

## Matthew - The Visual Bible

*Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. Proverbs 4:10-12 NIV*

*Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:13-15 NIV*

The book of Matthew was written by the disciple Matthew. The Visual Bible is unique in that it is the word for word reading of Matthew from the New International Version of the Bible with people acting it out to coincide with the words. It is a powerful presentation of the Gospel and interesting to watch.

*As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Matthew 9:9-13 NIV*

Matthew was a tax collector. In those days tax collectors were notorious for their dishonesty and greed. When Jesus walked by Matthew's tax stand, Jesus said, "Follow me" and Matthew did. Matthew heard the call of God on his life and followed Jesus. When Matthew invited Jesus to his home the Pharisees questioned why Jesus would eat in the presence of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus said that He didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners. God isn't looking for people who think they are perfect. He came to save sinners. The Bible tells us that all of us sin and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Each of the Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus from the writer's perspective. Matthew begins his narrative by listing the genealogy of Christ including Abraham and King David. He also notes four women (second class citizens in their culture) in the genealogy who were either non-Jews or women of blemished character or both. There are names that we recognize in the list and each has a story of human frailties and sins. Nobody is perfect but Jesus. What are the people like in your genealogy?

Matthew means "gift of the Lord". He left a good paying job to follow Jesus. Of the four gospels, Matthew emphasized the non-Jews honoring Jesus at His birth, Jesus' and His parent's protection in a foreign land, and also the extending of the Great Commission to all people. Matthew was written to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah for all people and that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Matthew tells us that the grace of God is for everyone. No matter where we have been or what we have done, God loves us and welcomes us as His own. Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

Before his encounter with Jesus, Matthew had riches, but suddenly money was no longer important to him. When Jesus went to Matthew's home it was an act of significance. To eat in someone's home was a sign of friendship and approval. The Pharisees knew that Matthew had cheated many people and so they disapproved of Jesus being there. Jesus made it clear to them that He came to help those who need help; those who wanted to change. He will come into our lives and change us from the inside out if we ask Him.

*Dear Lord, we thank You that You have come to help the weary and broken. There are many needs all around us. You alone have the answers to our lives. Touch us with Your healing love and grace. Take away the wrongs of the past and fill our hearts with abundant joy in You. Bless and keep Your people for Jesus sake, Amen.*