



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **9th Grade | Unit 2**

BIBLE 902

The Gospels

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The Gospels

Introduction

Studying this LIFEPAAC®, you will learn more about the life of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels. A look at the four writers of these accounts will help you to understand that the Holy Spirit worked through ordinary men to put together an inspired record of the brief time that God's Son was on this earth. The Lord could have selected just one writer for this task, or even two or three. However, He decided to choose four writers from entirely different backgrounds and to guide them closely in their work. The Holy Spirit inspired the very words they used to produce an **infallible** record, in the original **manuscripts**, of Christ's earthly life (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

As you study about Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you will understand that they each had an individual approach to the work they undertook. You will realize that they wrote at different times, for different purposes, and to different people. The Lord worked through their unique personalities, allowing their individual styles to come out in the writing of these records. Thus we have four separate accounts, written from varied viewpoints, which harmonize in every detail. The Holy Spirit made sure that they were kept free from error. As a result you will be studying a reliable record that is profitable to read, that will correct any wrong ideas you may have, and that will enable you to grow up, to become a mature Christian, who is completely capable of doing the same good works that Jesus did (John 14:12).

In this LIFEPAAC you will study the four Gospel records and learn much about the authors and their backgrounds. You will discover their **origins**, occupations, and associations. The dates and purposes of writing and details concerning the **recipients** will become familiar to you. Finally, a brief analysis of the themes, styles and contents will enable you to clearly understand the message of each Gospel.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAAC. When you have finished this LIFEPAAC, you should be able to:

1. Name the writers of the four Gospels and tell about their origins, occupations, and associations.
2. Tell the approximate date when each Gospel was written, the recipients of their record, and the purpose for which it was written.
3. State the theme of each Gospel record.
4. Tell about the style of each writer and how they differ from one another.
5. Discuss the major content of each Gospel and how it compares and contrasts with the other three accounts.

1. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

The writer of the first book of the New Testament is Matthew. Although the Gospel of Matthew was not the first Gospel written, it follows first in line after the Old Testament and is closely related to that part of the Bible. As we shall see shortly, Matthew's Gospel is rooted

firmly in the Old Testament and quotes extensively from it. In this section we shall discover much about Matthew's life and the occasion of his writing this record. A brief analysis of this Gospel account is included in this section.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Name the writer of the first Gospel and tell about his origin, occupation, and associations.
2. Tell the approximate date when Matthew's Gospel was written, the recipients of this record, and the purpose for which it was written.
3. State the theme of Matthew's record.
4. Tell about Matthew's style and how it differed from the other three writers.
5. Discuss the major content of Matthew's Gospel and how it compares and contrasts with the other three accounts.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

anointed (u noin' id). Consecrated or set apart by the pouring upon of oil.

catechism (kať u kiž um). A form of oral teaching by questions and answers.

chronological (kroń u loj' u kul). Giving an account of events in order of occurrence.

compilation (koń pu lā' shun). A collection of material from various sources to form a separate work.

discourse (diś kôrs). A communication of thoughts by words.

genealogy (jē' nē äl' u jē). An account of the descent of a person from ancestors.

infallible (in fał u bul). Not capable of error; never wrong.

literary (liť u reť ē). Skilled in learning and literature.

manuscript (mań yu skript). A piece of writing before it is published.

mercenary (meť su neť ē). Motivated by a greedy desire for money or other gain.

narrative (nať u tiv). A story or account.

origin (ôr' u jin). Source or beginning.

parable (pať u bul). A short, simple story from which a lesson is drawn.

publican (pub' lu kun). A collector of public revenues, taxes, or tolls.

recipient (ri sip' ē unt). One to whom anything is committed or written.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, Īce; hot, ōpen, ôrder; oil; out; cup, puť, rüle; child; long; thin; /TH/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

WRITER OF THE GOSPEL

In this part of your LIFEPAK, you will study Matthew's **origin** or background, his *occupation*, and his *association* with other people.

