



# PALMA CEIA

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## Presbyterian Church

### **Jesus Christ and the Disinherited (Matthew)**

*Gathering Together Around God's Word*

*Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2022  
10:05am in EM 307/308 & Zoom*

#### **The Gospel of Matthew**

The Gospel of Matthew begins our journey into the New Testament. Though not the oldest of the gospels, Matthew was the most referenced Gospel in the early church (cited by the church fathers more than twice as often as the other Gospels) and has direct connections to the Old Testament.

The Gospel of Matthew was traditionally held to be written by the disciple and former tax-collector Matthew. Most scholars now believe the book to be written around 80-90 CE by a Jewish scribe living in Antioch (Syria). Matthew transformed the earlier Gospel of Mark through the addition of dialogue and explicitly Jewish elements. These elements include poetic parallelism, emphasis on the law, the central role of piety, baptism as a rite of entry, and communal discipline. Through this Jewish lens, Jesus is presented as an authoritative interpreter of Moses as well as the promised messianic king of Israel.

Matthew utilizes Mark's general geographic outline (Galilee to Jerusalem) but includes a number of narrative additions such as the birth stories and genealogy at the beginning (ch. 1-2) and the resurrection appearance and final commissioning at the end (28:9-20). The book's five major discourses (5:1-7:27; 10:5-42; 13:1-52; 18:1-35; 24:3-25:46) structure the Gospel and are linked together by the narrative sections. Each of these discourses ends with the editorial conclusion, "*When Jesus has finished saying these things...*" Some scholars note a parallel between these

five discourses and the Torah's five books as another connection Matthew makes between Jesus and Moses.

The Gospel of Matthew is written to a community with Jewish roots and focuses on obedience and fulfillment of God's will. Matthew maintains the importance of righteousness and obedience to the law but sets it within the context of faith in Jesus Christ. Though the Gospel arises out of Judaism, its message differs from other Jewish sects and is at times antagonistic to their teachings—especially the Pharisees. Matthew portrays the kingdom of heaven as initiated by Jesus Christ and calls followers to continue that work and the spreading of the good news. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus is depicted as a Moses-like teacher, a compassionate healer, the Messiah/son of David, the royal son of God, and the apocalyptic son of man.

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| <i>1:1 – 2:23</i>    | <i>Prologue: Jesus' Divine and Human Origins</i>              |
| <i>3:1 – 4:11</i>    | <i>Introduction to Jesus: His Baptism and the Testing</i>     |
| <i>4:12 – 7:29</i>   | <i>The Proclamation of the Kingdom</i>                        |
| <i>8:1 – 10:42</i>   | <i>The Power and Mission of the Kingdom</i>                   |
| <i>11:1 – 13:52</i>  | <i>Questioning of and Opposition to Jesus and the Kingdom</i> |
| <i>13:53 – 18:35</i> | <i>Opposition to and Confession of Jesus</i>                  |
| <i>19:1 – 25:46</i>  | <i>Jerusalem Receives and Rejects Her King</i>                |
| <i>26:1 – 28:20</i>  | <i>The King is Tried, Crucified, and Raised</i>               |

## **Jesus Christ and the Disinherited**

“It cannot be denied that too often the weight of the Christian movement has been on the side of the strong and the powerful and against the weak and oppressed—this, despite the gospel.”

Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*

The Gospel of Matthew takes place within the world of the Roman Empire. At the time of Christ, Roman society was hierarchical, commercialized, and agrarian with no middle class. Rome was mostly ruled by a few powerful men and their families and the rest of society was largely set up to serve these families. Beyond the bureaucrats, priests, and military, the bottom of society consisted of artisans, peasant farmers, and fishermen. Women—with few exceptions—and children

always ranked well below men. This hierarchy existed throughout Rome and its many provinces.

Opposition to Rome in the Gospel of Matthew is not overt; however, there are various elements that take subtle digs at the economic and political structures of the day. These elements should not be ignored and are an important part of the Gospel's overall structure. Jesus is portrayed as being within the Davidic (*i.e.* kingly) line, a threat to Rome's ruling Herodian kings, a messenger of the kingdom of heaven, associated with John the Baptist who is executed by Herod Antipas, in contention with the priestly establishment who works with Rome, and ultimately condemned to death by crucifixion by the Roman governor Pilate—a death reserved primarily for political rebels.

Jesus comes from the lower strata of society and advocates for those who society has outcasted and banished to the fringes, those Howard Thurman calls the disinherited. Jesus' association and care for these people puts him at odds with those in political and religious power. The kingdom of heaven Jesus initiates is a place that disrupts the social status quo and welcomes all into the boundless love of God.

- Matthew's Genealogy — Matthew 1:1-17
- The Birth of Jesus the Messiah — Matthew 1:18-25
- Jesus Minister to Crowds of People — Matthew 4:23-25
- The Beatitudes — Matthew 5:1-12
- Jesus Cleanses a Leper — Matthew 8:1-4
- Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniac — Matthew 8:28-34
- Jesus Heals a Paralytic — Matthew 9:2-8
- The Call of Matthew — Matthew 9:9-13
- A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed — Matthew 9:18-26

- Jesus Heals Two Blind Men — Matthew 9:27-31
- Jesus Heals One Who Was Mute — Matthew 9:32-34
- Feeding the Five Thousand — Matthew 14:13-21
- Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret — Matthew 14:34-36
- The Canaanite Woman's Faith — Matthew 15:21-28
- Jesus Cures Many People — Matthew 15:29-31
- Feeding the Four Thousand — Matthew 15:32-39
- Jesus Blesses Little Children — Matthew 19:13-15
- Jesus Heals Two Blind Men — Matthew 20:29-34
- Jesus Cleanses the Temple — Matthew 21:12-17
- The Parable of the Wedding Banquet — Matthew 22:1-14
- Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees — Matthew 23:1-36
- The Judgement of the Nations — Matthew 25:31-46
- The Commissioning of the Disciples — Matthew 28:16-20