

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 16 October 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

“Behold, Thy King!”

Matthew 1:1-3

As I grow older, there are some things that I never grow tired of hearing. One of the things that I never tire of hearing are **people’s testimonies of how they came to know the Lord Jesus Christ**. I especially love to hear the testimonies of Jewish people who have found Christ.

Now, as I listen to the testimonies of my Jewish brothers and sisters, there is an expression that they often use. There is something that they call **“the best-kept secret of the Jewish people.”** What is this big “secret” which, they say, has been kept from their people? It is the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was a *Jew*, who had 12 *Jewish* disciples, and who lived in the land of *Israel*. It is also the fact that the New Testament was written *by Jews, about Jews, and, oftentimes, directly to Jews*.

Now, perhaps you’re wondering how so many Jews could be unaware that Jesus is a Jew, and that the writers of the New Testament were Jews. It’s simple: their leaders have purposely withheld this information from them (or outright *lied* to them)! From earliest childhood, most Jews are told that the New Testament is a “*Gentile book*,” which was written *by Gentiles, to Gentiles, about a false “Gentile” messiah, whom they call “Jesus.”* Many Jewish children have even been taught that the New Testament is a “handbook on how to persecute the Jews”; and they are solemnly forbidden to read it.

Now, whenever you are forbidden to do something, what are you naturally inclined to do? You want to do that forbidden thing, right? Many Jews are so curious about that “forbidden book” called “The New Testament,” that when they finally encounter a *genuine* Christian, and recognise that that Christian loves the Jewish God *and* the Jewish people, they finally crack open a New Testament, to see what it says. And what do they find? To their shock, they find that the very first sentence of the New Testament reads, **“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”** They find that Jesus is not only a Jew, but a descendant of King David! As they continue to read through **Matthew**, and through the rest of the New Testament, they see that this Jesus of Nazareth was not merely a great Jewish teacher, but the Messiah, the Son of God, and the King of Israel. As they compare their Hebrew Bible to the New Testament, they find that the prophecies of the suffering Messiah in the Old Testament were perfectly fulfilled in Jesus. Upon discovering these things, many Jews end up placing their faith in Jesus; and with joy in their hearts, they become filled with an urgency to tell their family and friends about “the great secret” that had been kept from them all their lives. Such is the case with *everyone* who truly believes on Jesus—whether he be Jew or Gentile! Jesus transforms your life, and fills you with joy, and with a desire to tell others about Him!

This morning, we will begin to study a book which has transformed countless lives. I’m referring to the first book of the New Testament. As we study **Matthew** verse by verse and chapter by chapter, we will find the portrait of the King of Israel, and the Saviour of the world. It is my prayer that if Jesus is not the King and ruler of *your heart*, you will come to believe on Him, repent of your sin, surrender your life to Him, and be saved. It is also my prayer that if you are saved, you will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The title of this message is **“Behold, Thy King!”**

Read Matthew 1:1.

I. The author of Matthew

Whenever you begin a study of a book of the Bible, it is important to know *who* wrote the book, and why he wrote it. So, then, who wrote these words, “*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*”? His name was **Levi**. Levi was a tax-collector who became an Apostle of Jesus; and Jesus gave him the new name “Matthew.” Now, this seems like a “no-brainer,” right? (After all, the title of this book is “**The Gospel According to St. Matthew.**”) However, this title, “The Gospel According to St. Matthew,” is not part of Scripture; and nowhere in the book will you actually find the statement, “I, Matthew, am the author of this book.” How, then, do we know that Matthew wrote this book?

Well, there are several ways we can know. First, Christians all the way back to the times of the Apostles have accepted Matthew as the author. Take **Papias**, for example. Papias was born in A.D. 60; and he was a disciple of the Apostle John. Since this man personally knew at least some of the Apostles, there can be no doubt that he knew who wrote this book. And who did Papias say wrote it? In his writings, he affirmed that *Matthew* was the author.

Now, you’d *think* that this would settle the question. However, we live in a world in which literally every book of the Bible is questioned by the modernist “scholars.” Most modern scholars do *not* accept that **Matthew** wrote this book. Some even say that Matthew was written by *more than one* person. (They say the same thing about virtually every other book of the Bible.) The critics don’t know the voice of the Good Shepherd, as Christians do; and they cannot accept this by faith. They demand “evidence” that Matthew was the author. How, then, can we know, *from the text of Matthew itself*, that Matthew is the author?

