

MATTHEW

Introduction

Author. The early church fathers were unanimous in their view of Matthew's authorship of the gospel. This Matthew, one of the 12 apostles, and a tax collector who left his work to follow Jesus (9:9-13), was also called Levi.

Date. Although the date is difficult to determine, a writing in the early 50's seems reasonable. Since Jewish believers who made up the early church would have been the first to require a full story of Jesus' Messianic offer, this book which clearly speaks to their interests may have been one of the earliest of the synoptic gospels.

Structure. The book of Matthew is woven around five great discourses of Jesus: 1) the Sermon on the Mount, (5-7); 2) the commission to the Twelve, (10); 3) the parables of the kingdom, (13); 4) the questions about greatness, (18); and 5) the Olivet Discourse, (24-25). Each of these sections ends with the literary conclusion of "When Jesus had finished saying these things."

Occasion. Because the occasion of the book is not explicitly stated any conclusion must be made with caution. Evidently, the question arose of how Jesus could have been the Messiah if he did not found the kingdom promised to his father, David. It has been surmised by many that the book of Matthew was written to answer this question. The weakness of this view, although historically plausible, is that it is not clearly drawn from the text itself. The book of Matthew does emphasize Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfillment and fulfiller of the Old Testament promises more than the other synoptics (Matthew has more quotations from, and allusions to, the Old Testament than any other New Testament book). Matthew even finds parallels in the history of God's people in the Old Testament with this, God's ideal Son. Thus, the book seems intended to instruct believers about the person and program of Jesus, the Messiah.

Message Statement. *Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David, fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament in offering the Kingdom to Israel and in providing salvation for the world, and, though rejected, will one day establish the Kingdom for Israel and all men.*

Argument

- 1A THE CREDENTIALS OF THE KING 1:1--4:11
The first four chapters are given over to the demonstration of the fact that Jesus was qualified in every way to be Messiah. In harmony with the design of the gospel, the areas which are covered are not meant so much to *prove* as to *instruct*. A skeptic could argue that the genealogy (chapter one) was forged and the Scriptural quotations (chapter two) were hermeneutically deficient as proofs. Rather, these chapters are intended to answer, instruct and confirm the faith of believers.
- 1B His Legal Descent 1:1-17
The genealogy demonstrates legally that Jesus could be Messiah. His ancestry can be traced through David and his royal line. The first verse summarizes his descent through David and Abraham reminding the reader of the great covenants of Genesis 12 and 2 Samuel 7. The order in which Abraham and David are mentioned emphasizes the Jewish promises above the promises to Abraham which include Gentiles as well.
- 2B His Human/Divine Nature 1:18-25
Matthew is careful to underscore the virginity of Mary in the section at five different points, thus teaching that Jesus' origin was supernatural. Both his humanity and deity are taught by the names which He is given.
- 3B The Old Testament Witness 2:1-23
The second chapter is a hermeneutically mixed bag of quotations from the Old Testament. Some rely upon direct prophecies, others upon Jesus' identification with the corporate life of the nation and, the final one, upon the general teaching of the Messiah's reception.
- 4B The Forerunner 3:1-15
John is introduced as a forerunner who attempts to prepare the people through repentance for the coming of Messiah. His message, like that of the Messiah, came from Deuteronomy 30, consisting primarily of repentance as the necessary prerequisite to the enjoyment of millennial blessing.
- 5B The Godhead 3:16-17
Through the descent of the Holy Spirit and the Father's voice from heaven, Jesus receives the divine endorsement and enablement for his mission. As every Davidic king before him had been anointed as they entered into the special ministry as theocratic proxy, so also Jesus is now the recipient of the pregnant Old Testament phrase "Thou art my son" (Psalm 2:7).
- 6B His Moral Constitution 4:1-11
Until this point Jesus' credentials have been established by external means. In chapter four Matthew records Jesus' own testimony to his deity through his triumph over Satan. Thus he demonstrates the moral right to rule. In a note of Old Testament interest, each of Jesus' quotations of Scripture used to combat the temptations from Satan were drawn from the book of Deuteronomy, the foundational book of the covenant. As so many kings had failed in their theocratic responsibilities because of either ignorance of, or deliberate rebellion against, the Deuteronomic covenant, it is delightfully refreshing to finally find a King who understands and applies the power of the book.
- 1B THE MESSAGE OF THE KING 4:12--11:1
This section covers the publication of the message throughout Israel. It begins with a summary of Jesus' teaching in the sermon on the mount. The message presented in the sermon is then authenticated for the reader in Matthew's variegated review of two chapters of Messianic miracles. Jesus then commissions the twelve who are sent throughout the nation to spread the news.
- 1B The Background 4:12-25
This section covers the establishment of Jesus' base of operations as a fulfillment of prophecy. It next

