

## **Lesson #1- Introduction to Matthew**

1. Likely written around AD70, after the destruction of the temple by the Romans.  
Anonymous author. Probably by Matthew based on early reliable tradition.
2. One of the three “synoptic” gospels (along with Mark and Luke). These three gospels are very similar in the events they recant and the order of presentation. The gospel according to John covers considerable events not recorded in the three other gospels.
3. The gospel according to Matthew, while perfectly compatible with the other three gospels, records the events of Jesus ministry from a **uniquely Jewish perspective**. Matthew focuses, more than the other gospels, on Jesus’ use of Old Testament quotes and expounding of the law, showing Him to be the fulfillment of the law and Messianic prophesy.
- Go to bibleproject.com. Scroll down to “Explore Bible Videos” and click on “Explore All”. Scroll down to “New Testament Overviews” and select and watch “Matthew 1-13. Then select and watch “Matthew 14-28”
4. Matthew’s purpose: To show that Jesus is-
  - I. The promised Messiah from the line of David
  - II. The New, better Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-22)
    - Matthew begins showing how Jesus fulfils the prophesy of Moses, that one like himself would come and deliver Israel (previously referenced, Deut. 18:15-22)
      - Both came out of Egypt
      - Moses crossed the water of the Red Sea, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan
      - Moses led the children of Israel in the wilderness 40 years, Jesus was in the wilderness tempted for 40 days.
      - Moses received the law on the mountain, Jesus delivered the law from the mountain
    - Jesus is greater than Moses in that He will:
      - Deliver from slavery
      - Give new divine teaching
      - Save from sin
      - Initiate a new covenant
  - III. God with us, Immanuel
5. Organization of the Book:

- I. **Introduction** (Chapters 1-3): connects Jesus with the Old Testament, going back through David, all the way to Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation. It highlights how Jesus is a Son of David and a Son of Abraham and is the prophesied of, long awaited Messiah. Jesus' birth is recorded, showing fulfilment of prophesy (Isaiah 50) that the nations would come and honor the Messiah, the place of His birth, and supremely important, His virgin birth and fulfilment of all Messianic prophesy makes it clear that He is no ordinary man, He is truly "God with us"- Immanuel. He is God become human.
- II. **Core-** Broken into five teachings of Jesus, that parallel the five books of Moses. Jesus is the new, authoritative, covenant teacher who **fulfils** the story line of the Torah (Law).
  - (Chapters 4-7): Jesus announces the arrival of God's kingdom, God's rescue operation for the whole world, taking place through King Jesus.
    - Jesus confronts evil, particularly spiritual evil- demon possession, disease, death.
    - Jesus has come to restore God's reign by creating a new family of people who will follow, obey, and live under His rule.
    - Jesus takes His followers out to a mountain and delivers His **first large block of teaching**, which we usually refer to as the Sermon on the Mount.
      - ✓ An upside-down kingdom- no rich/ poor, no privileged social or religious position. All are invited to repent and follow Jesus.
      - ✓ Jesus is here to fulfil the Torah
      - ✓ Jesus is here to transform the hearts of His people so that they can truly love God and others
  - (Chapters 8-10): Shows Jesus bringing the kingdom into reality in the lives of everyday people.
    - Nine stories of Jesus bringing the power of God's kingdom into lives of hurting and broken people.
    - Three groups of three stories, with a call to follow Jesus inserted between each group. Matthew is making the point that one can only experience the grace and power of Jesus by following Him and becoming His disciple.
    - This is followed by the **second large block of teaching** (chapter 10), where Jesus sends forth the twelve, teaching His disciples how to announce the kingdom and what to expect in response from the people to whom they preach (acceptance and rejection).
  - (Chapters 11-13): A group of stories about how people are responding to Jesus; the responses are mixed.