Well, the first big clue that points to Matthew as the author is the fact that whoever wrote this book was a *Jew*. The person who wrote this book knew Jewish customs expertly; and he obviously lived in Galilee, and knew the geography of the whole land of Israel. In fact, the person who wrote this book doesn’t even give any explanations about Jewish customs or culture. He was a Jew, writing *to* his fellow Jews, about things that they all knew, because they were Jews! Another clue as to who wrote this book is that the author focused a lot on the town of Capernaum. Why Capernaum? Because Capernaum was Matthew’s hometown!

Another big giveaway that Matthew was the author of this book is that **he mentions money a lot**. This is not surprising, since Matthew was a tax collector. Matthew thought in terms of money; and he took special interest in Jesus’ many parables about money. He went out of his way to highlight them. In fact, did you know that money is mentioned more in the book of **Matthew** than in any other Gospel? Matthew mentioned more *types of Roman coins* than the other 3 Gospels did. He even mentioned some of the rarer Roman coins, which are not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament—particularly, the *didrachmus*, the *statera*, and the *talent* (**Matthew 17:24, 27; 18:24**). Matthew mentioned gold, silver, and brass—metals which none of the other 3 Gospel writers mentioned. Matthew also used the words “*debt*,” “*reckoning*” (“account-taking”), and “*money-changers*”—terms that the other 3 Gospels don’t mention. It is especially significant that Matthew mentioned the *talent*. Why? Because the talent was a sum so large, that Matthew, being a tax-collector, was the only disciple who would have ever *touched* a talent. He knew the immense monetary value of a talent; and that is why, when Jesus compared our *sin-debt* to a debt of 10,000 talents, Matthew was blown away! He was stunned to hear that our sin-debt is so great in God’s eyes—yet, that God can actually *forgive us* of such an unpayable debt!

By the way, there are a lot of “Christian” teachers out there in YouTube Land who despise the local church; and such people often say that “Jesus never spoke about money!” Therefore, they say, any church that talks about “tithing” or “giving” is corrupt! My friends, anyone who

says that Jesus didn't talk about money is either knowingly lying, or has never read the book of **Matthew** (let alone the rest of the New Testament). Jesus had a *lot* to say about money! He expects us to be faithful stewards of the money that God entrusts to us. He expects us to use God's money for the propagation of the Gospel, so that souls might be brought into God's Kingdom! As we study through **Matthew**, we will see how our management of money plays such an important part in God's mandate to His people in this church age.

Now, *when did Matthew write this book?* There is good reason to believe that he wrote it as early as **A.D. 37**.—only a few years after Jesus ascended to Heaven. He definitely wrote it before the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, because he speaks of the Temple rituals as things that were *still in place* at that time. By the way, many of the “scholars” claim that **Mark** was written before Matthew, and that Matthew *copied* his material from Mark. Now, to the unwary, this sounds reasonable, since the books of **Matthew** and **Mark** are so similar. In fact, **92%** of the information in the books of **Matthew** and **Mark** is the same. So, that settles it: Matthew *must* have copied from Mark, right? Wrong! That is what *unbelieving critics* of the Bible say; but we who are saved know the voice of our Master, and we know the truth. Why would Matthew, who was with Jesus 24-7 for about 3 years, have relied upon Mark, who was an eye-witness of only a small part of Jesus' ministry? Mark, of course, wrote his Gospel by inspiration from God, just as Matthew did; however, *Mark* is the one who needed to receive information from *Matthew*. Matthew was an *eyewitness* of Jesus' ministry! To be sure, there is much similarity between **Matthew** and **Mark**; but it wasn't because Matthew copied from Mark (or even because Mark copied from Matthew). *Here* is why these books of similar.

Read Ecclesiastes 12:10-11.

Second Timothy 3:16 says that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” All Scripture comes from the same “Shepherd,” the Lord Jesus Christ; and He gave His words to about 40 different men (the “*masters of assemblies*”) to write down. That is why some books of the Bible are similar to each other. Christ, the true Author of all Scripture, considered the material to be so important, that He gave the information to several authors to write down.

Now, *in what language* did Matthew write this Gospel? Like every other author of the New Testament, Matthew wrote it in Greek. Koine Greek was the universal language of the Roman world; and God used this very rich, precise language to teach us important truths about Christ's atonement, justification, sanctification, and the other deep truths of salvation. Now, to most of us, this is not news. We *know* that **Matthew** was written in Greek. However, believe it or not, there are many who claim that Matthew wrote his Gospel in *Hebrew*. They say that it was later *translated* into Greek, but that the original Hebrew text was lost.