surveys the two kinds of followers which He has at this point. A few faithful disciples are called but most are uncommitted individuals who are fascinated by, and attracted to, the miracles.

- 2B The Content (DISCOURSE I) 5:1--7:12
 This sermon lays down the requirements for entering the kingdom and the proper lifestyle of citizens of the kingdom. Although Jesus speaks it to disciples one must not confuse the terms "believers" and "disciples." The sermon concludes with a clear invitation to salvation. Thus, whether many of his followers (disciples) were in need of salvation or many of those who subsequently joined the sermon while in process were unbelievers. In any event, Jesus used the opportunity to preach the necessity of faith and confidence in God and to refute both the humanistic theology and hypocritical practice of the Pharisees.
- 1C Description of the citizens of the kingdom 5:1-16
 Jesus begins with a description of the inner, righteous character which is necessary for entrance into the Kingdom. The famous "beatitudes" (5:3-10) are simply expositions of righteous character, each accompanied by a promise of millennial blessing. These few verses are framed (5:3 and 5:10) with the direct promise of "theirs is the *kingdom* of heaven." Those rewards in the intervening verses (5:4-9) include other promises which will be fulfilled in the millennium. Those who will *in the future* receive the blessings of the kingdom must demonstrate godly character *in the present*. This kind of people will be light and salt in a world awash in the putrefying effects of sin.
- 2C Contrast with the prevailing concept of a citizen of the kingdom 5:17--6:34
 Throughout this section Jesus' foil is both the bankrupt theology and practice of the Pharisee. To separate himself from the Pharisees was necessary not only because of the obvious differences between them but also because of the people's propensity in this economy to so heavily depend upon their leaders for instruction and example. To win the hearts of the people Jesus had to destroy their confidence in the religious system which was so consistently taught to them in the synagogues.
- 1D Introductory clarification 5:17-20
 At the outset Jesus clarifies that he is not setting himself against Old Testament teaching; rather, his dispute is with the Pharisaical *mis*interpretation of the Law. It is clear from these verses that Jesus is dealing with the subject of righteousness which will gain one entrance into the kingdom.
- 2D Concerning doctrine 5:21-48
 Jesus elucidates the true intent of the Law with reference to righteousness by showing that the Law requires inward purity in addition to external purity. The final statement of this section summarizes the intent of the Law by requiring the moral excellence of God in men. His audience should have realized that such a goal was unattainable by human effort. At its spirit and soul of the Old Testament law demanded a heart of faith.
- 3D Concerning practice 6:1-34
 Jesus next moves from doctrine to practice. He first warns the people not to follow the man-centered customs of the Pharisees, almsgiving, prayer and fasting and then outlines proper practices concerning wealth and anxiety.
- 3C An invitation to become a citizen of the kingdom 7:1-27
 Given the flow of the sermon so far it appears that Jesus begins His invitation for entrance into the kingdom at this point. His first point is that those who are listening and are tempted to relieve their own guilt by pointing out the sins of others should refrain from such a practice. He next outlines the proper method of obtaining salvation, that of *asking by faith* rather than of *working by pride*, exhorting the audience to enter. Once again, anticipating opposition from the unregenerate leadership, Jesus admonishes those who are considering his invitation not to be derailed by false

teachers who claim to know the way of salvation. He then closes with a parable which illustrates the consequences of one's decision.

