

# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The Gospel of Matthew is appropriately located at the beginning of the New Testament. This is not because it was the first New Testament book, or even the earliest Gospel, to be written. Rather, more than any of the other Gospels it emphasizes Jesus' relation to the Old Testament, as the coming Messiah and King. Thus it serves as a bridge, connecting the two Testaments as promise and fulfillment.

## Author

The earliest manuscripts of the first Gospel do not identify an author, and some modern scholars reject Matthew as the author. However, since the second century A.D., church tradition has recognized Matthew, the disciple of Jesus and apostle, as its writer.

Before his call to follow Jesus (9:9–13), Matthew occupied the unpopular post of tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government. The Jewish character of this Gospel fits well with such an author.

## Date

Some have suggested a date as early as A.D. 50, and Matthew was first quoted by one of the church fathers around A.D. 110.

The two expressions “to this day” (27:8) and “until this day” (28:15) indicate that a substantial period of time has passed since the events described in the book, but they also point to a probable date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Jewish flavor of this Gospel is another argument for a date prior to A.D. 70.

## Themes and Literary Structure

An important key to the literary structure of Matthew is found in the phrase “when Jesus had ended” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), which is used to conclude the five key discourses of the book: the Sermon on the Mount (5:3–7:27), Instruction of the Disciples (10:5–42), Parables of the Kingdom (13:3–52), Terms of Discipleship (18:3–35), and the Olivet Discourse (24:4–25:46). This fivefold structure, common in Judaism (e.g., the Pentateuch), may reveal Matthew's purpose of showing Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding the coming prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15).

Matthew was placed first in the canon of New Testament books by the early church because it is a natural bridge between the Testaments. Matthew presents Jesus as Israel's promised messianic King and royal descendant of David. To show that Jesus fulfills the qualifications for the Messiah, Matthew uses more Old Testament quotations and allusions than any other New Testament book (almost 130). Often used in this Gospel is the phrase “that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled,” which appears nine times in Matthew and not once in the other Gospels.

Matthew emphasizes Jesus as a teacher. He was especially an authoritative interpreter of the Law of Moses and of the will of God (4:23; 5:2; 7:28, 29).

Matthew is the only Gospel to mention the church explicitly (16:18; 18:17), and the phrase “kingdom of heaven” occurs thirty-two times in this Gospel but nowhere else in the New Testament.

The narrative of Matthew includes some events not mentioned or without precise parallel in the other Gospels—e.g., the visit of the wise men (2:1–12), the flight to Egypt (2:12–23), and the Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29).

Fulfillment of prophecy was involved when Joseph and Mary went to Egypt (2:15; cf. Hos. 11:1) after the visit of the wise men. Matthew intends that his readers see an implicit link between Jesus and Israel (the Son who emerges from Egypt, Hos. 11:1). Many suggest that, by employing Hosea 11:1 in 2:15, Matthew implies that Jesus recapitulates the history of Israel, and embodies in Himself the future of Israel as the people of God.<sup>1</sup>

## Outline of the Contents

- I. Coming of the Messiah. 1:1–4:11.
  - A. His Ancestry. 1:1–17.
  - B. His Advent. 1:18–2:23.
  - C. His Ambassador. 3:1–12.
  - D. His Approval. 3:13–4:11.
    1. Baptism of Christ. 3:13–17.
    2. Temptation of Christ. 4:1–11.
- II. Ministry of the Messiah. 4:12–27:66.
  - A. In Galilee. 4:12–18:35.
    1. His message: Sermon on the Mount. 5:1–7:29.
    2. His miracles: Signs of divine authority. 8:1–9:38.
    3. His missionaries: Sending of the twelve. 10:1–12:50..
    4. His mystery: Parables about the kingdom. 13:1–58.
    5. His malediction: Seriousness of rejection. 14:1–16:28.
    6. His manifestation: Special transfiguration. 17:1–27.
    7. His mercy: Sanctification of forgiveness. 18:1–35.
  - B. In Judaea. 19:1–27:66.
    1. His presentation as King. 19:1–25:46.
    2. His rejection as King. 26:1–27:66.
- III. Triumph of the Messiah. 28:1–20.
  - A. His Resurrection. 28:1–8.
  - B. His Reappearance. 28:9–15.
  - C. His Recommission. 28:16–20.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

**Syllabus**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Sep 6	Introduction & Chapter 1 - The birth of the Christ
Sep 13	Chapter 2 - Jesus' childhood
Sep 20	Chapters 3 & 4 - John the Baptist to beginning of Jesus' ministry
Sep 27	Chapter 5 - The beginning of the Sermon on the Mount
Oct 4	Chapters 6 & 7 - The Sermon on the Mount
Oct 11	Chapter 8 - Signs of Jesus Authority
Oct 18	Chapter 9 - Further Signs
Oct 25	Chapter 10 - The sending of the Twelve
Nov 1	Chapters 11 & 12 - Claims of The Christ
Nov 8	Chapter 13 - Parables of the Kingdom
Nov 15	Chapter 14 - Rejection, death of John, Feeding the 5,000
Nov 22	Chapter 15 - Tradition of the elders, Feeding the 4,000
Nov 29	Chapters 16 & 17 - The Confession of the Christ, The transfiguration
Dec 6	Chapter 18 - Humility, Love, Forgiveness
Dec 13	Chapter 19 - Marriage & Divorce, Rich Young Ruler
Dec 20	Chapter 20 & 21 - Who is the greatest?, The triumphal entry
Dec 27	Chapters 22 & 23 - Scribe's and Pharisee's questions, and woes against them
Jan 3	Chapter 24 - Judgement is coming
Jan 10	Chapter 25 - Parables of Judgement
Jan 17	Chapter 26 - The night before his crucifixion
Jan 24	Chapter 27 - Jesus crucified and buried
Jan 31	Chapter 28 - Jesus resurrection and commission