Now, *could* Matthew have written in Hebrew? Of course. As a tax collector, he was an employee of the Roman government, who dealt with people of all ethnicities every day. He had to be literate not only in the universal language of Greek, but also in Hebrew and Aramaic—the “heart” languages of the Jews. Wouldn't it have made sense, then, for Matthew to write this book in the “heart” language of his own people, the Jews? No! Here's why.

Read Matthew 5:17-18.

How do we know that Matthew didn't write this book in Hebrew? Because if he *had* written it in Hebrew, God would have seen to it that the Hebrew text was *preserved*! Jesus said that not one “jot or tittle” (the smallest Hebrew consonant or vowel) of God's Word will ever be lost. If **Matthew** was originally written in Hebrew, but then was lost, it would mean that those

original words were *not* preserved; and Jesus' promise would not be true! Brethren, don't listen to the modernist preachers who don't believe in the divine inspiration or preservation of Scripture. Matthew *was* written to the Jews; but it was written in *Greek*, so that both Jews and Gentiles could read it! This book is *especially* for Jewish people; but it is also for *all of us*. Now, we've seen when, why, and how Matthew wrote this book; but **what kind of man was Matthew himself?** God used all kinds of men, of all different personalities, to write His Word; and the personality of Matthew is clear to see. One thing that stands out about Matthew is that **he was a methodical man**. He had a great love for teaching and learning. That is why he emphasised *discipleship* so much. In fact, Matthew is the only one of the Gospel writers who used the word *matheteuo* ("to disciple"). He used this word three times—in **Matthew 13:52, 27:57, and 28:19**. (None of the other Gospels used this word.) Matthew firmly believed in making disciples by way of systematic *teaching*. You can see this in the long sermons that Matthew recorded. For example, the Sermon on the Mount (in **Matthew 5-7**) is the longest recorded sermon in the New Testament. If Matthew were here today, he would probably love our "Sunday School" hour, with its interactive teaching. Church is often called a "spiritual hospital": but it is more than that. It is a *school*. Church is a place where God's people are methodically, systematically taught God's Word, so that they can know how to be disciples of Jesus. In fact, you are *not* a "disciple" (a "learner") of Jesus, you are not a Christian at all. God's people desire to learn God's words, so that they may *live* them.

Now, there is one more fact about Matthew that I would like to point out; and that is that **Matthew was a humble man**. He never forgot what he was saved from.

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

Why did Matthew not mention his own name in the Gospel that he wrote? Because he was a *humble* man! He never forgot that he had once been a hated tax-collector. We don't know for sure whether Matthew was a cheat and extortioner before he became a follower of Jesus; but he probably was. Publicans were notorious for taking more taxes from people than Rome required, and for putting the extra money in their pockets. At the very least, Matthew was *friends* with the lying, cheating tax-collectors of Capernaum. Yet, Jesus chose *this* man, of such low reputation, to be one of His Apostles! Matthew never got over Jesus' grace and mercy. He never got over the fact that Jesus would save a sinner like him. He didn't get the big-head about being one of Jesus' disciples, either. He wasn't worried about "re-making" his image so that he could fit into "respectable" society. Instead of distancing himself from his old tax-collector buddies, he threw a party, and invited his lying, cheating buddies to that party, so that Jesus could preach the words of life to them! He didn't care what the "respectable" people in Capernaum had to say about it; he just wanted his friends to be saved. He used his money to bring people to Jesus, so that they might one day spend eternity with him in Heaven. That is the kind of heart that *you and I* should have, too, brethren. It is my prayer that as we study this book, *your* heart will become more like *Matthew's* heart—and, most importantly, like *Jesus's* heart.

II. The audience of Matthew

It is very important, as you are studying a book of Scripture, to know *to whom* the book was written. Was it written to Jews, or to Gentiles? And was it written to believers, or to *lost* people? In this case, the book of **Matthew** was written to **Jewish people**—and especially to *unsaved* Jewish people, who needed to be persuaded that Jesus was their Messiah.

