

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 03

Narrator: Paul

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 1-4, 8-12

Story Summary: Various passages in Matthew to demonstrate Old Testament use

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:19; 9:12, 37; 10:12; 11:28-30; 12:50

About 80% of the material in *Matthew* is also found in *Mark* and *Luke*. Since the episodes in the *Luke* Series contain much of what is in *Matthew*, the purpose of this episode is to emphasize how much Matthew uses the Old Testament to add validity to his account.

Matthew's main audience is his fellow Jews. They were very familiar with what we now call the Old Testament and valued those Scriptures as sacred and true, with some passages pointing to a coming Messiah—someone who would essentially reestablish King David's kingdom. After the Messiah's arrival, the Jews would be rulers of their physical land, independent of Rome.

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew took passage after passage out of the Old Testament and showed how they predicted Jesus to be the Messiah...but a totally different Messiah than was expected. Jesus came to give them spiritual freedom, not physical freedom.

In addition to that, Matthew showed God to consist of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This three-fold nature of God seemed to be different from the most basic Hebrew teaching, found in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

These two major differences caused the Pharisees to turn from curiosity to hatred. The more Jesus taught about love, the more they hated him. The more he showed them about the true nature of God, the harder their hearts turned.

As you read through the assigned chapters, notice that Matthew seems to put his material in a more chronological order than Luke did. This is likely because Matthew accompanied Jesus through most of his ministry while Luke gathered his information about the ministry of Jesus from various sources.

Only Matthew and Luke record events around the birth of Jesus, though they provide different genealogies, which has led some scholars to believe that one is of Joseph and the other is of Mary. They both agree that Jesus was a descendant of King David.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who was the main audience for Matthew, and how did he accommodate them?
2. Why might have Matthew written in a more chronological order than Luke?
3. What is one reason to think that Matthew and Luke may have used some of the same reference material?
4. What is one reason to think that Matthew and Luke drew on different additional sources of information?
5. What is one reason that Matthew and Luke's writings are different in style?
6. Why do Jesus' genealogies of Matthew and Luke differ?

1. The Jews were his main audience. Matthew accommodated them by using Old Testament passages to prove his points. 2. Matthew accompanied Jesus through most of his ministry, but Luke did not. 3. Much of their Gospels include almost word-for-word passages. Copying material from other sources was common, accepted practice. 4. They do have a significant amount of writing that is different. Among other reasons, Matthew was with Jesus for almost three years and certainly knew more about Jesus and his ministry than Luke did. 5. Matthew wrote to convince the Jews, while Luke wrote to convince Theophilus and other Gentiles who were not intimately familiar with the Old Testament. 6. Possibly one is through Joseph and the other through Mary. They come through Solomon, but they could just be different branches from there.

Application Questions:

1. Matthew was able to tailor his presentation of the Gospel to his audience. Are you also able to do that? How much familiarity with the material and your audience is needed to do so? Is that one reason why it is important to establish relationships with those who need to hear the Gospel?
2. If someone asked you to explain the nature of God, how would you do it?
3. Assuming that both Matthew and Luke wrote through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, how are ways he might have guided them (hint: read Luke 1:1-3)

Application Questions for Teens:

1. We will never completely understand the nature of God; nevertheless how would you describe it? What does God's nature have to do with you?
2. John the Baptist was to announce Jesus and prepare the way for him, and then get out of the way. By doing so he became a great person. How can you prepare the way for Jesus in the lives of those around you? Can you think of a time you announced Jesus and then "got out of the way"? What was that like? Was it difficult for you or easy?