

The Gospel of Matthew

Introduction to the New Testament

Class 6

“Matthew leaves nothing to chance: he repeatedly erects highway signs in large letters to direct his readers, making it unmistakably explicit that Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel’s Scripture. Matthew has organized his material in a didactic, user-friendly fashion—a kind of ‘training manual for prophets.’ It is therefore not without reason that, when the fourfold Gospel canon was later assembled, Matthew was placed first. Nor was it without reason that Matthew became the Gospel most frequently cited by early Christian writers and that commentaries were written on it by Origen, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Cyril of Alexandria, to mention just some of the patristic authors who focused on this Gospel. Matthew successfully organized the Jesus tradition in a form that made it clear, harmonious, and accessible.”

Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 106-107

I. Who and When?

A. How do we know that Matthew wrote *Matthew*?

1. Unanimous extra-biblical support: Quoted in 1st century writings (Polycarp, *Didache*) and 2nd century writings like Irenaeus call Matthew the author:

For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. **Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church.** After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.

Irenaeus (ca. 130–202), *Against the Heresies*, 3.1

2. With all the NT manuscripts we have, his name is always attached to it: “The Gospel according to Matthew.”
3. This is the only gospel where Matthew/Levi is called “Matthew the tax collector” (10:3). Mark and Luke leave this description out when listing out the Twelve (Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16).

B. The author himself

1. Converted when Jesus says, “Follow me,” in 9:9.

2. Famously holds a dinner for “many tax collectors and sinners” (9:10ff.).
 3. Matthew as an apostle (10:3 and Acts 1:13).
- C. When did Matthew write the book?
1. Carson says late 60s, but I think Quarles a better estimate.
 2. Charles Quarles¹⁵ says early quotations by Polycarp and *Didache* mean it’s early in 1st century. Matt 23:16–22 implies temple standing. Irenaeus’ comment also lends support to a date in the early 60s.

II. Outline of Matthew as one of the Synoptic Gospels

Matthew is a SYNOPTIC GOSPEL with Mark and Luke. Synoptic means “see together,” as in *together they are seeing the same thing*. We have a high degree of confidence Mark is first, but harder to tell whether Matthew or Luke is second.

Matthew and Luke adopt Mark’s basic outline. It’s a geographic layout, where Jesus starts in Galilee and then travels to Jerusalem for the crucifixion.

The key structural marker is that after a big block of teaching there will be a statement that begins, “And when Jesus finished these sayings....” The only exceptions to this are in the Prologue (1:1-4:17) and in the final section that includes the cross, resurrection, and Great Commission (26-28).

1. (1:1-4:17) The Prologue
From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17)
2. (4:18-7:29) Galilee Part 1: The Gospel of the Kingdom (Sermon on the Mount)
Teaching block: Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
Transition: *And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching,²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (Matt. 7:28-29)*
3. (8:1-11:1) Galilee Part 2: The Christ and his Apostles (Commission of the Twelve)
Teaching Block: Instructions when he sends out the twelve apostles (10:5-42)
Transition: *When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. (Matt. 11:1)*

¹⁵ Quarles, Charles L., *A Theology of Matthew: Jesus Revealed as Deliverer, King, and Incarnate Creator*, Explorations in Biblical Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013), 9.

4. (11:2-13:53) Galilee Part 3: The Christ and his Kingdom (Parables of the Kingdom)

Teaching Block: Parables about the Kingdom (13:1-52)

Transition: *And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there. (Matt 13:53)*

5. (13:54-19:2) Galilee Part 4: The Christ and our Response

Teaching Block: Sin and the people of God (18:1-35)

Transition: *Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. (Matt. 19:1-2)*

6. (19:3-26:2) Galilee to Jerusalem: The Stone Rejected is the Cornerstone

Teaching Block: Extensive material on seven woes to the Pharisees (23), the end times (24), living with an awareness of Jesus' return (25).

