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Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1: The Christbook, Matthew 1-12

Frederick Dale Bruner

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Recognized as a masterly commentary when it first appeared, Frederick Dale Bruner's study of Matthew is now available as a greatly revised and expanded two-volume work -- the result of seven years of careful refinement, enrichment, and updating.

Through this commentary, crafted especially for teachers, pastors, and Bible students, Bruner aims "to help God's people love what Matthew's Gospel says." Bruner's work is at once broadly historical and deeply theological. It is historical in drawing extensively on great church teachers through the centuries and on the classical Christian creeds and confessions. It is theological in that it unpacks the doctrines in each passage, chapter, and section of the Gospel. Consciously attempting to bridge past and present, Bruner asks both what Matthew's Gospel said to its first hearers and what it says to readers today. As a result, his commentary is profoundly relevant to contemporary congregations and to those who guide them.

Bruner's commentary is replete with lively, verse-by-verse discussion of Matthew's text. While each chapter expounds a specific topic or doctrine, the book's format consists of a vivid, original translation of the text followed by faithful exegesis and critical analysis, a survey of historical commentary on the text, and current applications of the text or theme under study. In this revision Bruner continues to draw on the best in modern scholarship -- including recent work by W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., by Ulrich Luz, and by many others -- adding new voices to the reading of Matthew. At the same time he cites the classic commentaries of Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Bengel, and the rest, who, like Bruner himself, were not simply doctrinal teachers but also careful exegetes of Scripture. Such breadth and depth of learning assure that Bruner's Matthew will remain, as a reviewer for Interpretation wrote, "the most dog-eared commentary on the shelf."

Volume 1 of Bruner's commentary is called The Christbook because the first twelve chapters of Matthew are focused on the nature and work of Christ. As Bruner proceeds through these chapters, he shows how Matthew presents, step by step, central themes of Christology: Jesus' coming (chapters 1–4), his teaching (5–7), his miracles (8–9), his sermon on mission (10), and his person (11–12). Throughout the book there are also thoughtful discussions of significant topics such as baptism, marriage, Jewish-Christian relations, and heaven and hell.

Eminently readable, rich in biblical insight, and ecumenical in tone, Bruner's two-volume commentary on Matthew now stands among the best in the field.

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