Juliana Gilbride

CCEA GCSE

A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

2nd Edition

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INTRODUCTION

EXERCISES

There are various exercises throughout the book to aid learning. They are labelled with different icons.

ACTIVITY

These exercises are designed to improve skills such as thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and being creative.

IN A GROUP

These group exercises are designed to encourage group participation and debate. They aim to improve skills such as communication and working with others.

FURTHER THINKING

These extended exercises are designed to encourage research and wider learning. They aim to improve skills such as using ICT, self-management, managing information, thinking, problem-solving and decision-making.

QUESTIONS

These are examples of the types of question that could be found on a GCSE exam paper. They aim to test knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills. These skills can be identified by the trigger or command words used in each question:

Knowledge

There are three types of knowledge questions in the examination. In the book they appear inside a yellow box:

1. Short answers worth 1 mark. They usually begin with one of the following words:
   - What…
   - How…
   - Name…
   - Which…
   - Where…
2. Short answers worth 2 or more marks, which are awarded for listing details or examples. They begin with the word:
   - List…
3. Short paragraph answers worth 5 marks. They require the retelling of one of the stories from Matthew's Gospel. They usually begin with one of the following words or phrases:
   - Retell…
   - Describe…
   - Recall…
   - Outline…

   or

   "[The beginning of the story]" Complete the story.

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Understanding

These questions require short paragraph answers and are worth 5 marks. They require an explanation and in the book they appear inside a blue box. They usually begin with one of the following words or phrases:

- Explain…
- Why…
- How…

or

- "[A parable]" What does this parable teach…?

Evaluation

There are two types of evaluation questions in the examination. In the book they appear inside an orange box:

1. Short paragraph answers worth 5 marks. These questions are open ended. They take the following wording:
   - "[A statement]" Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
   - Do you think… Give reasons for your answer.
2. Extended paragraph answers worth 10 marks. These questions are open ended. They take the following wording:
   - "[A statement]" Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. You should refer to Matthew's Gospel in your answer.

These questions require a response to a statement and are asking for well-informed arguments, supported by evidence. You can respond positively (agree) or negatively (disagree); or combine both positive and negative points (points of view do not have to be balanced). It is the quality of the argument that attracts marks rather than the viewpoint adopted. The use of specialist vocabulary is also important.

TIP Remember to refer to Matthew's Gospel in your answer to the 10-mark evaluation questions.

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SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY

Green boxes feature throughout the book that contain suggestions as to how Jesus' teachings and behaviour is relevant to Christians today. They will be useful in answering evaluation type questions in the examination. These boxes are not exhaustive so it is good idea to have other valid examples.

THE TITLES OF JESUS

These icons are used throughout the book to highlight the various titles of Jesus used in Matthew's Gospel. Each title explains something different about the identity of Jesus. Chapter 2 (pages 19–32) explains these titles in detail.

SoG Son of God

Mes Messiah

SoM Son of Man

SoD Son of David

Sav Saviour

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of chapters 2–6 there are useful tables to track learning. These tables are designed to check knowledge and understanding, and highlight any areas that need improvement. There are copies of the learning outcome tables on the digital resource.

GLOSSARY

Pages 79–81 provide a valuable glossary of key terms.

INDEX

Pages 83–85 provide a useful index of key words.

BIBLE TRANSLATION

For all Bible quotations and references, this book uses the Good News Bible.

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CHAPTER
1 2 3 4 5 6

BACKGROUND TO MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

NOTE

Students are required to consider the prescribed passages from Matthew's Gospel within the religious, political, social and cultural context of Jesus' time. The material in Chapter 1 provides an understanding of these themes.

The content of this chapter will not be specifically examined, unless it relates to a story or event within the gospel.

The gospels

The word 'gospel' means 'good news'. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *god spel*, which can mean 'spell it out', 'speak out' or 'proclaim'. In the Bible, the gospels proclaim the good news about Jesus.

The four gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each writer tells the story of Jesus' life and death in their own unique way.

WHO WAS MATTHEW?

Although the writer of the Gospel of Matthew did not identify himself by name, from its earliest days the Church has agreed that the author was the apostle Matthew (also called Levi). He was a tax collector in Capernaum before becoming a disciple of Jesus. (Matthew 9:9)

When Jesus called Matthew to follow him, he left everything behind to follow Jesus. Later in this book you will learn how Matthew was keen to introduce others like him to Jesus (Matthew 9:9–13).

THE PURPOSE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

The four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – tell us about the life of Jesus. Each gospel writer had a 'target audience' in mind when writing his gospel.

Matthew seems to be writing for an audience of Jews and Jewish Christians who were familiar with the Jewish scriptures.

- Matthew begins his gospel with a list of the ancestors of Jesus (this is called a genealogy). Ancestors were very important to the Jews, and Matthew wanted to show that Jesus' family could be traced back to many famous figures in Jewish history, including King David and Abraham.
- Matthew makes reference to Jewish customs, for example hand-washing traditions (15:2) or the wearing of phylacteries (23:5), and did not explain them to his readers. This suggests that his readers were already familiar with Jewish culture.

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***Phylacteries*, or *Tefillin*, are small wooden or leather boxes that are strapped to a person's forehead or left arm. Each box holds strips of parchment inscribed with passages from the Jewish scriptures. They are worn in response to Deuteronomy 6:6–8:**

> ***"Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder."***

- Many of the issues that Matthew discussed in his gospel would have been of special interest to Jewish readers: fasting (6:16–18), the Sabbath (12:1–14; 24:20), temple offerings (5:23–24), and the temple tax (17:24–27).
- There is a focus on the law and the prophets – the foundations of the Jewish faith. Also Matthew wanted to convince his readers that Jesus was the promised Jewish Messiah.
- This gospel is not only for Jewish readers. Although Matthew stresses that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, he also includes many stories and events that suggest that Jesus' mission is also to the Gentiles.

