

Matthew - an Overview to the Book

About this book

- The human author: most likely Matthew (also called Levi -Mark 2:14; originally a tax collector, before Jesus chose him to be a disciple - Matthew 9:9).
- Matthew's focus appears to be on things that would be of special significance to the Jews - though it is written in a way that indicates it has a universal relevance. [There are some suggestions that it may have been originally written in *both* Aramaic (the language common among Jews of that time) and Greek (the language common to the rest of the Roman empire).]
- This book can be divided into three sections:
 1. Events related to Jesus' birth,
 2. Events of Jesus' ministry, and
 3. Events surrounding his death and resurrection.
- The main part of Matthew, which focuses on Jesus' ministry, is arranged in five sections. Each section begins by telling us what Jesus did (his *actions*), and ends by telling us what Jesus said (his *teachings*).
- Parts of this book are arranged in *topical*, rather than in *chronological*, order. Teachings or activities may be mentioned side-by-side, which actually occurred at different times.

Common themes found throughout this book

- Jesus is the promised Messiah ("Deliverer") who would be King over Israel (and over the whole world). The Old Testament is often quoted or referred to, in order to prove this.
- A strong focus on Jesus' teachings - the teachings of the kingdom.
- Frequent reference to the "kingdom of heaven" and what it means.
- Israel's present rejection of the King; it's significance to the rest of the world; Israel's future.

Things to do

- Briefly look through the book and see if you can spot some of the common themes or interesting features.
- You may wish to read the entire book in one sitting, to get an overview of the "good news" that Matthew wanted to tell us. Then ask yourself the following questions:
 - What are your overall impressions of Matthew's "news report"?
 - Did you discover anything new or unexpected in what he said?
 - What basic ideas (or principles) did you learn about being a citizen of God's kingdom? In what ways do these principles have relevance to the way you should live?