



**St. Matthew**  
September 21

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Biblical figure

Matthew was a Jewish tax collector. The other Jews despised Matthew because of his job. Tax collectors collected money for the Romans, who oppressed the Jews. And so Matthew was an outcast.

But Jesus saw beyond Matthew's job. He saw into Matthew's heart. He knew that Matthew would become His disciple.

One day, when Matthew was sitting at his post at work, Jesus came to him. Jesus said two simple words: "Follow me."

Jesus' words reached straight into Matthew's soul. Immediately, Matthew rose from his seat and followed Jesus. His fellow tax collectors marveled to see him leave his well-paying job behind to follow a poor preacher.

Matthew's heart was so full at being called by Jesus that he had Jesus over for dinner at his house. Many tax collectors and other sinners sat next to Jesus and His disciples. The Pharisees —Jewish religious experts—were shocked. "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" they asked Jesus' disciples.

Jesus overheard their words and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do." Jesus came to heal sinners, just as He had healed Matthew.

Matthew became one of Jesus' Twelve Apostles. He followed Jesus all throughout Galilee and saw how Jesus healed the blind and the sick. When Jesus would heal someone's body, He would also heal the person's soul, saying, "Your sins are forgiven." Matthew understood that healing the soul was the most important part.

After Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the dead, He told His disciples to tell all the world the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Again, Matthew followed Jesus' words. He wrote the Gospel of Matthew to tell the world all about Jesus. You can read this first Gospel in the Bible. Matthew starts off by telling us about Jesus' human family, all the way back to Abraham. In art, a winged man is usually shown next to Matthew, because Matthew wrote about how Jesus, the Son of God, belonged to a human family.

Matthew preached about Jesus' life to the Hebrews and then traveled as far as Persia to preach the Gospel. Tradition tells us that Matthew died a glorious martyr for Jesus.

St. Matthew, help us to follow Jesus!