

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON
FIFTY-SEVEN

56. What did Jesus Himself say to His Apostles with regard to their witnessing for Him?
57. How are the Apostles witnessing for Jesus unto the uttermost part of the earth?
58. What claims do the New Testament writers make for themselves in their writings?
59. What do we mean by the Credibility of the New Testament writers?
60. What is the first valid ground on which we accept the New Testament writers as reliable witnesses?
61. What is the second valid ground on which we accept the New Testament writers as reliable witnesses?
62. What is the third valid ground on which we accept the New Testament writers as reliable witnesses?
63. What is the fourth valid ground on which we accept the New Testament writers as reliable witnesses?

Lesson Fifty-eight

**MATTHEW'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS
OF NAZARETH**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 9:9, 10:2-4; Luke 5:27-32.

Scripture to Memorize: "And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him" (Luke 5:27-28).

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64. Q. In taking up the study of Christianity itself, what is the first matter to be considered?
- A. In taking up the study of Christianity, the first matter to be considered is the Person, Jesus of Nazareth, who appears historically as its Founder.
- (1) Christianity, as we have already learned, consists of:
(a) The Person, and (b) The System. The Person is

Jesus of Nazareth; The System is the aggregate of the principles, institutions and laws which He revealed and established through His Apostles. (2) Of these two matters, The Person must be considered first, because The System stands or falls with Him. If He, Jesus of Nazareth, is all that He claims to be, then we are justified in accepting the Christian System as God's final and complete revelation of truth to mankind. "What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?" (Matt. 22:42); "Who say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16:15). These questions must be answered first. If the story of Christ is true, then Christianity is true; for, in the words of Dr. Daniel A. Poling, "Christ is Christianity, and Christianity is Christ."

65. Q. How, then, shall we begin our study of Jesus of Nazareth?

A. We shall begin our study of Jesus of Nazareth by viewing Him first as a historical character.

That is, in the same manner that we view Christopher Columbus, or Martin Luther, or George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln, or any other outstanding figure of human history.

66. Q. To what primary sources shall we go for information respecting the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth?

A. For information respecting the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth, we shall go to the New Testament writings, especially the first four books of the New Testament Canon.

67. Q. By whom were the first four books of the New Testament Canon written?

A. The first four books of the New Testament Canon were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, in order.

68. Q. What are the first four books of the New Testament Scriptures commonly called?

A. The first four books of the New Testament Scriptures are commonly called The Gospels, or the Gospel Narratives.

69. Q. For what purpose were these four Gospel Narratives originally written?
- A. The four Gospel Narratives were written to give us the evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God. John 20:30-31.
70. Q. What is the subject-matter of the books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?
- A. They are four biographies of Jesus of Nazareth written from as many different points of view.
71. Q. What are the four books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as to design?
- A. As to design, they are four testimonies respecting Jesus of Nazareth, presented from as many different points of view.

They are *biographies* in the sense that they present the facts about the Person known historically as Jesus of Nazareth. They are *testimonies*, in the sense that they witness to His life, His teaching, His miracles, His character, and His death and resurrection.

72. Q. Who was Matthew?
- A. Matthew was one of the original group of Twelve Apostles.

Matt. 10:2-4, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16, Acts 1:13. We must be careful not to confuse Matthew with the *Matthias* who was later selected to take the place of Judas. Cf. Acts 1:26.

73. Q. Of what nationality was Matthew?
- A. Matthew was a Jew.

He was the son of a certain Alpheus. He also bore the name of Levi: probably his full name was Matthew Levi. See Matt. 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27.

74. Q. What was Matthew's occupation originally?
- A. Matthew was originally a publican, *i. e.*, a tax collector.

(1) The alien government, which ruled Palestine, whether of Rome, or of its deputy-princes, the Herods, collected its taxes and customs through speculators, who bought up the right of collecting the revenue (*publicum*) for their

own advantage. They were allowed to retain in the form of commissions whatever sums they were able to collect over and above the assessments levied by the government. Naturally this gave rise to much graft; however it was the system itself that was at fault, rather than its officials. (2) These men who acted as collectors of the revenue were called *publicani* by the Romans, whence our English word *publican*. They were often native Jews, and were classed by their own people, not only with the social outcasts of the day (Matt. 9:10-13, 21:31), but even with the heathen, as if entirely outside the pale of the Jewish commonwealth (Matt. 18:17). (3) Matthew was obviously not a chief publican, like Zaccheus, *i. e.*, one who had supervision over a considerable territory and farmed out the business of actual collection to deputies. Matthew's business, it seems, was purely local. His place of toll was near Capernaum, on the road to and from Damascus, where he apparently collected taxes for Herod the tetrarch. His special duty, it would seem, was that of collecting revenues from the fishermen on the Lake of Galilee, and probably from merchants traveling southward from Damascus. (4) It seems, too, that Matthew was a man of considerable means. At any rate, immediately after his call to the apostleship, he gave a great feast at which Jesus of Nazareth was the honored guest (Mark 2:13-17, Luke 5:29-32). Matthew is, then, the typical business man who has given up his business to enter the ministry. This alone is sufficient evidence of his strength of character.

