

Matthew

Transformed Materialist

I. Background of Matthew

- A. Tax collector – Taxed on transported goods
 - 1. Jews hated all tax collectors [Jews saw tax collectors as national traitors.](#)
 - 2. Jesus ([Matt. 21:31](#)) & Matthew ([Matt. 9:10](#)) ranked tax collectors as [sinners](#)
- B. Matthew was probably one of the more [educated](#) of the disciples
- C. Matthew was probably one of the more [wealthy](#) of the disciples
- D. Matthew and James are both referred to as “son of [Alphaeus](#)” [Matt. 10:3](#); [Mark 2:14](#) [Scholars believe they were likely brothers.](#) These two would be added to Peter and Andrew, and James and John.
- E. Matthew is also known as [Levi](#) – [We are given two names for Matthew in the Gospels.](#) His Hebrew name, Levi, would indicate he was from the tribe of Levi. Matthew will always call himself by this Aramaic name. Later when giving the list of disciples, he will tag himself as “Matthew the publican.” [Mark and Luke use both their Jewish name, Levi and Matthew.](#) There is no indication that his name was changed, but Matthew does mean “gift of God.”
- F. Matthew is not mentioned after [Pentecost](#)

[There is only one event of Matthew in the Gospels – His call and the following feast!](#)

[“\(“And he went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted \(\[gathered\]\(#\)\) unto him, and he \[taught\]\(#\) them.” \[Mark 2:13\]\(#\)\) And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he \[saw\]\(#\) a man, named Matthew \(“Levi the son of Alphaeus” \[Mark 2:14\]\(#\)\), \(“a \[publican\]\(#\),” \[Luke 5:27\]\(#\)\) sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. \(“And he \[left\]\(#\) all,” \[Luke 5:28\]\(#\)\) And he \[arose\]\(#\), and \[followed\]\(#\) him.” \[Matthew 9:9\]\(#\)](#)

II. Matthew’s Life & Growth while traveling with Christ

- A. Matthew’s Call – [Matt. 9:9](#); [Mark 2:13-14](#); [Luke 5:27-28](#)
 - 1. Jesus came to him and said, “[follow me](#)” [This is a quote from a lesson from Ladies Studying Jesus – Matthew’s Call - “Matthew didn’t seek out Jesus, instead, Jesus sought out Matthew! The sudden and immediate response of Matthew would cause one to think he had heard Jesus before. We don’t know how many times Matthew might have longingly listened to the seaside teaching of the Kingdom of God from the prophet of Nazareth. But remember, Jesus knows the hearts of man, and He certainly knew the heart of this publican. Speaking to his need and thoughts, Jesus said, “Follow Me.” And Matthew eagerly obeyed! Jesus chose Matthew and he followed! This is the first time we see a social outcast openly coming to Christ.” God loves to make trophies of His grace. Taking people others have given up on and transforming them for His glory! \[I Cor. 1:27-25\]\(#\) Matthew – “base” “despised”](#)

“And it came to pass, (“Levi made him a great feast in his own house:” Luke 5:29) as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many (“a great company of” Luke 5:29) publicans and sinners came and sat down (“together” Mark 2:15) with him and his disciples (“for there were many, and they followed him.” Mark 2:15).” Matthew 9:10

2. Matthew made a large feast for his fellow tax collectors The book of Luke tells us Matthew made a big dinner/reception in his home specifically for Jesus! He was proud to be associated with Jesus. His first response was to celebrate and introduce Jesus to his friends. Notice, Matthew, in his Gospel, never mentions that he hosted the dinner.

B. Book of Matthew – Most influential of the Gospels in the early church

1. Early church writings quote Matthew the most
2. The canon of the New Testament started with Matthew It has been said, “The Book of Matthew is the door that swings open to the New Testament.” It is a wonderful bridge between the Old Testament and the Gospel plan of God!
3. Matthew emphasized Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Christ Matthew, the former publican, knew the Old Testament! Ninety-nine times he will quote it, and over a hundred and twenty times he showed how it fulfilled prophecy in Christ, more than Mark, Luke, and John combined! He drew passages from the Law, Psalms, and the Prophets, every section of the Old Testament. He understood the promise of the Messiah and skillfully laid it out for his fellow Jews to understand. He wrote with his people in mind, leading many of them to their Messiah!