How do we know that Matthew wrote this book to the Jews? For one thing, because the *style of writing* is very Jewish. Matthew wrote his sentences in a Hebrew style called “parallelism.” He used the Greek word *tote* (“then, at that time”) 90 times. This is a very Hebrew way of introducing a new section of a book. He uses the term “*Son of David*” 9 times. This title for the Messiah is *extremely* important to the Jews; yet, by comparison, “*Son of David*” is used only 3 times in **Mark** and **Luke**, and none at all in the book of **John**. Matthew uses the term “**Kingdom of Heaven**” a whopping 33 times! The **Kingdom of Heaven** (the future 1,000-year Kingdom of the Messiah on earth) is very important to the Jews; yet, this term is not used once in the other 3 Gospels! Matthew placed a huge emphasis on the things that Jesus said about **Moses**; about the Old Testament **ceremonial laws**; about the **Sabbath**; about the **Kingdom of Heaven**; and about **Jerusalem, King David, the Temple, and the Messiah**. He also placed an enormous emphasis on Jesus’ fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew quoted the Old Testament **129 times!** This was very important to the Jews, because they needed to see that Matthew and the other Apostles weren’t just “making up” this stuff from their own heads. They needed to see that Jesus was the fulfilment of all that the prophets had foretold about the King of Israel. Thirteen times in **Matthew** it is said that Jesus performed some act so “*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.*”

From the very first sentence, the book of **Matthew** begins with the **royal genealogy** of Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew shows how Jesus is the descendant of King David, through the line of His father-by-adoption, Joseph. Why is this a big deal? Because if there is anything that the Jews know about the Messiah, it is that He is the “Son of David.” As I mentioned earlier, Matthew doesn’t explain Jewish customs and culture. *John and Mark* explained Jewish customs in their Gospels, because they were writing mostly to *Gentiles*, who weren’t familiar with Jewish customs. However, Matthew did *not* explain the Jewish customs, because he was writing to his own countrymen. Every Jew who reads **Matthew 1** knows that he is being presented with the lineage of Israel’s *King*.

When the Son of God came down from Heaven, He came *first* to His own people, the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and Matthew wrote this book *specifically* to the house of Israel. We *must* understand this. Why is this so important? Because we must not confuse *the church* with *Israel*. The church is not Israel; and Israel is not the church. God has a distinct program for both. This matter will become *very* important when we get to Jesus’ teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven, and about end-times events. If you don’t understand that Matthew was emphasising Jesus’ message to the *Jewish* people, then you can end up with some very wrong doctrine. In fact, you can end up with a **works-based salvation**. Let’s look at an example.

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

If you don’t understand that Jesus was speaking this parable specifically to *the Jewish people*, then you could easily get the notion that these three servants represent “Christians” living between the time of Jesus’ first and second coming. However, this is not the case. If it *were* the case, what would it mean? It would mean that a Christian can *lose his salvation*. That third servant clearly was *cast into hell!* Is Jesus saying that saved people can become lost again if they don’t serve the Lord faithfully enough, and end up in hell? Not on your life!

Remember, Jesus was speaking to *the Jewish people*. These three servants represent *Jewish people*, both saved and unsaved. How do I know? Because God regards *all* Jews as His servants—whether they choose to own Him as their God or not. in **Leviticus 25:55**, the LORD said, “*For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt.*”

So, are you getting the picture? The first two servants represent *saved* Jews, who have taken the “talent” of God’s Word, and have used it to win souls to Jesus, and advance the Kingdom of God. In contrast, the third servant represents a Jew who *did not* use his talent to advance Christ’s Kingdom, because he was ashamed to own Christ as his Lord. He represents an *unsaved Jew*, who rejected Jesus as his Messiah. And what will happen to those Jews who rejected Jesus when He returns to earth? They will be cast into hell, and will never enjoy the wonderful 1,000-year Kingdom that their prophets foretold.

Now, this parable obviously has an *application* for us Gentile believers, as well. The application is that God wants us to use His Word to win souls to Christ until He returns. However, we must remember that Jesus spoke this parable to *saved and unsaved* Jews. The book of **Matthew** is for us Gentiles, too; but we must read it through “Jewish glasses.”

III. The agenda of Matthew

When Matthew wrote this book, he had an agenda. He wrote this book to his fellow Jews, in order to prove two things. First, he wrote this book **to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, and the King of Israel**. In **chapter 1**, he shows, through Jesus’ genealogy, that He is the King of Israel. In **chapter 2**, he recounts how the wise men came looking for the King of the Jews when He was still an infant, and worshipped Him. He records the parables in which Jesus portrayed Himself as King who came to His people in poverty and humility, to die for their sins, but who will one day return to earth in power and glory. Matthew presents Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King—but especially as “King”! The word “King” is used 20 times in **Matthew**. (Again, this is more than in the other Gospels.) Let’s look at one example.

Read Matthew 21:1-11.

Now, if Jesus be the King, then what must He have? He must have a *Kingdom*. This brings us to the second part of Matthew’s agenda. Matthew also wrote this book in order **to present the Kingdom of Heaven**—to explain *what* it is, and *when* it will come, and *on what basis* it will come. Matthew explains the relationship between the nation of Israel and this new thing called “the church,” which Jesus had established; and he explains that the Kingdom of Israel has been put on hold *for now*, because of their rejection of Jesus Christ.

