

## MATTHEW

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“Matthew” is a name that I have always liked because it reminds me of a character in the Public television series, “Ann of Green Gables”. The character, or brother of the family who becomes a foster parent to Ann, is very kind, patient, and loving in his modest and rather unassuming way.

Matthew is probably most associated with the first of the four gospels and the writer and apostle, Matthew the Jewish tax collector. In the world of movie-making, Matthew Broderick is well known for movies like *Inspector Gadget* and *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*. Through history, several noted theologians, writers, and similar types bore names such as Matthew Jones, Flinders, and Henson just to name a few.

Matthew was the first of four gospels and the first book in the New Testament. Being a first in both categories, Matthew is the bridge or link between the two testaments as well as the first account of Jesus from his lineage to his death and resurrection. You are the first of four children – each child being a human account or testimony of a plan ordained by God. Please do not forget that your birth and life are ordained by God; consequently, that there is plan for your life, intended to glorify God.

Second, Matthew contains references to prophesy of the Old Testament; again a link between the two testaments separated by at least one generation. You represent a new generation of both Vicki’s family and my own – it is our hope and prayer that you and the others will be wise in your decisions and make choices that are based on a relationship with Christ. Ideally, that your wisdom comes from the perfect source and is not diluted or altogether overruled by the so-called wisdom of the world that is simply self-centered and single-minded. From the reading of the letter and from this day forward, know that your life is priceless and that your purpose has already been planned – even before you were born.

The apostle Matthew and his fellow apostles lived the post-resurrection and ascension with the presence of the Holy Spirit. As you may know, the Spirit enables us to be more like Jesus; to pray from the depth of our hearts; and to experience joy in the midst of suffering and trials. The Holy Spirit is simply our helper made available to all believers through a relationship with Jesus. I pray that you may experience the presence of the Spirit just as Matthew and other believers did in the early church; and through his indwelling, will experience joy and fulfillment through certain suffering and trials that and you have and do incur. How I long to see you, to hold you, and to re-affirm our relationship. Amen

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