“And when the (“scribes and” Mark 2:16) Pharisees saw it (watching) (“murmured (Lit - complained/grumbled to) against his disciples” Luke 5:30), they said unto his disciples, (“Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” Luke 5:30) (“How is it” Mark 2:16) Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? ¹² But when Jesus heard that, he (“answering,” Luke 5:31) said unto them, They that be whole (Lit. - healthy/well) need not a physician, but they that are sick. ¹³ But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy , and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Matthew 9:11-13

4. Matthew recorded more of Jesus’ words and teaching than any other Gospel Though Matthew is not the longest gospel book it does have more of Jesus’ words and teachings than any other. He loved to portray Jesus as the all-knowing Messiah. He recorded the longest edition of the Sermon on the Mount, along with 21 miracles, and 20 parables. He loved Jesus, and had learned that wealth did not bring souls satisfaction!

III. Lessons from Matthew’s Life

What is important to us will come out in our conversation and lifestyle. Let’s look to see what was important to Matthew the Apostle. As we said, Matthew was the author of the first book of the New Testament. He recorded more of Jesus’ words than any other Gospel writer, yet we have no words spoken by him within any text. Even in his own book he only uses his name twice, at his call and in the list of the twelve. We really know very little about Matthew. But the themes and aspects of Jesus’ teachings Matthew emphasizes speak volumes of what was important to Matthew. 1) **Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament** – (Example: Matthew 13:34-35 = Ps. 78:2-4) over and over Matthew will show his Jewish readers Jesus was their Messiah 2) **Jesus came to save sinners** - This is a very strong theme in the book of Matthew. Remember, Matthew was probably the most outcast

member of society among the disciple group. It is certain he never truly got over the wonderful forgiveness He received. What a thrill it must have been for Matthew to write concerning the birth of Christ, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall **save** his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21)
3) **Material possessions** – Matthew had basically sold his soul for riches! He had traded away his heritage, religious beliefs, national loyalty, and probably family relationships for a healthy bank account! We know it paid off, for he had a large home and the wherewithal to fill it up with friends and put on a big feast! But as he wrote his book, Matthew recorded more of Christ’s words about material possessions and money than any other gospel writer. We learn that the way we regard our possessions reveals our level of faith in God’s provision for us and our commitment to His work! As I read think about what this might have meant to Matthew, the former publican.- Matthew 6:19-21; 24-33

Thomas A Pessimist Transformed

I. Background of Thomas

- A. Only the book of John features incidents involving Thomas
- B. He has two names given – Didymus (Greek) ”twin”; Thomas – (Aramaic) ”twin”
- C. His character and personality reveal a pessimistic Though he has been called “Doubting Thomas” a stronger character trait seen in his life could be argued as pessimistic. We could also add, negative, worrier, and anxious. All those traits can certainly come together and live itself out as skeptical and having a doubting spirit in all things!
- D. Thomas is not mentioned after Pentecost

II. Thomas’ Life and Growth while traveling with Christ – The gospels record three incidents where he speaks

“Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. ⁸ His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?.....¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. ¹⁶ Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. ¹⁷ Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.” John 11:7-8, 14-17

A. Raising of Lazarus

- 1. Thomas’ statement was bold and courageous This is the first time we hear from Thomas in the gospel record. Though Thomas’ statement is terribly pessimistic, John MacArthur in his book Twelve Ordinary Men calls it, “heroic pessimism!” It’s tough to be pessimistic all the time. You see everything through a fog of negativity. An optimist would think everything will be ok, a realist would consider it might not turn out well but willing to deal with the situation as it comes, but here’s Thomas – they were all going to die! Please notice, however negative and pessimistic, the other disciples were willing to follow Thomas’ lead and follow Jesus to Bethany! They would rather die with Jesus than be separated from Him.

2. Jesus' desire was to see His disciples believe Jesus' desire throughout the event of Lazarus' rising, was centered on a lesson and boost in the faith of His disciples! v. 15, 42 And that was exactly what happened! v. 45 Please make it an understanding and firm core of your person, God's desire for you in all things, negative and positive, is for you to learn and have your faith in the person of Christ grow!

