

Matthew 1-13

The gospel of Matthew is written to...

What would you expect the gospel of Matthew to highlight, given his audience?

The gospel of Matthew is structured into seven parts.

1. Matthew 1-3
2. Matthew 4-7
3. Matthew 8-10
4. Matthew 11-13
5. Matthew 14-20
6. Matthew 21-25
7. Matthew 25-28

Matthew 1-3 - Introduction

Matthew 1:1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Notice that David and Abraham are explicitly highlighted. This isn't just because they're super famous or awesome. Matthew is pointing back to specific promises made to both of these men, which Jesus is meant to fulfill.

2 Samuel 7:12-13

When your [David] days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, [...] and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Genesis 22:18

and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed

Matthew 1:16

and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Matthew begins with Joseph's lineage, which is in line with the practice of the time of patrilineal genealogies. He then proceeds into Jesus' birth story from Joseph's perspective. Notice how Matthew directly points out the fulfillments of the Old Testament as they are happening.

Matthew 1:23

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"
(which means, God with us).

Matthew 1:26

'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Matthew 2:18

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

Matthew 3:3

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

Matthew then concludes his introduction to his gospel with Jesus’ baptism, a symbolic beginning of His ministry.

Matthew 4-7

The first block of Matthew’s five main sections kicks off with Jesus being tested in the wilderness for 40 days. Unlike the Israelites, Jesus succeeds in each temptation.

Matthew 4:6

and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,
“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and
“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

Even the devil is quoting the Old Testament! See if you can spot the twist the devil is making to the original psalm:

Psalm 91:9-13

Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—
no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.
For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

To make it easier, highlight what the devil says, and notice the bits he's left out. Then look at Jesus' response.

Matthew 4:8-9

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

What is the devil offering to give Jesus?

Matthew 4:17

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

Matthew ends each of his five main sections with a block of teaching from Jesus. For the first section, this teaching is the Sermon on the Mount. Throughout this point, Matthew has been highlighting Jesus' echoes to a perfected Moses, the one who gave Israel the Torah.

Notice the pattern then in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount...

Matthew 5:17

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Matthew 5:21-22

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment

Matthew 5:27-28

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:33-34

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God

Matthew 7:28-29

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

And so the first section highlights Jesus' success against sin and temptation and his teachings. For the Jew of the time who would hold the Torah as the law, Matthew illustrates how Jesus knows the law well enough to avoid entrapment while using scripture to defeat temptation. And then Jesus affirms he is here to fulfill the Law, and proceeds to teach in this expansive pattern in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 8-10

The second section of Matthew's gospel includes three sets of three stories, broken up by a call to follow him, and then again concludes with Jesus teaching the disciples.

The three sets of three stories are miracles. So while Jesus is announcing the kingdom of God is at hand, he is healing and calming storms and casting out demons, a literal illustration of the power of the kingdom of God.

Matthew 8:19-20

And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Matthew 8:21-22

Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” And Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

Matthew 9:9

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

Matthew 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Notice how each break between three stories of miracles performed pulls on this thread of Jesus’ followers. This thread leads into Jesus teaching the twelve disciples to go out and perform miracles and proclaim the kingdom of God is at hand. But Jesus is clear every step of the way, that following Him comes at a cost.

Matthew 10:34-39

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 11-13

The third section of Matthew’s gospel covers the response people are having to Jesus’s teachings, and it’s not all great.

Matthew 12:14

But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Matthew 11:21

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Jesus repeatedly tells those who refuse to believe that they will face harsh judgment for rejecting Him.

Matthew 12:6

I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

Matthew 12:41-42

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

This section of Matthew's gospel then closes with teachings through parables about the value of the kingdom of heaven. And yet after all the miracles, and all the condemnations and all the teaching, chapter 13 closes with this:

Matthew 13:53-58

And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Homework

Read Matthew 14-28

What verses include quotes from the Old Testament?

What examples do you see of Jesus reenacting Israel's journey?

What questions do you have from the reading?

Dive Deeper

If you want to keep studying on your own this week, check out these resources:

- Four Portraits, One Jesus *by Mark L. Strauss*
- A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New *by G. K. Beale*
- Get the handouts at DeeplyBiblical (<https://deeplybiblical.com/gospels/>)