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. (Matthew 4:23)



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“And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:11–12)

About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” . . . Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 18:1, 3–4)

“And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

Jesus' kingdom does not mirror the kingdoms of this world. It will not fade, or weaken, or cower, or surrender, or fail, or darken. It knows no tyranny, or oppression, or chaos, or lawlessness. Only joy and peace, victory and light. Its nature and destiny rest on its King.



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Application: Your King

The thematic flow of Matthew's narrative follows the chronological seasons of Christ's life and offers insightful application to our lives:

1. *When we were born again, the King arrived in our lives.* Life receives a freshness from the newness of our relationship with Jesus.
2. *When we began to grow spiritually, the King demonstrated His power in us.* We live empowered, saying no to sin and saying yes to God's ways.
3. *As growth accelerated, opposition and spiritual testing increased around us.* Satan, this world, and our indwelling sin assault our growth.
4. *When all seems lost, Jesus arises victorious in our lives as He did over the grave.* We stay the course, not swerving left or right; and we overcome the obstacles until, eventually, we see Jesus face to face, and He gives us the crown of life.

Where do you find yourself in the journey? Why? What is one step you can take to grow as a citizen of God's kingdom and ambassador of the King?

The arrival of Jesus in Bethlehem jolted the world. It jarred us when He entered our lives. How shocking His radical goodness, how earthshaking His wisdom, and how spiritually electrifying His presence! Truly, Jesus still proves to be the God of surprises.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for arriving in my life, redirecting my course, and giving me a place in Your royal family. Thank You for working through Matthew's pen to preserve for us the person, work, and words of King Jesus, Your Son, our Lord. I want to know Him more deeply, trust Him more fully, and follow Him more faithfully. In His strong name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15*, vol. 1A (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 7.
2. You can also learn about Pastor Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* method on the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](http://insight.org)" at insight.org.