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. ⁵Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? ⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:2-6

B. Upper Room teaching of Christ - John 14:1-7

1. All the disciples were confused and troubled by Christ's words. If you take a little walk through the Upper Room interaction between Jesus and the disciples, you will find almost every time one of them opens their mouth a lot of ignorance comes out! The disciples' words in John 16:17-18 sums it up well, "we cannot tell what he saith." They really were clueless about what was ahead though Jesus had spelled it out clearly!
2. Thomas' question – and Christ's wonderful answer So here's Thomas' question, kind of, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so we certainly can't know the way!" You can hear the frustration and uncertainty! True pessimistic Thomas fashion! BUT – the answer has been memorized by almost every true believer for thousands of years and used in bringing people to Christ since they were recorded in the book of John! "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me." Notice, Jesus answered where He was going – to His Father – and Christ gave the route to how to join Him – through Him. Adding, He was not only the Way but Truth and Life also! What an answer! We have to thank Thomas for the question for without the question we would not have John 14:6!

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. ²⁶And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. ²⁷Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believe. ²⁸And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my God. ²⁹Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
John 20:24-29

C. Thomas' unbelief of the resurrection of Christ - Crisis in his Faith

1. Thomas was not with the disciples We don't know where or what Thomas was doing that Sunday after the death of Christ. All the other disciples were together "assembled for fear of the Jews," but when Jesus appeared to them, Thomas was not there. Later they told Thomas of their meeting with the risen Jesus, but he would not believe them. Matter of fact, the Greek indicates they told him over and over, and the punctuation for more than half of the English translations shows an

exclamation point after the statement, “We have seen the Lord! We have seen the Lord!” but Thomas dug in and stayed in his pessimistic hole and would not believe!

2. “My Lord and my God.” Eight agonizing days later, Jesus appeared again, please notice the gentle, yet firm way He dealt with Thomas!

1) Jesus addressed Thomas’ area of unbelief – repeated the very issues of Thomas – He had not believed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus – even though all his fellow disciples told him, he didn’t believe it was possible!

2) Jesus focused Thomas on the real issue – “faithless” The resurrected Jesus looked Thomas in the eye and made sure he understood the sin of his soul was faithlessness – unbelief!

3) Jesus taught Thomas that there is a special blessing for those who will go through life in sightless faith! Live life believing and trusting in a good and loving God who is all-powerful! Don’t miss the fact that Jesus was talking about us too! If you are a follower of Jesus, you are one of those who believe in the resurrection. But we must walk every day, in all situations, in sightless belief. Faith in God’s power, love, leading hand, ability to save, ability to change lives, and ability to heal the body and soul! We are to live a lifetime of sightless faith - faithfully!

III. Lessons from Thomas’ Life

God is able and willing to use anyone. Personality, family background, and status doesn’t matter. What makes one useable to God? What will be the underlying characteristic of these men as they turned the world upside down? We could say boldness; courage; an understanding of the truths of the Gospel; these are true; some might rightly say Holy Spirit power, and that is absolutely right, but please realize the disciples could have grieved the Holy Spirit and restricted His power in their lives....so what was the underlying characteristic of these men moving into Acts – Faith in the Gospel – a belief in their resurrected Savior and Christ’s provision as the Lamb of God! With a strong foundation of faith, the Holy Spirit would now work mightily through them, and ladies, it’s the same with us. When our lives are built in faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and His power, we can also turn our world upside down! We can make a wonderful, positive difference in our homes, our relationships, our co-workers, our dear relatives, and our churches! This all is our world! How’s your faith? Are you allowing God to build your faith? Or do you fight Him all the way? Is your fist in the face of God every time He desires for you to trust His changes and moves within your life? Do you need to see every aspect of your life clearly drawn up, ok it, before you will trust God? That’s not how it works with faith! True faith is sightless! Remember Jesus’ words, “blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.” Let’s have written on our hearts the words of Hebrews 11:6. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Let’s commit to walk by faith and not by sight! (2 Cor. 5:7)