Transition: *When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ² "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." (Matt. 26:1-2)*

7. (26:3-28:20) The Crucifixion and Triumph of the King

Conclusion: *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)*

III. Why we need (and love) Matthew

A. The Kingdom of God

1. "Kingdom of God" (5 occurrences) and the "kingdom of heaven" (32 occurrences, all in Matthew) found extensively in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke).
2. Phrase means the rule of God, the kingship of God.
3. Sometimes the emphasis is on the King—what he is like, what he will do. Sometimes the emphasis is how we enter the kingdom. Sometimes on what it's like to be in this kingdom—awesome!
4. R.T. France: "the phrase 'the kingdom of God' in both its Hebrew and Greek forms denotes the dynamic concept of 'God ruling'.... 'The kingdom of heaven has arrived,' might thus be paraphrased as 'God's promised reign is beginning' or 'God is now taking control'" (NICNT, 102). He adds, "Yahweh reigns' embodies the universal

Hebrew conviction, expressed in a rich variety of ways from Genesis to Malachi, that God, as creator of this world, is in control of it and of all who are in it. But alongside this unquestioned datum of the eternal sovereignty of God there developed a sense that all was not as God would have it in his world, and with this the hope of a time to come when God's rule would be more fully and openly implemented and acknowledged among the people of earth: 'The LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one, and his name one' (Zech. 14:9)" (ibid., 102-103).

5. Some of the many references to the kingdom of heaven and God as the King:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (1:1)

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (4:17)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (5:3)

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (7:21)

"Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matt 12:25-28)

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (13:44-46)

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. (18:23-24)

And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." (27:37)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (28:18)

B. Matthew Highlights Prophecies Fulfilled

1. Virgin birth (Matt. 1:18-25 and Isa. 7:14)
 2. Bethlehem birth (Matt. 2:5-6 and Micah 5:2)
 3. Healing and teaching (Matt. 12:18-21 and Isa. 42:1-3)
 4. Crucifixion (Matt. 26:31 and Zech. 13:7)
- C. Matthew (Christ) Teaches Us How to Interpret the Old Testament Laws
1. The Old Testament is not abolished but fulfilled by Jesus (Matt. 5:17-21).
 2. The Ten Commandments demand obedience from the heart and not mere external obedience (Matt. 5:17-48).
 3. Some laws in the Old Testament are more important than others, like mercy being above sacrifice:

 For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hos 6:6)
 Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt 9:13)
 And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. (Matt 12:7)
 4. Jesus organized OT moral laws according to two great commandments: Matthew 22:34–40.
 - a. Love God: Deuteronomy 6:5
 - b. Love your neighbor: Leviticus 19:18
- D. Matthew Captures Critical Teaching on Discipleship
1. Large teaching blocks of Jesus are preserved in Matthew, and these highlight how disciples are to live and believe. They answer the question, "What does it mean to follow Christ?"
 2. Example: The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7)
 3. Example: Parables about the Kingdom (Matt 13)
- E. Matthew Presents Jesus as the Christ
1. Matthew 1 underscores in many ways that he is the Christ, the Son of David (1:1; genealogy; his birth as "Christ" and "Immanuel").
 2. Son of David the Healer in 9:27; 20:30.
 3. "Hosanna to the Son of David!" in the Triumphal Entry (21:9)
 4. The Christ
- Jesus is not merely the Jews' Messiah, he is God's Messiah; he is not only God's anointed Savior to Israel (Rom. 11:26), but to the whole world besides (Rom. 15:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:19). He belongs not only to Israel, but

to all who believe and who thereby become his people, his very own possession from his Father (Ps. 2:8; 110:3; Jn. 6:37-39; Heb. 2:13) Peter Lewis, *The Glory of Christ* (1992), 163

5. The Christ as God's Ransom:

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28)

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt 26:26-29)

"The covenant" in v. 28 is Jeremiah's "new covenant." Note forgiveness of sins in v. 34:

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:31-34)

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" (Matt 26:31) – Quoting Zech 13:7

IV. The Bookends of Matthew – 1:1 and 28:19–20

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Matt 1:1)

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:19-20)