

New Testament Survey:  
The Gospel of Matthew

Source: Craig Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997.

### Major themes of the Gospel

There are several major themes in the Gospel of Matthew.

1. Jesus as teacher. Matthew includes 5 full discourses in his book. Mark has shorter versions of the second, third, and fifth, but Matthew expands each of them.

Some scholars have seen a trend in Matthew to depict Jesus as a new Lawgiver or a “new Moses.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus’ birth resembles Moses in that both survive government-approved infanticide. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness before beginning his ministry; Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness before beginning His ministry. Moses received the Law on a mountain; Jesus gave His first major discourse on a mountain. However, Jesus’ teaching is far different from Moses’ in that Jesus’ demands come with the promise of the means to obey them.

2. Son of David, King, and Royal Messiah. Matthew uses the phrase “Son of David” 9 times to refer to Jesus, 8 of which appear in no other Gospel. The people who address Jesus as “Son of David” are always the ones needing healing (9:27, 15:22, 20:30).
3. “Heightened Son of God.” Matthew’s use of this term approached a confession of full-fledged divinity. The devil recognizes Him as the Son of God in the temptation (4:3, 6). The disciples confess Jesus as the Son of God when He walks on water (14:33). Matthew includes this title with Peter’s confession (16:16). Jesus is called “Immanuel” at His conception, then promises to be with us always in the Great Commission.
4. Particularism and Universalism in the Gospel offer. Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels, but his Gospel also includes the visit of the Persian Magi (chapter 2), a series of parables depicting the end of the Jewish leadership (21:18-22:14), and the parable of the sheep and the goats (25:31-46). Jesus’ Great Commission still resonates with missionary-minded congregations today. Before the cross, Jesus tends to limit His message to the Jews; after His resurrection, the message goes to all people.
5. Discipleship and the Church. Matthew give the disciples a better showing than does Mark. Matthew says the disciples have at least some faith (8:26, 13:51, 14:33). Matthew alone uses the word for “church” (16:18 and 18:17). Matthew also includes Jesus’ teaching about community discipline and forgiveness (18:15-35).<sup>2</sup>

### Circumstances

Matthew is written primarily to Jewish Christians, primarily in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Some interpreters believe Matthew was written to Christians either on the verge of or just recovering from breaking off from Judaism.<sup>3</sup> We know that Paul was being expelled from synagogues in the 40’s and 50’s, so Matthew’s

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1. Blomberg, p. 129.

2. Blomberg, p. 132.

3. Blomber, p. 133.

Gospel may have been written in the 60's. Irenaeus wrote that Matthew composed his Gospel while Peter and Paul were still alive and in Rome themselves, pointing to a date before or around 68 A.D.

### **Outline of the Gospel of Matthew**

- I. Introduction to Jesus' Ministry (1:1-4:16)
  - A. Jesus' Origin (1:1-2:23)
    - a. Jesus' Genealogy (1:1-1:17)
    - b. The Story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus (1:18-25)
    - c. The Visit of the Wise Men (2:1-12)
    - d. The Flight to Egypt (2:13-15)
    - e. Herod murders the infants of Bethlehem (Holy Innocents) (2:16-18)
    - f. The family returns to Nazareth (2:19-23)
  - B. Jesus' Preparation for Ministry (3:1-4:16)
    - a. John the Baptist (3:1-12)
    - b. Jesus' baptism (3:13-17): the Spirit appears, the Father speaks
    - c. Jesus' temptation (4:1-11)
    - d. Jesus begins His ministry in Capernaum (4:12-16)
- II. The Development of Jesus' Ministry (4:17-16:20)
  - A. Jesus' Authority in Preaching and Healing (4:17-9:35)
    - a. Introduction (4:17-25)
      - 1. Jesus calls the first disciples (4:18-22)
      - 2. Jesus' ministry in Galilee (4:23-25)
    - b. Paradigmatic Preaching: The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)
      - 1. The Beatitudes (5:1-11)
      - 2. Teachings (5:12-6:4)
      - 3. The Lord's Prayer (Our Father): 6:5-14)
      - 4. More Teachings (6:15-29)
    - c. Paradigmatic Healing (8:1-9:35)
      - 1. Jesus heals a leper (8:1-4)
      - 2. Jesus heals the Centurion's servant (8:5-13)
      - 3. Jesus heals others (8:14-17)
      - 4. The cost of discipleship (8:18-22)
      - 5. Jesus calms a storm on the Sea of Galilee (8:23-27)
      - 6. Jesus heals a demon-possessed man ("Legion") (8:28-34)
      - 7. Jesus heals a paralytic (9:1-8)
      - 8. Jesus calls Matthew; Matthew throws a feast (9:19-12)
      - 9. Jesus questioned about fasting (9:14-17)
      - 10. Jesus raises a synagogue ruler's daughter to life and heals a woman of a blood issue (9:18-26)
      - 11. Jesus heals 2 blind men (9:27-31)
      - 12. Jesus heals a man unable to speak (9:32-34)
  - B. Rising Opposition to Jesus' Mission (9:36-12:50)
    - a. Opposition Predicted for the Disciples' Mission (9:36-10:42)
      - 1. Jesus calls for laborers to the harvest (9:35-37)
      - 2. Jesus calls the 12 Apostles (10:1-3)
      - 3. Jesus sends out the Apostles (10:4-15)

