

A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You

Matthew

Once again, it's a joy for me to welcome you to "It's a Good Life." Today, we want to start a new study, "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You." This would be the books of the New Testament, and my goal here is not that we would study in depth each book of the Bible in the New Testament but that you and I, when we're finished with this study, this series of studies, we'll be able to get an overview of each book of the Bible. Maybe you have not been able to memorize the books of the Bible. I'm not talking about the entire Scriptures that are contained in those books, but I'm speaking of even the names of the New Testament. This would be my goal today to help you think your way through the New Testament. So, in just a moment, We'll be looking at "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament starting with the book of Matthew.

But first, let me invite you to write to me today: Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. If you'll write to me today, I'll be glad to send to you free of charge a written transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." You can also go to our website, www.LRWM.org. On the website, you will be able to download a transcript of this program. You'll be able to listen to this program once again; it's on there, and other programs of "It's a Good Life." But you'll be able to look at that website and find some Bible study helps and several things on there that, I pray, will help you in your Christian life. And if you've never trusted the Lord as your Savior, why not go there and look and see how that you, too, can know Christ as your Savior.

Well, today, we want to look at the bird's-eye view of Matthew. Now, some background on this book is, the author is the apostle Matthew according to church tradition. The date is uncertain, of course, not really pinned down. We can't say for a certainty, but we believe that it was before AD 70,

and the setting is that Matthew was a Jewish tax collector. He was called by Jesus, and he wrote primarily to an audience with a Jewish past to reveal to them the Gospel of Jesus. Now, if you'll look back in the book of Matthew, you'll be able to see that his name was also Levi. And the purpose of the book is this: to convince Jews and Jewish Christians that Jesus is the Christ of God.

And if you'll go back in the Old Testament, you'll find how that the priests would anoint Christ's coming as the King over Israel. First Kings 19:16 talks about this, and Exodus 30:30 says, *And thou shalt anoint Aaron [the priest] and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.* Not only was Christ anointed as a King, but he was anointed as a Priest.

Now, the following points are different types of evidence that the author presents to create and develop faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Remember now that Matthew was writing primarily to the Jewish people, and he was writing to Jewish believers as well. The genealogy of verses 1-17 of chapter 1 shows Jesus was a descendant of David and thus could be the Messiah predicted by the prophets. The angels also spoke of Jesus, and this shows God's witness of Jesus through His messengers at His birth and His resurrection. Isn't it wonderful that God used angels to announce the birth of Jesus, and He used angels also to announce the resurrection of Jesus, how that Jesus came out of the grave. Now, you can read chapter 1, verses 20-25. Chapter 28 in verses 5-8 talks about these things.

And then we see that another point of the evidence that the author points to, to create and develop faith in Jesus as the Messiah, is prophecy. Chapter 1, chapter 2, and so forth show that Jesus fulfilled the predictions concerning the coming of the Messiah. We also have the witness or the testimony of God

the Father in chapter 2, verse 17, and chapter 17 in verse 5. And it shows that the Father Himself was willing to give witness to Jesus as His only Son. He said, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased."

And then Jesus is teaching, Himself, in chapter 5, and chapter 7 shows that Jesus' knowledge and authority, which He had not learned and received as a son of a carpenter. In other words, no carpenter could have taught Jesus the things that He did, the healings, the miracles, and when He went into the temple, He confounded the lawyers and the doctors, those people who were well-versed in the Scriptures. He confused them, and they could not understand how the son of a carpenter could know the things He knew about the Scriptures. Well, they did not recognize Him at that point as the Savior or as the One who came from God, the Messiah, that Jesus' teachings Himself showed the knowledge that He had in presenting God the Father and Himself as the Savior.