To this day, unbelieving Jews scoff at the idea that Jesus of Nazareth could be their King. Why? Because in their thinking, Jesus failed to set up the Kingdom of Israel. That is why Matthew goes out of his way to explain to his Jewish brethren that Jesus came to earth the *first* time to pay for our sins—but that He will return a *second* time to set up that long-awaited Kingdom. He shows, through Jesus’ teaching and parables, that the Kingdom of Heaven has not been *cancelled* for Israel; it has merely been *postponed*, until Israel repents and believes on Jesus. In **Matthew 19:28**, Jesus assured His disciples that **“ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”** There *will* be a literal, visible kingdom on earth, with Christ ruling and reigning from Jerusalem, and the Apostles ruling over the tribes of Israel! However, this won’t happen until Israel believes on Jesus.

Read Matthew 23:37-39.

IV. The argument of Matthew (v. 1)

Many Christians have a flawed (or, at least, an “incomplete”) idea of why Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote their Gospels. These men didn’t just haphazardly write down whatever miracles and sermons that they could recall from Jesus’ life and ministry, so that they could be preserved for posterity. They had *specific arguments* to make; and they structured their whole Gospel in order to make their arguments. For example, John stated the argument for *his* Gospel in **John 20:31**: “***But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.***” The other Gospel writers had their own “thesis statements,” as well.

Like all the other Gospel writers, Matthew had a *specific argument* that he wanted to make. Mark argued that Jesus is the **Suffering Servant**; Luke argued that Jesus is the **Son of Man**; John portrayed Him as the **Son of God**; but Matthew portrayed Jesus as **the King of Israel**. He selectively chose specific sermons and miracles that highlighted Jesus’ Kingship, and even clustered them together in non-chronological order at times, in order to make one big overreaching point: that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, and the King of the Jews!

In **Matthew 1:1**, Matthew declares that Jesus is the King of Israel: and here is how he says it. He says, “***The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, and son of Abraham.***” Folks, this is profound! This isn’t merely a nice opening statement to introduce his book: this is a declaration of God’s plan for *Israel*, and for the *world*—and in that order!

Did you notice how Matthew *reversed the order* of Abraham and David? Historically, *Abraham* came first, and David was born 1,000 years later; yet, Matthew mentions *David* first, then Abraham. Why? Is there a reason for this? Yes! You see, Matthew is going to present Jesus *first* as the “Son of David”—the *King of Israel*. Jesus came *first* to the Jews. The *Jews* are the “children of the Kingdom.” They are the people to whom God intends to give that glorious Kingdom that the prophets foretold.

However, there is a problem. The problem is that Israel, as a nation, chose to reject their King. That is why Matthew *also* presents Jesus as “***the son of Abraham.***” This is Matthew’s way of saying that Jesus is not merely the King of Israel: He is the Saviour of the *whole world*. God promised Abraham that “***in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***” In other words, from *Abraham*’s family line would come a Man who would bring the blessing of salvation to *the whole world*: and that Man is Jesus. Israel (for *now*) refuses to own Jesus as their King; and that is why God now commands believers in this church age to take the Gospel to *everyone*! This is the whole reason why God raised up the nation of Israel in the first place. He raised up Israel to be the nation through whom the Saviour of the world would be born, so that He might bring salvation to *all of us*, through His death for our sins, and resurrection!

Read Genesis 12:1-3.

Read Matthew 22:1-14.

Conclusion: As we close this morning, I have a couple questions to ask. First, have *you* received God’s gift of salvation? Do *you* know Jesus as your personal Saviour? Jesus came first to His own people, the Jews, to bring them salvation; and now, His Gospel has been taken to the whole world. It has been presented to *you* this morning. However, you must respond. You must take up the “garment of salvation.” You must confess that Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance. You must stop trusting in your *own* goodness, and confess that your goodness cannot save you. You must, in your heart, turn from sin, place your complete trust in Jesus’ death a resurrection for your sins, and ask Him to be your Lord and Saviour. If you have not done this, I plead with you to do so today!

If you are saved, I would ask this: To what extent are you a *disciple* of Jesus? How far are you willing to go to “learn” from your Saviour? Like Matthew, are you willing to leave *all*, and follow Christ? Or are there areas in your life in which you are *not* surrendering all? Is your love for Jesus lacking? If so, ask the Lord to transform you, and make you into a steadfast disciple of Jesus!