Origin. Have you ever wished that you might change your name? Do you have a nickname that you like better than your given name? In the preceding verses, Matthew refers to himself as *Matthew*, but Mark and Luke call him *Levi*. Apparently his name was Levi before he was chosen by Jesus to be His follower. The name Levi is from *Levite*, which means *servant of the Law*. However, afterward he preferred to call himself *Matthew*, which means *God's fully grown man*. When we study his occupation and discover what that involved, we will more clearly

Read Matthew 9:9;
Mark 2:13 and 14; and
Luke 5:27 and 28.



understand why he wanted to be known by a new name. This change of name was not unusual; Peter and Paul also had different names before the Lord changed them.

The only other fact that we have concerning Matthew's origin is that he was the son of Alphaeus, a very common name in that day. At the time Matthew wrote this **narrative**, he was in the town of Capernaum, a community on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Although he may not have been born there, most likely he was from the province of Galilee and grew up in that area. With a name like Levi, he was undoubtedly of Jewish origin.



Answer true or false.

- 1.1 _____ Matthew calls himself Levi in his Gospel.
- 1.2 _____ Levi means God's *fully grown man*.
- 1.3 _____ Matthew was the son of Alphaeus.
- 1.4 _____ Matthew was in the town of Cana of Galilee in this narrative.
- 1.5 _____ Matthew was probably from the province of Judea.
- 1.6 _____ Matthew was of Jewish origin.
- 1.7 _____ Peter and Paul both had their names changed.

Having looked briefly at the *origin* of Matthew, we shall now examine closely his *occupation*.

Occupation. Have you ever heard anyone complain about having to pay taxes? Sales tax, income tax, entertainment tax, and many other kinds of fees are charged by the government to pay for its services. People who do not like to pay taxes often dislike those who collect them. The same was true in Jesus' day. Although Christ taught that men should "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," the way

Read Matthew 22:15–22.



these taxes were collected caused the **publicans**, or tax-gatherers, to be very despised people.

Since the Jews hated the Roman rule over their land of Israel, those who worked for the Roman government were looked down upon, especially if they were Jews. Also, as long as the publicans collected the required amount,

Rome did not care how much the tax-gatherers took from the people. As a result they had a free hand to cheat the Jews, and they did cheat them regularly. You can see why Matthew, the publican, would be so despised by his fellow countrymen. One day as Jesus passed by the toll-house—the custom house or the collector’s office—in Capernaum, He saw Levi and said, “Follow Me.” The other disciples of Jesus must have been amazed that He would choose such a man to join them, especially those who probably paid taxes to him on the fish they caught in the Sea of Galilee! In Luke’s account he tells us that when Christ called Matthew, “He forsook all and rose up and followed Him.” Today the Lord sees us, knows our names, and calls us to follow Him, just as He did Levi. If we will leave our past behind us and follow after Him, He will make new persons out of us.



| Levi, the Publican



Complete these sentences.

- 1.8 Matthew was a a. _____ or b. _____ .
- 1.9 Jesus taught that men should render unto Caesar the _____ that are Caesar’s.
- 1.10 The a. _____ hated the b. _____ rule over their land of c. _____ .
- 1.11 The tax collector’s office was also known as a a. _____ or b. _____ .
- 1.12 When the Lord called Levi to follow Him, he forsook _____ and rose up and followed Him.

Answer this question in complete sentences.

- 1.13 Why did the Jews hate the publicans? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Read Matthew 9:10–13;
Mark 2:15–17;



You have studied Matthew's *origin* and *occupation*; now you will study the people with whom he associated both before and after the Lord called him.

Luke 5:29–32; and
Luke 19:1–10.