4. Jesus predicts persecution (10:16-42)
- b. Opposition Experienced in Jesus' Mission (11:1-12:50)
  1. John the Baptist' disciples come to Jesus during John's imprisonment (11:1-19)
  2. Jesus prophesies against unrepentant cities (11:20-24)
  3. Jesus promises rest (11:25-30)
  4. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (12:1-8)
  5. Jesus heals a man with a withered hand in the synagogue (12:9-14)
  6. Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah (12:15-21)
  7. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (12:22-32)
  8. Signs: a tree's fruit, Jonah (12:33-42)
  9. An unclean spirit returns (12:43-45)
  10. Jesus redefines His family (12:46-49)
- C. Progressive Polarization of Response to Jesus (13:1-16:20)
  - a. The Polarization Explained: Kingdom Parables (13:1-52)
    1. Parable of the Sower (13:1-23)
    2. Parable of the Weeds (13:24-30, 36-43)
    3. Mustard Seed and Leaven (13:31-33)
    4. Parable of the Pearl (13:45-46)
    5. Parable of the Net (13:47-50)
  - b. The Polarization Enacted: From Jew to Gentile (13:53-16:20)
    1. Jesus rejected at Nazareth (13:53-58)
    2. John the Baptist's execution by Herod (14:1-12)
    3. Jesus feeds the 5,000 men (plus women and children) (14:13-21)
    4. Jesus walks on the water (14:22-33)
    5. Jesus heals in Gennesaret (14:34-36)
    6. Traditions, Commandments, and defilement (15:1-20)
    7. Jesus heals a Canaanite woman's daughter (15:21-28)
    8. Jesus heals others (15:29-31)
    9. Jesus feeds the 4,000 men (plus women and children) (15:32-39)
    10. Pharisees and Sadducees demand signs (16:1-4)
    11. The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:5-13)
    12. Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ (16:13-20)

### III. The Climax of Jesus' Ministry (16:21-28:20)

- A. Focus on Coming Death and Resurrection (16:21-18:35)
  - a. Implications for Discipleship: Correcting Misunderstandings (16:21-17:27)
    1. Jesus foretells His death and resurrection (16:21-23)
    2. "Take up the cross" (16:24-28)
    3. The Transfiguration (17:1-13): Jesus, Elijah, and Moses.
    4. Jesus heals a boy of an unclean spirit (17:14-20)
    5. Jesus foretells His death and resurrection for the second time (17:22-23)
    6. Temple tax and coin in the fish (17:24-27)
  - b. Implications for the Church: Humility and Forgiveness (18:1-35)
    1. Disciples argue over who is the greatest (18:1-6)
    2. Temptations to sin (18:7-9)
    3. Parable of the lost sheep (18:10-14)
    4. If (when?) a brother sins against you (18:15-20)

5. Parable of the unforgiving servant (18:21-35): 70x7?
- B. The Road to Jerusalem: Impending Judgment on Israel (19:1-25:46)
  - a. True Discipleship vs. Harsher Condemnation for the Jewish Leaders (19:1-22:46)
    1. Teachings on divorce (19:1-12)
    2. Jesus rebukes the disciples for preventing the children from coming to Him (19:13-15)
    3. The rich young man chooses riches over Jesus (19:16-30)
    4. Laborers in the vineyard (20:1-16)
    5. Jesus foretells His death and resurrection for the third time (20:17-19)
    6. Request of the mother of James and John (20:20-28)
    7. Jesus heals 2 blind men at Jericho (20:29-34)
    8. The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)
    9. Jesus cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)
    10. Jesus curses the fig tree (21:18-22)
    11. The priests, scribes, and elder challenge Jesus' authority (21:23-27)
    12. Parable of the 2 sons (21:28-32)
    13. Parable of the wicked tenants (21:33-46)
    14. Parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14)
    15. Paying taxes to Caesar (22:15-22)
    16. Sadducees ask of the resurrection: "whose wife is she?" (22:23-33)
    17. The Greatest Commandments (22:34-40)
    18. "Whose son is the Christ?" (22:41-46)
  - b. Judgment on the Temple but Also on the Nations (23:1-25:46)
    1. Seven Woes to scribes and Pharisees (23:1-36)
    2. Lament over Jerusalem (23:37-39)
    3. Jesus' prediction of the Temple's destruction (24:1-2)
    4. The Apocalypse of Matthew (24:3-25:46)
- C. Jesus' Ultimate Destiny (26:1-28:20)
  - a. Passion and Crucifixion (26:1-27:66)
    1. The plot to kill Jesus (26:1-5)
    2. Jesus anointed at Bethany (26:6-13)
    3. Judas chooses to betray Jesus (26:14-16)
    4. The Last Passover of Jesus (26:17-25)
    5. Institution of Holy Communion (26:26-29)
    6. Jesus foretells Peter's denial (26:30-35)
    7. Jesus prays in Gethsemane (26:36-46)
    8. Jesus is betrayed and arrested (26:47-56)
    9. Jesus before Caiaphas (26:57-68)
    10. Peter denies Jesus (26:69-75)
    11. Jesus delivered to Pilate (27:1-2)
    12. Judas hangs himself in remorse (27:3-10)
    13. Jesus before Pilate (27:11-14)
    14. Barabbas or Jesus? (27:15-23)
    15. Pilate delivers Jesus to crucifixion (27:24-26)
    16. Jesus is mocked by the Roman soldiers (27:27-31)
    17. Jesus is crucified (27:32-44)

18. Jesus' death (27:45-55). The centurion confesses Jesus is the Son of God.
  19. Jesus is buried by Joseph of Arimathea (27:57-61)
  20. The Jewish leaders request a guard at the tomb (27:62-66)
- b. Resurrection (28:1-20)
1. The appearance of the angel, the fright of the soldiers, and the pronouncement to the women (28:1-10)
  2. The guards report (28:11-15)
  3. The Great Commission (28:16-20)