NOTE

UNIVERSALISM
Universalism is the idea that the Gospel message is for everyone (not just the Jews), regardless of race, gender, or religion. No one person is more deserving of the Gospel than anyone else.

THE STRUCTURE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Matthew's Gospel is 28 chapters long. Some topics are described in more detail than others, which helps the reader to understand what was important to Matthew. Matthew's Gospel can be divided in the following way:

- **The prologue (1:1–2:23)**

  This consists of the ancestors of Jesus Christ (genealogy) and birth narrative.

- **The body (3:1–28:15)**

  This consists of five parts:

  1. The Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29)
  2. The Commissioning of the Apostles (10:1–42)
  3. Parables about the Kingdom (13:1–52)
  4. Instructions to the Disciples (18:1–35)
  5. Final Discourse (24:1–25:46)

  Each of these parts ends with a similar closing statement, for example: *"When Jesus had finished saying these things...."* (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1)

- **The Passion Narrative and the Great Commission (chapters 26–28)**

  This tells the story of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension.

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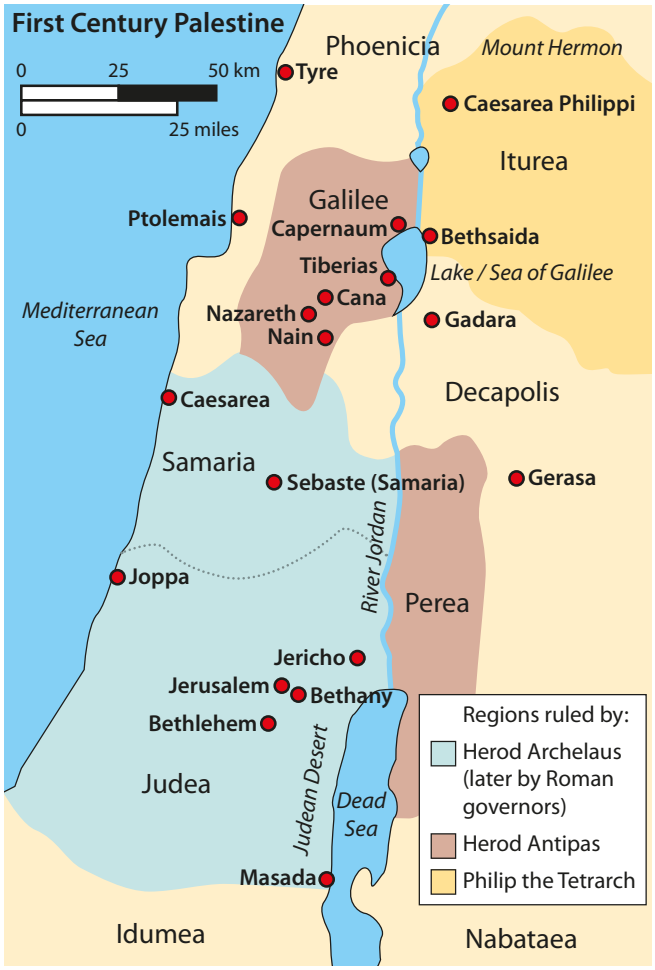
Palestine at the time of Jesus

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Jesus lived in a place called Palestine. Today this land is occupied by the countries of Israel and Palestine. It is an extremely important place for Jews, Christians and Muslims, for whom it has deep, sacred significance. Today conflict and unrest between Jews and Palestinians continues to erupt into violence in this region.



TIP As you work your way through this book and come across the names of different places it is a good idea to look back to the map above to see exactly where the places were.

KEY PLACES IN PALESTINE FOR A STUDY OF THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

The River Jordan

The Jordan River runs from the uplands of Galilee into the Sea of Galilee, then through the Rift Valley and into the Dead Sea. It splits Palestine down the middle.

The Sea of Galilee

The northern area around Galilee is where Jesus spent much of his life. The Sea of Galilee is really a large lake, 13 miles long and 7 miles across.

Galilee, Samaria and Judea

Find the River Jordan on the map. If you look to the left of it you will see three main regions – Galilee at the top, Samaria in the middle and Judea underneath. It is mainly within these regions that the ministry of Jesus took place, although he does travel beyond them. You may also recognise the place names of some of the towns, where important events happened in the life of Jesus, such as the town of Bethlehem and the city of Jerusalem.

Bethlehem

Bethlehem is a town in Judea where Jesus was born. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be born in the 'town of David': Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

The Wilderness of Judea

To the east of the Uplands of Judea lies the Wilderness of Judea, a desolate area where John the Baptist lived and where Jesus was tempted.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem was the capital city of Palestine. At the time of Jesus it had a population of about 50,000 people. It was a busy place, with narrow, overcrowded streets and was part of the main corridor running between Asia and Africa. It had many visitors and the streets were full of traders and travellers, many of whom were Jews who visited Jerusalem during festival times to carry out their religious duties.

A scale model of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus.

FURTHER THINKING

Have you ever visited Jerusalem? Do you know what it is like today? Do you know anything about its history?

Research the answers to the following questions:

1. **Who established Jerusalem as the capital city in Israel?**
2. **What important buildings were located in the city?**
3. **Why is Jerusalem important when studying the life and death of Jesus?**

ACTIVITY

Various events in Jesus' life took place in and around Galilee. Referring to the map on page 11, look up the following references and write a sentence on each of them:

Matthew reference	Place	Event in Jesus' life
Matthew 3:1		
Matthew 16:13		
Matthew 13:1		
Matthew 15:21		
Matthew 14:3		
Matthew 26:36		
Matthew 26:57		
Matthew 27:32		

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