

According to Matthew – Introduction – Part 2

1. **Who wrote Matthew?**

All the Gospels remain anonymous. The internal and external evidence points to Matthew (Levi) as the author of this account.

2. **To whom is Matthew addressed?**

The content of the book of Matthew mandates that the account was written to Jews. The content of the account would have had no impact upon Gentiles who had no knowledge of the Messianic claims of Hebrew Scriptures.

3. **Where was Matthew written?**

Internally, there is no evidence of where Matthew was, and scholarly attempts to place Matthew in Antioch Syria are complete guesswork.

4. **When was Matthew written?**

Internal and external evidence indicates that this account would have been written early: AD 35-55.

5. **What was the occasion of the writing, what situation(s) prompted the writing?**

The content dictates that this book was written as a witness to the Jews. There is nothing in the text that would indicate any other occasion that prompted this writing (It's not a swan song, persecution, journey).

6. **What is the stated purpose for Matthew?**

Matthew 1:1, 5-6, 16, 22, 2:15, 23, 8:17, 28:16-20; “kingdom of heaven” – used 31 times in Matthew, none in any other book.

What is the purpose of Mathew?

- To demonstrate that Jesus is Christ (the Messiah)
- To write an account of the life and times of Jesus Christ
- To introduce, offer, and prepare the Jews for the kingdom of heaven
- To validate both this testimony and the testimony of all the apostles
- If Israel were to have believed in Jesus and accept His as their king, then He would have brought the kingdom of heaven into fruition.

7. **What were the circumstances of the author when he wrote?**

Unknown

8. **What were the circumstances of those to whom he wrote?**

The Jews are historically oppressed and hated by all the surrounding nations. The initial distribution would have been to religious Hebrew Jews, both local and in the diaspora (Acts 2:5-12, 37-41).

9. **What glimpses does the book give into the life and character of the author?**

In the discussion as to the author, we see the emphasis that Matthew places on the Hebrew Scriptures, the Jewish customs, and the politics of the ruling authorities. Matthew does not focus upon his experience but is completely focused on Jesus.

10. What are the themes of Matthew?

- The kingdom of heaven
- The coming kingdom
- The administration of the kingdom
- Entrance into the kingdom
- Jesus as Messiah
- The messages of Jesus
- The parables of Jesus
- The authority of Jesus
- The miracles of Jesus
- The prophecies of Jesus

11. What is the one central truth of Matthew?

Jesus the Messiah offering the kingdom of heaven to Israel.

12. What are the characteristics of the book?

This narrative is written very matter-of-factly. There is no personalization or commentary from Mathew that appeals to the reader. The emphasis is telling them of Jesus; this is what He did and said.

Outline – Reading Matthew as a collection of discourses. The arc of Matthew is chronological: the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But during the life of Jesus, the discourses of Matthew are compilations of information. One can usually find the discourses with bookends.

The first discourse

Matthew 5-7 (5:1-2, 7:28-29) – The Sermon on the Mount

The second discourse

Matthew 10 (10:1, 5, 11:1) – The cost and benefit of being a disciple

The third discourse

Matthew 13 (13:1-3, 36, 53) – The parables of Jesus

This part includes the parables of the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl, and the dragnet

The fourth discourse

Matthew 18 (18:1, 19:1-2) – To be great in the kingdom

Many call this *Discourse on the Church*; this is categorically not true and begins and ends with references to the kingdom of heaven.

The fifth discourse

Matthew 23-25 (23:1, 24:1-4, 26:1-2) – The Olivet Discourse - The discourse on the end times

According to Matthew – Introduction – Part 2

Before, between, and after the discourses, the narrative progresses from location to location and records the conversations, challenges, miracles, and wisdom of Jesus the Messiah. The narrative sections complete the account of Matthew:

1. His birth and early life – 1:1-2:23
2. His introduction to Israel – 3:1-4:25
3. His miracles – 8:1-9:38
4. Affirmation and opposition – 11:1-12:50
5. Evidence and more opposition – 14-17
6. Jesus' Jerusalem ministry – 19-22
7. The crucifixion and resurrection – 26-28

Key Words in Matthew

Heaven – 72 times

Disciple(s) – 69 times

Kingdom – 54 times

Forgive(ness) – 40 times

Prophet – 34 times

Slave(s) – 30 times

High Priest (chief priests) – 24 times

House – 25 times

Blessed – 13/5 (two different words)

Messiah/Christ – 16 times

Fulfill – 16 times

Righteous – 14 times

Worship – 13 times

Spirit – 19 times

Blind – 14 times

Repent – 3 times

Kingdom of heaven – 31 times

Son of Man – 29 times

Son of David – 10 times

Son of God – 7 times

Weeping and gnashing of teeth – 6 times

End of the age – 5 times

According to Matthew – Introduction – Part 2

Thoughts

This is the most misused book in the Bible. James is second. This is based on the fact that most within Christendom will use Matthew to promote a works-based soteriology. In other words, they use Matthew in an attempt to add to the good news of eternal life by grace through faith.

The emphasis is the kingdom of heaven. The moniker must be understood and is vital throughout the account. It is first found in 3:2 and is used in chapters 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 25.

The word *disciple* is also interesting. It is used 69 times, first in chapter 5, and then is used in almost every chapter afterward (except for chapters 20 and 25). What is a disciple? This word is used exclusively in the Four Accounts and Acts. Why is that and is it appropriate to call believers disciples today?

There is no strict chronology; we need to make sure we do not make a big deal about the order of events because we can demonstrate that some events are not given sequentially. It does follow a general path from gathering the twelve to the cross. When we get into chapter 3, we will talk more about chronology.

One could follow the *fulfill* “πληρώω plēroō” thread to understand the message of Matthew: 1:22, 2:15, 17, 23, 3:15, 4:14, 5:17, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 48, 21:4, 23:32, 26:54, 56, 27:9. Matthew can be rightfully subtitled “Jesus Fulfills the Messianic Prophecy.”

Questions

I don't want to overwhelm you with looking too far ahead, so the questions will be asked as we begin a section. The first section that we will deal with is Matthew 1-2. Here are some questions:

1. There are some gaps in the genealogy and Josiah is skipped. Why?
2. What is the significance of the curse of Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 22:24; Matthew 1:12)?
3. Whose line is this? Joseph or Mary? Compare and contrast with Luke 3.
4. Matthew states that there is symmetry from Abraham-Moses; Moses-Babylon; Babylon to Jesus. What does this mean? Does this add up?
5. What is the point of the genealogy?
6. Who were the magi? What was their purpose?
7. What does it mean to fulfill a prophecy? What is a prophecy?