



DAY *by* DAY SERIES

DAY *by* DAY
THROUGH THE
BIBLE

The Writings of Matthew & Luke

ALLEN J. HUTH

ILLUMIFY
MEDIA.COM

FOREWORD

Have you ever felt you were right where God wanted you to be? That was my experience, about twenty years ago. I had the great pleasure of working for a large corporation, a company I really enjoyed. Our family was active in church, with our children growing both in stature and in the Lord. I was leading a small group with our church and served on the leadership team for our small group ministry. I was comfortable, and I liked where I was; I felt I was right where God wanted me to be.

Then, a Bible study I attended focused on the gospels and the life and words of Jesus. We followed that study by proceeding through the Book of Acts. God used that time in His Word to make me question my comfort. Was I really following the words of Jesus? Was I really stepping in faith, as the apostles did in the Book of Acts?

More than twenty years ago, Allen J. Huth followed a call God placed on his heart and started the Ezra Project, a non-profit whose mission is stated very simply – “Connecting God’s people to God’s Word, by encouraging Christians to engage in the Bible daily.” In pursuit of that mission, Allen has written the *“Day by Day Through the Bible”* series. In this book, Allen takes the writings of Matthew and Luke and shares insights he gained in his life when he read from God’s Word daily. Following this study guide will take you deeper into the meaning and impact of the life and words of Jesus and into the radical change knowing Jesus brought into the lives of the apostles, Allen, and eventually me.

Recently, God placed two verses, one written by Matthew and the other written by Luke, into my life. Matthew 6:33, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* God used that verse to challenge me; am I too comfortable? Am I keeping first things first? Am I letting the cares and concerns of the world impact the priority of what is before me? Am I keeping first things first?

God also used Luke 6:38, “*Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.*” That verse is one of my mother’s favorites. As I reflect on my mother’s life, I can see how God filled her lap to running over; not necessarily with the things of this world, yet God has given her so many blessings. Her life has been full and running over with blessings that come from God.

My prayer for you, as you follow through this daily study, is God’s Word will challenge you in your walk with Him. Are you too comfortable? Are you keeping first things first? Are you trusting God to fill your lap, running over with His blessings? May the Holy Spirit be your guide, maybe even make you a bit uncomfortable, as you read and reflect on the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and the action-packed Book of Acts.

—*Daniel J. Heighway*

Dan Heighway’s career spanned more than three decades in various leadership roles in a Fortune 150 company. He now serves as the Executive Director of The Gideons International.

PREFACE

The *Writings of Matthew & Luke* is a guide of daily devotions in the three books attributed to the two New Testament writers: the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, and the Book of Acts. Done day by day, it will cover 80 days:

- Matthew, 28 days
- Luke, 24 days
- Acts, 28 days

Comments on Bible passages, life applications, and prayers are based on the audio daily devotion, ADDBIBLE, a free app that can be heard daily on your smartphone or tablet. The scripture verses are drawn from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

ADDBIBLE was recorded using written records from thirty-five years of my personal Bible reading journals. I started reading the Bible at fifteen years old and started journaling my quiet times in 1983. I have been blessed “*exceedingly abundantly*” (Eph. 3:20) by what God has revealed to me in His Word.

I count it an awesome privilege to share insights from my personal journals including personal stories of how God’s Word has specifically impacted my life and short prayers we can pray together, all in 10-15 minutes per day.

This workbook is one of a series of *Day by Day Through the Bible* “Writings of” daily devotions featuring other Biblical authors like Moses, Solomon, the Major and Minor Prophets, Mark, John, Paul, and more. Access them all by visiting ezraproject.net.

May God richly bless you as you enjoy a portion of God’s Word each and every day.
Abiding in the Word,

—**Allen J. Huth**, President
The Ezra Project

ABOUT MATTHEW AND LUKE¹

In this workbook, we include the writings of two New Testament writers, Matthew and Luke. In other workbooks, *The Writings of John*, *The Writings of Paul*, and *The Writings of the Mark, Peter, James, Jude & Hebrews*, we cover the writings of the rest of the New Testament. Both Matthew and Luke wrote gospels that bear their names. Luke also wrote the Book of Acts. Matthew wrote the longest gospel, and surprisingly Luke, not Paul, wrote more words in the New Testament than any other author. Luke is credited with 37,932 words and Paul with 32,408 words.

Matthew. Matthew was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He is also known as Levi, the son of Alphaeus. He was a tax collector, or publican, in Capernaum when Jesus walked by his tax booth and called him. Tax collectors were despised by Jews because they worked for the Roman government and had a reputation of collecting more than due, lining their own pockets.

As a tax collector, Matthew may have been wealthy. He was able to host “*a great feast in his house and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them*” (Luke 5:29). His training probably included scribal techniques; an ability to write and keep good records. As a Jewish convert, he most likely had the ability to relate the words and actions of Jesus in light of Old Testament messianic prophecies.

When called by Jesus, Matthew left behind his source of income, his position of security and comfort, to follow Jesus into the unknown of travel and hardship. He left his old life for a new uncharted life with the possible Messiah. His up-close and personal walk as an apostle with Jesus gives him believable credibility.