Associations. That we are known by the company we keep is quite true. In other words, we *gradually* become like those with whom we spend our time. As a young boy, Levi had probably spent much time staying around the custom house and, as a result, had decided that the occupation of tax-gatherer would be an easy way to “get rich quick!” The preceding passages indicate that he was very well-to-do. Luke informs us that Levi made Jesus “a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them.” The fact that Matthew held a great feast in his own house and invited a great multitude of his publican friends, shows how wealthy he was to be able to accommodate this large company. Mark adds the details that “many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.” These writers went out of their way to explain that this feast was a great one with many invited guests. From this account we also learn that Matthew influenced many of his fellow-publicans and fellow-sinners to follow Jesus. When we discover that Jesus is

the answer and begin to follow Him, our friends will be influenced to follow Him also.

Levi's conversion was probably very much like that of Zacchaeus, the chief among the publicans of Jericho, a city in the province of Judea. Luke chapter 19 tells us that Zacchaeus was rich; but after he met Jesus, he gave away half of his material possessions to the poor and restored four times as much to the people as he had taken from them. The Lord indicated that Zacchaeus had been lost, but now by faith was a son of Abraham. Concerning Levi, when the scribes and Pharisees began to criticize, Jesus said that He had come to save sick people and sinners. He also suggested in Matthew 9:13 that from then on, instead of being a **mercenary**, Matthew would minister the Lord's mercy.

Read Matthew 10:5–8;
Acts 1:12–14; and
Acts 5:12–16.



For the next three years, Matthew was a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and learned from His life and teachings. He was sent out as an apostle with the other chosen disciples to all the people of Israel. As an apostle, he freely gave of himself to preach, to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, and to cast out demons. We can imagine that the people of that day were utterly amazed to see a former publican doing all those things. After Christ's Resurrection, Matthew was among the 120 who were baptized by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and he continued to minister through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Answer these questions in complete sentences.

1.14 How do we know that Matthew was rich? _____

1.15 How did Zacchaeus show that he had really been saved by the Lord? _____

Complete this activity.

1.16 On a separate sheet of paper, write a 300-word report of Matthew's life both before and after he became a follower of Jesus. Write it as if you were a reporter for a local newspaper in Matthew's day. Your teacher will check this paper with you.

TEACHER CHECK

initials

date

OCCASION OF THE WRITING

In this section we shall try to pinpoint the approximate *date* of the writing of Matthew's Gospel, determine who the **recipients** were, and discover the *purpose* for this writing.

Date. To determine the exact date of writing is difficult, but the time of Matthew's writing can be dated at approximately AD 58. In Matthew 27:8 the words "unto this day," suggest that a number of years had gone by since the Ascension of Jesus. Also from the warning of Matthew 24:1-2, we realize that the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was in the not-too-distant future.

Having looked briefly at the probable date of writing, we now turn our attention to the recipients of Matthew's Gospel.

Recipients. The content of Matthew indicates that a large part was written for the Jews. References to the Holy City, the Holy Place, the Son of David, the kingdom of Heaven, and the Law of Moses are many. This narrative contains

sixty references to Jewish prophecies in the Old Testament, and forty quotations from it. These references to the Old Testament generally begin, "that it might be fulfilled" (see 2:5, 15, 17, and 23; 27:9, 10, and 35, as examples). At the time of Christ, Aramaic was the language of the common Jews of Israel; and Greek was the **literary** language. Those who spoke Aramaic could also read Greek. Matthew translated Hebrew and Aramaic words, proving that he wrote the Gospel we have in Greek to a worldwide audience of Jews (see 1:23; 27:33 and 46). He also explained customs of the day, which Jews in the Land of Israel would have known (see 22:23; 27:8 and 15). Those explanations show that the ones to receive the Gospel were Hebrews living outside the Land of Israel.

Now that we have discussed the date and recipients of the Gospel According to Matthew, let us consider briefly the *purpose* for writing.

Purpose. From the opening chapter, which is a **genealogy** of Jesus through David to Abraham, to the last chapter, where Matthew explains the false rumor about the body of Jesus being stolen (see 28:11-15), the purpose of Matthew's

writing is obvious. It was to convince Jews everywhere that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah and that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about a coming Redeemer.