- Positive response. Some love Jesus and believe He is Messiah
- Some are neutral, Jesus is not what they expected.
- Negative response, He is not Messiah, they hate Him, outright rejection.
- **Third large block of teaching** (chapter 13), a collection of Jesus' parables. These parables are commentaries about the stories you have just read in chapters 11 and 12.
- (Chapters 14-20) Explores different people's expectations about the Messiah.
  - Jesus continues healing sick people.
  - Twice He feeds enormous crowds in the desert. One is a Jewish crowd, the other a non-Jewish crowd.
    - ✓ Many see this as a parallel to what Moses did for the children of Israel in the wilderness, and are excited that Jesus is that great Prophet, the Messiah.
    - ✓ Not the religious leaders. They reject Jesus as being the Messiah, looking for a Messiah that, in their view, fits the image of a victorious Messiah, defeating Israel's oppressors, such as seen in Psalms 2 and Daniel 2. They go about trying to discredit and destroy Him.
  - In response, Jesus withdraws and begins teaching His closest disciples what it really means for Him to be Israel's Messiah.
    - ✓ It is not what anyone expects
    - ✓ Peter correctly answers for the group who Jesus is.
    - ✓ His disciples still struggle with how Jesus will establish His kingdom. Jesus begins teaching them from the prophecies of Isaiah, concerning how the Messiah would suffer and die as a willing servant, sacrificing Himself for the sins of Israel and the nations. The disciples still don't really get it.
  - **Fourth large block of teaching** (Chapters 18-20), about this upside-down kingdom He is establishing.
    - ✓ You gain honor by being a servant
    - ✓ Forgive instead of seeking revenge, love your enemy
    - ✓ Gain true wealth by giving away your wealth to the needy
    - ✓ Following the Servant-Messiah means you must yourself become a servant
- (Chapters 21-25) Clash of the two kingdoms (Jesus' kingdom and the kingdom of the Jewish leaders)
  - Jesus comes into Jerusalem on a donkey. Hailed by the people as the triumphant King

- He goes straight to the temple and makes a huge disturbance, that brings the daily sacrifices to an abrupt halt.
  - ✓ Jesus is asserting His royal authority over the temple, the place where God met with His people, because the worship is compromised by hypocrisy. Jesus is blatantly challenging the authority of the Jewish religious leaders. They are horribly offended.
  - ✓ The religious leaders try to trap Jesus in open public debate and fail dismally.
  - ✓ In desperation, they determine to somehow murder Him.
- **Fifth large block of teaching** (Chapters 23-25), Passionate criticism of the Pharisees, and sorrow over Jerusalem's rejection of their King and His kingdom.
  - ✓ Jesus withdraws with His disciples and begins telling them what is about to happen.
  - ✓ He is going to be killed by these religious authorities.
  - ✓ In rejecting His peaceful way and going about to establish their own kingdom, they are creating their own downfall.
  - ✓ They will rebel against Rome and try by their own power to establish their own kingdom. The result will be their utter defeat at the hands of the Romans and the complete destruction of the temple (their most treasured icon).
  - ✓ Jesus insures them that this is not how the story ends. He will be vindicated after His death by rising from the grave. He will one day return and set up His kingdom, ruling over all nations.
  - ✓ Until He comes again, the disciples are commanded to stay alert for His return and to spread the good news everywhere

### III. **Climax** (Chapters 26-28)- Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

- Jesus shares the Passover meal with His closest disciples, once again in view of His fulfillment of the prophecy of Moses, and that it all pointed to His ultimate sacrifice He was making, of which the exodus story was only a picture.
- Jesus is arrested and condemned by the Jewish leaders. Sent to the Roman ruler Pilate for condemnation to death, Pilate can't find fault with Him, but gives in to pressure from the Jewish authorities.
- Jesus dies on the cross for the sins of the world and is buried.
  - As Jesus is crucified, Matthew increases his references to Old Testament Scriptures, for the purpose of pointing out that Jesus'

death is no failure, but the amazing fulfillment of all the prophecies that the Messiah would suffer as a willing servant to bear the punishment for His people that He is saving. He is judged on their behalf.

- Three days later, it is discovered that the body is not in the tomb. Jesus has risen from the dead, just as He said He would.
- The book ends with Jesus' final teaching, which we refer to as the great commission. He sends out His disciples to all the world with the good news that He has defeated death and that there is eternal life for all that He has called and that respond in faith, following Him as Lord.
- His last words, going back to His name Emanuel, "God with us", is the wonderful promise that He will be with us, to the end of the world.

6. Who was Matthew? Matthew, also referred to as Levi, the son of Alphaeus, is introduced in chapter 9, where we find him sitting at the "receipt of custom". He was a low-level tax collector, a sellout and traitor to his fellow Jewish countrymen. He was hired by the occupying Roman government to collect the equivalent of our sales tax. These tax collectors would charge any surplus amount they could squeeze out of the people. Rome didn't care, so long as Caesar got his cut. You can imagine that he was hated by his own people and considered a detestable thief. Then one day there is an encounter, where Jesus walks by where Matthew is collecting his tax money. Jesus simply is recorded to have said two words, "follow me". Matthew does just that, he gets up and follows Jesus. Matthew is listed as one of the twelve apostles appointed by Jesus, as given in all three of the synoptic gospels. According to secular history (Foxe's Book of Martyrs), Matthew eventually took the gospel to Parthia and Ethiopia, where he was killed.