75. Q. What information do we gather from the New Testament writings with regard to Matthew's character?

A. We gather that he was a man of conviction, of modesty, and of steadfastness.

(1) He was a man of *conviction*, without doubt. When Jesus, passing by his place of toll, said, "Follow me," Matthew "forsook all, and rose up and followed him" (Luke 5:28). This one terse statement is an eloquent

commentary on Matthew's character. (2) He seems to have been *modest* and retiring in disposition. He kept himself in the background, it would seem. He does not stand out in the apostolic group, like Peter, for instance, or John; yet he was faithful, even unto death, for tradition has it that he died a martyr. (3) He was *steadfast*. We are not surprised, therefore, to find his name included in the list of the faithful, as given by Luke in enumerating the members of the apostolic group who were gathered in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem, after the resurrection of Jesus, waiting for the coming of the Spirit (Acts 1:13). He was faithful unto death and no doubt received the "crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8).

76. Q. Where in the apostolic writings do we find the account of Matthew's call to the apostleship?

A. We find the account of Matthew's call to the apostleship in Matt. 9:9, Mark 2:14, and Luke 5:27-28.

The account is given by Matthew himself, and by Mark and Luke also, in almost the same words. "And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him" (Luke 5:27-28).

77. Q. From what viewpoint did Matthew write his testimony respecting Jesus?

A. Matthew wrote from the Jewish viewpoint, and especially for the Jews.

(1) That Matthew wrote as a Jew, and for the Jews especially, is evident from the following characteristics of his writing: (a) His tracing of the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham and David; (b) his numerous appeals to Hebrew prophecy as having been fulfilled in Jesus; (c) his strong denunciations of the Jews and their rulers; (d) his rare explanations of Jewish names and customs; (e) his lengthy presentation of the Sermon on the Mount and with particular references to the Law; (f) his omission of Latin words from his text; (g) his omission of the

account of the sending out of the Seventy (cf. Luke 10:1-20); (h) and especially his repeated use of the term "kingdom of heaven," by which he tried to turn the attention of the Jewish people away from their expectation of an earthly kingdom and Messiah, to that of a spiritual reign of Heaven upon earth under a heavenly Messiah. (2) "No one can read Matthew's Gospel without perceiving that he was no Hellenist, but a Hebrew of the Hebrews, deeply learned in the history and prophecies of his race, and eagerly looking forward to their realization. When the plan and teaching of Jesus were unfolded to his mind stored with national memories, he instantly recognized the truth and beauty and completeness of that ideal, and gave himself up heart and soul to the cause of the Son of David. For that cause and for the kingdom of God he resigned all his hopes of advancement in Herod's kingdom, his lucrative calling, and the friends he had made" (*Cambridge Bible*).

78. Q. What is the general theme of Matthew's Gospel?

A. The general theme of Matthew's Gospel is: The Messiahship of Jesus.

The Jews of the time of Jesus and before, believed that in the writings of Moses and the Prophets there were many predictions concerning a great ruler and deliverer to come, called in their language *Messiah*, and in Greek *Christos* (meaning *The Anointed One*). They expected him to be a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal lineage of David; and to restore the kingdom of David and Solomon in all its pristine glory. In brief, they gave to the Messianic prophecies a purely temporal and earthly interpretation, as they do even to this day. Cf. Luke 3:15; John 1:19-20, 4:25-26, 5:39, 45; Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 3:18, 24; Acts 28:23, etc.

79. Q. What main purpose did Matthew have in mind in writing his Testimony?

A. It is obvious that he wrote his Testimony to present

Jesus as the fulfilment of Hebrew Messianic expectation.

(1) That is, to present Jesus as the One in whom the Abrahamic Promise is fulfilled. (2) Also, to present Jesus as the One in whom the Messianic predictions of the Hebrew Prophets are realized. (3) Finally, to present Jesus as the Messiah in an infinitely nobler sense than the Jews had ever anticipated, viz., as the Ruler of the Kingdom of Heaven, the truly Anointed One of God, the Prophet and Priest and King of His Church.

80. Q. How does Matthew prove the Messiahship of Jesus?

A. He proves the Messiahship of Jesus, by presenting Him as the Person in whose life and work the Messianic predictions of the Hebrew Prophets were all fulfilled.

Matthew quotes some sixty prophecies from the Old Testament Scriptures, as having been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

81. Q. What is Matthew's favorite expression?

A. Matthew's favorite expression is: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," etc.

See Matt. 1:22, 2:5, 2:17, 3:3, 4:14, 11:10, 12:17, 13:14, 13:35, etc., etc.

82. Q. When was Matthew's Gospel probably written?

A. Matthew's Gospel was probably written about A.D. 67.

McGarvey holds that it was not written before the year 60, and probably about A.D. 67. Its contents show that it was written a number of years after the death of Jesus (Matt. 27:8, 28:15); and prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70 (Matt. 24:1-28).

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76. Where in the apostolic writings do we find the account of Matthew's call to the apostleship?
77. From what viewpoint did Matthew write his testimony respecting Jesus?
78. What is the general theme of Matthew's Gospel?
79. What main purpose did Matthew have in mind in writing his Testimony?
80. How does Matthew prove the Messiahship of Jesus?
81. What is Matthew's favorite expression?
82. When was Matthew's Gospel probably written?

Lesson Fifty-nine

MARK'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS OF NAZARETH

Scripture Reading: Acts 12: 1-18, 15: 36-41.

Scriptures to Memorize: "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you,