Some scholars say he ministered in Africa after the death and resurrection of

1 Much of About Matthew and Luke was gleaned from information found in Britannica.com and Got Questions.org. Other sources include overviewbible.com and the English Standard Version Study Bible.

Jesus. He was martyred for his service to our Lord and his people. However, he left an incredible written record of the life of Jesus that we enjoy today.

Luke. Dr. Luke was a physician by trade. He was a Gentile and a second generation Christian, not an eyewitness like Matthew. He is the only non-Jewish writer of the New Testament. His credibility to write one of the four gospels comes from his extensive time with the apostle Paul.

Luke joined Paul in Troas in Asia Minor during Paul's second missionary journey. He was left in Philippi but rejoined Paul on the third missionary outreach and on Paul's last trip to Jerusalem and Rome. My personal speculation is the thorn in Paul's side was a physical ailment that needed medical attention; thus, a doctor accompanied him on his trips.

As a doctor, Luke was well educated, observant, and a careful writer. Perhaps Luke's training as a physician is a reason Luke covers so many healing miracles of Jesus. As the writer of both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, his use of "we" verifies his close friendship and participation with the works of Paul.

Luke provides the reason for his written record of Jesus and the early church in the opening verses of his gospel:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

The writings of Luke are addressed to Theophilus. No clear identity is included but by Luke addressing him as "most excellent", he was probably a man of wealth and social standing. Though we may be neither wealthy or well known, we get to enjoy the writings of Luke as well thanks to his careful and detailed account of the life of Jesus and the beginning of the early church.

MATTHEW 1

The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus

Today, we begin the Book of Matthew. The Book of Matthew is the first book of the New Testament. Matthew is the former tax collector who became one of the twelve apostles. His occupation as a tax collector implies he had the skill and the training to write. There is not much dispute he authored the gospel that bears his name. It is traditionally dated in the late 50s or early 60s.

Matthew wrote from the view of an apostle, an insider, close to Jesus. He crafted his account of Jesus to demonstrate His messianic identity, His inheritance of His Davidic kingship over Israel, and His fulfillment of the promises made to His ancestor Abraham to be a blessing to all nations. Matthew's primary audience is to fellow Jews. He tried to persuade them Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah while opening up salvation to all nations.

Here are few things to look for in the Gospel of Matthew: 1) Jesus Christ is King of the Jews; 2) there are seventeen references to Jesus fulfilling Old Testament prophecy; and 3) the phrase "*the kingdom of heaven*" is used thirty-two times in this book and nowhere else in the New Testament.

Matthew is twenty-eight chapters, and we will look at one chapter each day. Let's begin with the first chapter of Matthew primarily focusing on the genealogy of Jesus. Do you know where Jesus came from? Do you believe in the virgin birth? Please read or listen to Matthew 1.

COMMENTS

To help us through our personal study of the Book of Matthew, I will be referring to three of my personal Bible reading journals, written records of my thoughts after reading various portions of scripture over thirty-five years. I try to choose journals from different decades because what we glean from the reading of scripture oftentimes changes over time. I selected my 1992, 2007, and 2016 journals on Matthew.

Let's begin with my journal from 1992. Often when we start a new year, we start in the New Testament, and we start with the Book of Matthew. In 1992, that was the case. It was January 1st, and I wrote, "Happy New Year! Sure is nice to be back in the New Testament again. God is a God of order. There were fourteen generations between each major event outlining the coming of Christ. I'm sure His return is also right on schedule."

In 2007, my journal entry is, "Matthew opened his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus, back to Abraham, to validate Jesus as Messiah to his Jewish audience. Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, the father of the Jews, and David, the prophetic lineage of the Messiah. He does not call Joseph Jesus' father, rather the husband

Matthew opened his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus, back to Abraham, to validate Jesus as Messiah to his Jewish audience.

of Mary. Angels came to Mary and Joseph to announce the birth of Jesus to both these young people. They had a choice, and both decided to obey the angel. It would change their lives forever. Jesus means the Lord saves. Immanuel means God with us."

I often also record my prayers in my journals after reading the scriptures. In 2007, I recorded in the prayer section of the journal, "Wow, the Trinity is in the first chapter! God the Father bringing forth His Son Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Wow! And angels touching human lives to do so. And two young people hearing and obeying the voice of God, giving up their lives forever to bring God's Son into the world. Wow!" You probably did not get that excited about reading the genealogy of Jesus, did you?

Then from my journal entry in 2016, “Genealogy mattered to Jews. It proved who one was, which of the twelve tribes they came from, their legal rights, property rights, etc. If the Jews understood the Messiah would come from the lineage of David, such a case needed to be made with Jesus. Matthew makes the case, following the heritage of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, but not claiming that Joseph was His father.”

I continued, “Mary was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. An angel of the Lord confirms Mary’s pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph had to be convinced that his betrothed, Mary, was not an adulteress. Any man would have done the same.” Then I wrote, “Jesus is named by the angel. Finally, Matthew uses the fulfilment of prophecy to solidify his claim, Jesus is Messiah.”

