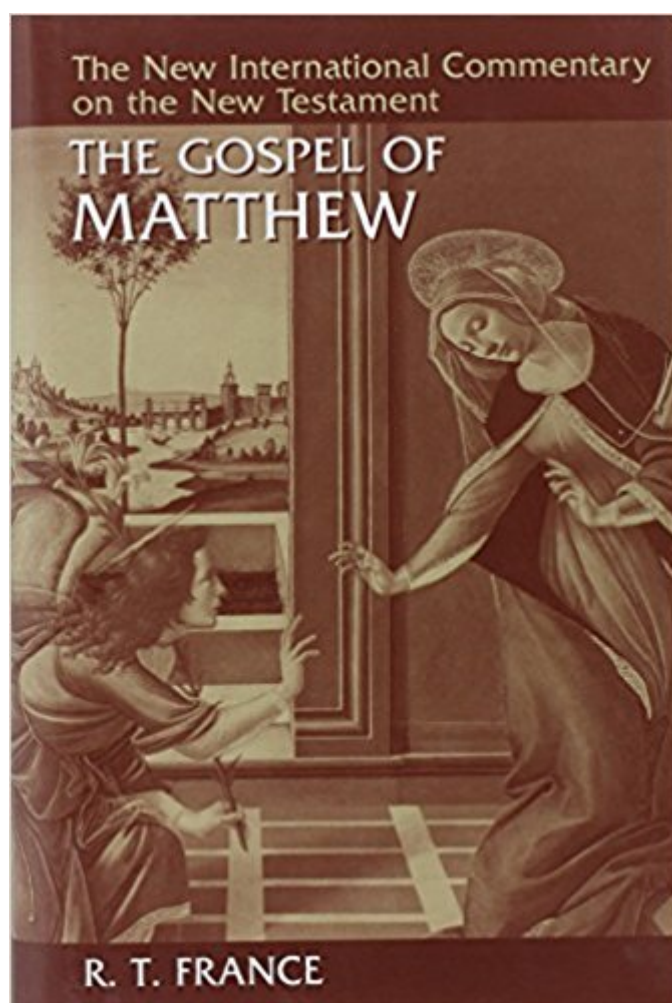


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The Gospel Of Matthew (The New International Commentary On The New Testament)



Synopsis

"It is a special pleasure to introduce R T (Dick) France's commentary to the pastoral and scholarly community, who should find it a truly exceptional - and helpful - volume." So says Gordon Fee in his preface to this work. France's masterful commentary on Matthew focuses on exegesis of Matthew's text as it stands rather than on the prehistory of the material or details of Synoptic comparison. It is concerned throughout with what Matthew himself meant to convey about Jesus and how he set about doing so within the cultural and historical context of first-century Palestine. Amid the wide array of Matthew commentaries available today, France's world-class stature, his clear focus on Matthew and Jesus, his careful methodology, and his user-friendly style promise to make this volume an enduring standard for years to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

R. T. France (1938-2012) was Hon. Research Fellow in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Bangor. His other books include *Jesus and the Old Testament*, *The Evidence for Jesus*, and *Matthew: Evangelist and Teach*

I have done a fair amount of browsing in commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew and all-in-all, this is my hands-down favorite. Dr. France does a nice job of interacting with issues in Matthean scholarship without getting bogged down in what can become a swamp of contradicting opinions

fueled by contradicting presuppositions. He ends up in what could be pigeonholed as an "evangelical" position, but one gets the clear impression that he gets there honestly, without starting with those commitments and then finding support for them. This is probably what 95% of Bible students need--solid exegesis with plenty of notes for those who need to go deeper. My advice is to get familiar with Davies and Allison and be able to find those excellent resources in your library. But buy this volume for yourself, and while you are at it, get a copy of France's *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*. Studying these books carefully will give one a solid understanding of the first gospel without the sometimes depressing rabbit trails of the many, many agendas that sometimes dominate research in Matthew.

Great commentary! One critique I have is that in the opening sections he refers back to a previous work of his rather than giving details common to most commentaries. He states that debates on the issues (authorship, provenance, date, and sources) and his stance on these issues hasn't changed and therefore he won't go into depth on them again. He simply directs the reader to his previous work. I don't have his previous work and as such it would be nice to have that in-depth information included here. However, still a great resource!

I taught our high school Sunday School class through the book of Matthew last year and wanted to have a bit more theological rigor in my lessons. I'm not a theologian but consulted a close friend who is, and he highly recommended France. What strikes me most about the writing style is the thoroughness of the research (many of the pages are half full of references, only half full of his commentary) and yet uncharacteristic humility with which he deals with the subject matter. I'm a practical reader, not an academic one, plus having to prepare a lesson for 14-17 yr old kids forces a certain pragmatism on me. So I'm often looking to cut to the chase and distill down to something a high school person can take to school with them on Monday. But France will not be so rushed! I read part of the commentary, say "oh, that's good", write it down, and am ready for the next verse. But France will end a compelling thought with something like "however, further insight into the grammar suggests such a conclusion, while historically popular, is not strongly supported by this text" or words to that effect. So I have to keep reading, past a couple more possibilities, until finally, France gives his opinion. And it's rarely some radical new position. Normally just a more finely-tuned view, built upon the hard work of many predecessors (with whom France is typically quite generous), and brought just that much further by France's painstaking research. I've not read widely in the commentary department and perhaps this is more common than I realize, but other

commentaries I have read like more of a platform for the writer than an insightful work. I am left feeling smarter, but in reality not very well informed. France will have none of that. He maintains at once a viscous loyalty to the text itself, and a student's appreciation for the collective body of research. Where I've been accustomed to a simple, black and white picture that I can easily understand, France forces me to contemplate a high-definition, widescreen, with surround-sound. Full-spectrum, all the shades and nuance, and I'm back to my knees seeking divine help to understand it all. Which is where I should have been all along...

I am a layperson filling a pulpit about every other weekend, so while I am not comfortable using the more critical commentary, this has been a terrific volume for me! Used it preparing a message two weeks ago, speaking from Matthew 5:1-10. The commentary regarding the Beatitudes was invaluable in preparing my message. France speaks in a language that is both easily accessible for a layperson, yet challenging and thought provoking. This is my second volume in the NICNT commentaries, and I love them both. I am sure there will be more in my future!

I have been using this commentary as a study tool to prepare for teaching my Sunday School class and I have found it to be incredibly helpful. It is both clear and concise. While I am sure it is helpful for pastors and seminary students, it is also readily understood by lay teachers and leaders. I highly recommend it.

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