We see Jesus' miracles in chapter 8, chapter 9, and chapter 14, and this shows His power which none other than God Himself can have. He is God, a very God. The demons themselves in chapter 8 shows that even the demons and evil spirits knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

If you do not recognize Jesus as the Son of God today, well, all I can say is that even the devil and the demons of Hell know who Jesus is. They know that He is the Son of God. So where does that place you if you do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

The gentiles themselves would understand as Matthew wrote. Actually, it was written to show the gentiles. It shows even the gentiles who were not schooled in the Old Testament could recognize that Jesus was powerful and greater than all. Chapter 2 and chapter 8 and chapter 15 talk about this. And then Jesus' own testimony shows that Jesus realized who He was and He was willing to identify Himself on certain occasions. There were

times that Jesus did not show Himself. He did not place Himself in a situation where the people recognized Him, and the Bible tells us that certain times He would make the statement it's not His time. In other words, it wasn't His time to go to the cross to be the sacrificial Lamb on the cross of Calvary.

And then we see that Jesus' death and burial and resurrection, chapter 27, verses 33-61. This shows Jesus' identity through the fulfilled prophecy and the understanding of those who saw Him crucified. His great sacrifice was witnessed. It's not something that was left to chance. It was not something that just happened. It happened at the exact time it was supposed to and there were witnesses who witnessed the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

Then we see that there's an application involved here of what we look at in the book of Matthew. And since the evidence shown in the purpose of Matthew proves Jesus is the Christ, you and I need to, first of all, be His disciple. In Matthew 28:19, it says, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

When we get saved, we become a disciple. We can learn the things of God, and we need to start listening to Him and do as He would have us to do. We need to be a disciple, a learner. We need to be baptized because of our faith in Him, Matthew 28:19. We need to obey all things He has commanded, chapter 28 and verse 20. It says, *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

We need to put God and His kingdom first in our lives. Chapter 6 and verse 33 tells us this, and when we do, Matthew 6:33 says, *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* We will not put earthly riches first if we're following Christ.

It's not wrong to have money, but we should not put that ahead of Christ. And it says in Matthew 6:19-21, ¹⁹*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:* ²⁰*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:* ²¹*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

We need to put God first. We need to listen to Him. We need to obey His commands, and as we do this, we will not be anxious or fret about food or clothing or things in our lives. We will set the eyes of our heart on God, according to Matthew chapter 6. And then we will serve God above all else, Matthew 6:24. It says, *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* We need to use all the evidence in the purpose of the book to help our own faith and others' faith to grow.

Jesus is not a normal king. He would die for the kingdom as seen in Matthew chapter 16. He had the power to rise from the dead, Matthew 16. He came to serve others, not to be served by them, Matthew 20. Jesus' whole life and teachings will help us to know how to follow an abnormal King in an unusual kingdom.

Many will not believe Jesus, despite the evidence. Some will only honor God by mouth, not by heart, according to Matthew 15:8. And some will honor the teachings of men above the teachings of Jesus, Matthew 15, verses 1-9. Some will deny Jesus because they do not see how the Scriptures point to Him, Matthew 22, verses 29-33. Some will be persuaded by the pressures of men rather than the clear evidence of Jesus in Matthew 27.

The Word of God works as a seed in the heart. Have you trusted Him today? Has the Word of God entered into you in such a way that you know what

the right thing to do is, to receive Jesus as your Savior, but there's something holding you back. Well, the Bible talks about the seed of the sower, good ground, an outward sign of an inward possession, Matthew 13:23. And as we look at that, we need to understand that God's Word goes forth. God's Word is quick and powerful. The Bible says, ⁸*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:* ⁹*Not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). That is the Word of God. That is the Seed of the Word. *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved* (Romans 10:13). That's the seed of the Word. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us* (Titus 3:5). That's the Word of God. That is the seed that goes to the heart. When we hear the Word of God, we must access that Word. We must accept the Word in order to be saved.

Have you trusted him today as your Savior? Do you know Jesus today as your Savior? If not, why not bow your head and receive Christ as your Savior today. We have so many evidences in the Word of God that tell us that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Won't you trust Him today?

And if you are saved and you've gotten away from Him, why not turn to him today and say, "Lord, forgive me. I want to serve You."

Well, it's been good being with you today, and let me remind you, next week, we'll look at the book of Mark, number two in our study, "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. Until then, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.