DIGGING DEEPER

What a great start to the Book of Matthew. Reading Matthew 1 reminds me of a wonderful experience I had visiting the headquarters of Faith Comes By Hearing where the readings we listen to on ADDBIBLE were recorded. That organization created a piece of equipment they call the Proclaimer. They send it all over the world to villages so people can hear the gospel. Thus, their name Faith Comes By Hearing, because they realize many people in the world are illiterate, but they can hear the gospel. Proclaimers are solar-powered, and they proclaim the gospel in villages.

Morgan Jackson, Senior Vice President of Faith Comes By Hearing, demonstrated the Proclaimer to us and shared some testimonies about what it means to place one of these Proclaimers in a remote village somewhere in the world. It may not be the case in the United States, but in many places around the world ancestry is very important.

When people hear the ancestry of this person in the Gospel of Matthew, the very first chapter, it really gets their attention. Very few people have a recorded ancestry that goes all the way back to somebody like Abraham. When people gather around a Proclaimer and they hear the ancestry, the genealogy, of Jesus, they are amazed.

They are impressed and they know why they should listen more; because Jesus has credentials, He is worth listening to.

I confess, I never got that much out of Matthew 1, the genealogy of Jesus, until I heard Morgan Jackson tell me about what happens in various remote villages around the world. Matthew 1, alone, brings people to faith in Jesus Christ. Of course, we do not want to look over the fact that this chapter also records the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Lord.

Prayer

Father, we thank You for giving us Jesus, for miraculously bringing Jesus into the world and proving through His genealogy, He was the long-awaited Messiah. We give You thanks. We look forward to what You are going to teach us in the Book of Matthew. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

MY THOUGHTS

MATTHEW 2

Angels and Dreams Move People

Today, we continue our journey through the Book of Matthew. Yesterday, we learned in Matthew 1 about the birth of Jesus and today, we continue in the young life, the development, of Jesus. However, if you want a more complete picture of the birth of Jesus, take a look at Luke chapters 1 and 2. To get the full story of the birth of Jesus, look at both gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Let's look at Matthew chapter 2. Did the wise men really show up on that first Christmas morning? Is the typical manger scene with them in it, a true representation of the biblical account of the birth of Jesus? Please read or listen to Matthew 2.

COMMENTS

In 1992, my personal Bible reading journal entry says, “*In a dream*’ appears in verses 12, 13, 19, 22. Magi warned, Joseph warned, Joseph instructed and warned again. God uses dreams as a vehicle of communication. Lord, talk with me in my dreams.”

In 2007, I focused more on angels, “Angels. Back in chapter 1, Joseph has an angel tell him it is okay to marry Mary. In chapter 2, angels direct Joseph to move to Egypt, then return to Israel. Also, God, in a dream, told the Magi not to return to Herod. And God, in a dream, tells Joseph not to settle in Judea but in Nazareth.

There may be days, months, or years between these messages, but they are there. Does God still speak to us through angels and dreams, or now by the whisper of the Holy Spirit?”

In 2016, I focused on divine intervention when I read Matthew 2, “A star guided wise men to Jerusalem to see one born King of the Jews. They were told he would be born in Bethlehem. The star came to rest over the place the child was. Pagan wise men were led by a star, then a dream. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph again, telling Joseph to take Jesus to Egypt. An angel also assured Joseph to marry Mary. Then an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph telling him to leave Egypt and go home to Israel. Again, being warned in a dream, Joseph settles in Nazareth. God and His messengers are directing every aspect of Jesus’ early life. Does God still intervene in lives today by angels and dreams?”

Does God still speak to us through angels and dreams, or now by the whisper of the Holy Spirit?

DIGGING DEEPER

That is a good question worth pondering today. Does God still intervene in lives today by angels or by dreams? I don’t know about you, but I want to be in tune with God, however He chooses to speak to me. Like Joseph, I want to go where He wants me to go and do what He wants me to do. I cannot really recall ever seeing an angel or having a spiritual dream, but many times I do sense God’s divine guidance in my life.

How about you? Have you had spiritual dreams? Or have you had an experience with an angel? Or do you just sense the Lord’s direction when you pray, and you feel God is guiding you in a certain way? Like Mary and Joseph, I want to hear the voice of the Lord, however He wants to communicate with me. I hope that is also the case for you.

Prayer

Lord, we want to hear Your voice. We want to hear Your voice however You choose to speak to us. If it is through dreams, help us understand them. If it is through angels, help us see. And if it is from that small still voice in our spirits, help us understand it is Your voice speaking to us. Then Lord, like this young couple, Joseph and Mary, give us the courage to act.

It had to be pretty risky for a young couple to move from their homeland, from their family support system, all the way to Egypt because they thought they heard from You. So for them, Your voice must have been very, very clear. May we ask the same, Lord, in our prayer, that Your voice be very, very clear to us, and then give us the courage to act. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

MY THOUGHTS