Write the correct letter and answer in each blank.

- 1.17** Matthew's Gospel was written in approximately AD _____ .
 a. 49 b. 67 c. 58
 d. 76 e. 35
- 1.18** Matthew wrote to the _____ .
 a. Jews of Israel b. Greeks outside Israel
 c. Greek Christians d. Jews outside Israel
 e. Roman Christians
- 1.19** In the Gospel of Matthew, we find _____ references to Jewish prophecies and _____ quotations from the Old Testament.
 a. 50/10 b. 60/40 c. 70/20
 d. 40/30 e. 30/80
- 1.20** Matthew's genealogy of Jesus goes back as far as _____ .
 a. Adam b. David c. Moses
 d. Daniel e. Abraham



Answer true or false.

- 1.21** _____ Matthew's Gospel was the first one written.
- 1.22** _____ Matthew wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem.
- 1.23** _____ Aramaic was the language spoken by the Jews of Israel.
- 1.24** _____ Matthew's Gospel was written in the Hebrew language.
- 1.25** _____ Matthew wanted to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK

In this part of your LIFEPAK, we shall turn our attention to the *theme* of Matthew's writing, note the *style* in which it is written, and look closely at the content of his Gospel record.

Theme. The words *Messiah* in Hebrew and *Christ* in Greek both mean **anointed**. In the Old Testament were three important positions, or offices to which men were appointed and anointed by a ceremony involving the pouring



| Anointing with Oil

Read 1 Samuel 16:1 and 13;
Exodus 40:13–15; and
1 Kings 19:15 and 16.



of oil on their heads. These offices were king, priest, and prophet. The Jews expected a Messiah who would fulfill all three functions and who would unite these positions in his own person. The theme of Matthew's Gospel is that Christ is the Kingly Messiah. Matthew depicts Jesus as King by the genealogy in chapter 1, which shows His royal descent, and the references in 2:1-2 to the Magi who come from the East looking for the King of the Jews. At the end of his Gospel, Matthew reported Pilate's questioning of Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"—to which Jesus answered (27:11) "Yes"—and the sign on the cross (27:37), "this is Jesus, the King of the Jews," thus emphasizing His Kingly office. Christ's sacrificial death showed Him to be both Priest and sacrifice. He shed His blood and offered it unto God to atone for the sins of the world. As we shall see when we study the content of Matthew, the **discourses**, or teachings, of Jesus show that He was indeed the Prophet which God would raise up (see Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, and 19). Matthew emphasized Christ's three anointed ministries and depicted him as the Kingly Messiah.



Answer these questions.

1.26 In what four ways did Matthew depict Christ as the King?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

1.27 In what way did Christ show that He was a priest? _____

1.28 How did Jesus show that He was the Prophet sent from God? _____

Having studied the *theme* of Matthew's Gospel, we shall consider next his *style*—the way he wrote this record.

Style. Have you ever had to prepare a report for which you gathered material from several different sources—perhaps a textbook, an encyclopedia, a library book, class notes, a tape recording, or personal observations? This report would be known as a **compilation**, because it is a collection from various sources to produce a separate work. In this way the Holy Spirit may have used Matthew to compose his Gospel. As a tax collector, Levi would likely have a shorthand method to keep track of accounts. He could have taken notes of the teachings of Jesus, which he would later use as the substance of his record. A first-century collection of Old Testament passages, proving that Jesus was the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, may have been drawn upon by Matthew. From Luke 1:1 we know that many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of Christian beliefs; therefore, many documents were available for use. Finally, since Matthew was an eyewitness of the Lord's life, he would be able

Read Matthew chapters 18 and 25.



to recall much from first hand experience. All of these factors may have been used by the Holy Spirit to inspire the Gospel writing.

Matthew's vocation as a tax-gatherer seems to have been influential in the language he employed in his Gospel. Money is mentioned more frequently than in any other Gospel. He used three "money" words that occur in no other record: tribute (17:24), piece of money (17:27), and talent (18:24; 25:15-29). Matthew alone recorded the two **parables** of the talents (check a Bible dictionary for approximate amounts in our money). Matthew referred to gold, silver, and brass (10:9), as well as farthing (5:26), penny (18:28), silver-piece (25:18), and tribute (17:25). In the passages you have just read, he also spoke of debt, reckoning, account-taking, and money-changers—words that would be very familiar to a former publican. Thus Matthew's style marks him as one who was accustomed to handling large sums of money.

SELF TEST 1

Match these items (each answer, 2 points).

- | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----|---|
| 1.01 | _____ publican | a. | a collection of material from several sources |
| 1.02 | _____ Capernaum | b. | the place where Jesus called Levi |
| 1.03 | _____ Matthew | c. | children of the wicked one |
| 1.04 | _____ AD 58 | d. | the language in which Matthew was written |
| 1.05 | _____ Greek | e. | motivated by greedy desire for money |
| 1.06 | _____ parable | f. | a series of short, striking statements |
| 1.07 | _____ AD 70 | g. | the year in which Matthew was born |
| 1.08 | _____ anointed | h. | oral teaching by questions and answers |
| 1.09 | _____ talent | i. | Levi's name after he was converted |
| 1.010 | _____ compilation | j. | the approximate date of Matthew's Gospel |
| 1.011 | _____ catechism | k. | a collector of taxes for Rome |
| 1.012 | _____ tares | l. | short story that teaches a lesson |
| 1.013 | _____ reckon | m. | the year when Jerusalem was destroyed |
| 1.014 | _____ leaven | n. | money word used only in Matthew's Gospel |
| 1.015 | _____ mercenary | o. | <i>Messiah</i> in Hebrew and <i>Christ</i> in Greek |
| | | p. | something which the kingdom of God is like |
| | | q. | a word familiar to a publican |

Answer true or false (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.016 _____ Matthew was of Greek origin.
- 1.017 _____ Matthew's Gospel was written for Jews outside the Land of Israel.
- 1.018 _____ The theme of Matthew's Gospel is the Kingly Messiah.
- 1.019 _____ Jesus taught that to forgive people is not necessary.
- 1.020 _____ Matthew wrote his Gospel in chronological order.
- 1.021 _____ Jesus was a Prophet, Priest, and King.

Answer these questions in complete sentences (each answer, 5 points).

1.022 Why did the Jews hate the publicans? _____

1.023 How do we know that Matthew wrote for the Jews? _____

1.024 In the Old Testament, what three offices required anointing with oil, and how does Matthew show that Jesus fulfilled all of these? _____

Write the correct letter and answer in each blank (each answer, 3 points).

1.025 A collection of material from various sources to produce a separate work is known

as a _____ .

- a. segment b. compilation c. discourse
d. catechism e. manuscript

1.026 At the time of Jesus' life upon earth, the Jews of the Land of Israel spoke _____ .

- a. Greek b. Hebrew c. Latin
d. Aramaic e. English

1.027 The first servant owed the king _____ talents.

- a. 100 b. 1,000 c. 7,000
d. 8,000 e. 10,000

1.028 The Sermon on the Mount is found in chapters _____ of Matthew.

- a. 3,4,5 b. 5,6,7 c. 11,12,13
d. 16,17,18 e. 23,24,25

Complete this activity (each answer, 2 points).

1.029 Outline in order the plan of Matthew's Gospel.

- a. Narratives About _____ (1-2)
b. Narratives and the _____ (3-7)
c. Narratives and the _____ (8-10)
d. Narratives and the _____ (11-13)
e. Narratives and _____ (14-18)
f. Narratives and the _____ (19-23)
g. Narratives and the _____ (24-25)
h. Narratives About _____ (26-28)

68

85

SCORE _____**TEACHER** _____

initials

date



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