- 3B Response of the People: Fascination and Amazement But Not Obedience 7:28-29
 Matthew records the seemingly innocent response of the people as "amazement." The problem is that given the kind of message (basically salvation) and the desired response (repentance and faith), the people's reaction is woefully inadequate. Hence, what is now simply a lack of commitment on the part of the people will soon blossom into open denial and blatant rejection.
- 4B Authentication 8:1--9:34
 The purpose of miracles throughout the Bible has been to authenticate the message of God's messenger. From Moses to Matthew true miracles have served as the identifying badge of divine authority. With this in mind Matthew now culls from the ministry of Jesus several examples of miracles (chaps. 8-9) which serve to authenticate the message recorded in the message of chapters 5-7. These miracles also demonstrate Jesus' ability to bring about millennial conditions.
- 1C Introductory statement of purpose: to authenticate the message spoken on the Mount 8:1
 By this statement Matthew deliberately connects the message of 5-7 with the miracles of 8-9. Although they are out of place chronologically, they are the next necessary step in Matthew's thematic flow.
- 2C Power over disease 8:2-17
 Jesus' healing of a leper, a paralytic and Peter's mother-in-law demonstrate his ability to cure sickness and identify Him as Messiah (8:17). Jesus' directions to the leper to return to the priest not only demonstrate obedience to Moses, but more importantly serve to force the issue of his person with the very height of leadership in the country.
- 3C Power over nature 8:18-27
 Jesus' stilling of the storm demonstrates His control over nature and ability to produce the unique geographical conditions of the millennium. These signs are of the magnitude of those performed by Moses.
- 4C Power over demons 8:28-34
 Healing sickness is one demonstration of power but the one who must overcome the evil one himself (Genesis 3:15) must be able to defeat his subordinates as well. Jesus' ability to subdue Satan and his minions is demonstrated here.
- 5C Power over sin 9:1-13
 Victory over Satan would be ineffective if Jesus could not deal with the problem of depravity as well. Jesus' pardon of a paralytic and a publican demonstrates his authority over sin.
- 6C Power over doctrine 9:14-17
 Jesus here teaches that his program is distinct from what went before.
- 7C Power over death 9:18-26
 Victory over Satan and forgiveness of sin is of little value for those who have died in the faith. Jesus' ability to resurrect is necessary if He is to recline with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- 8C Power over blindness 9:27-31
 This miracle certainly contributes to the theme of these two chapters but it also serves to introduce another theme soon to be developed by Matthew, the rejection of the Messiah. As Jesus heals these two men they immediately disobey him and spread the news. Even in His grace men are disobedient

to Him.

- 9C Power over dumbness 9:32-34
 In this final miracle of the section, Matthew's emphasis is upon the blasphemous response of the Pharisees. This represents an intensification of the disobedience seen in 8C above, into the realms of deliberate rejection. They recognized that unless they provided an alternative explanation for Jesus' miracles, they would have to admit his divine origin. This is a portent of the great watershed of this gospel found in chapter twelve.
- 5B The Multiplication 9:35-11:1
 Having proclaimed the message (5-7) and provided it with authentication (8-9), Matthew now records its dissemination throughout the land by means of the twelve apostles. Jesus' words to them transcend the historical situation to those who will witness of him in the tribulation.
- 1C THE OPPOSITION TO THE KING 11:2--13:52
 Before the king is rejected, opposition begins to mount. In this gospel Matthew uses the life of John to preview the life of Jesus. Thus, the imprisonment of John is a portent of opposition to come to the Messiah himself. This opposition is *realized* in the Sabbath controversy and then *illustrated* in the parables of chapter 13.
- 1B Anticipated 11:2-30
 As the forerunner is treated, so also the king will be treated. The imprisonment of John, carried out by Herod and allowed by Jewry at large, is an omen of opposition to Jesus. The lack of response by the cities of Galilee (11:20-30) is seen by Jesus as opposition as well which precipitates both His condemnation and his pity.
- 2B Realized 12:1-50
 The opposition to Jesus is realized on a certain Sabbath day. The Pharisees argue with Jesus about working on the Sabbath and then attribute His miracles to the working of Satan. Given the purpose of miracles (to authenticate the message and the messenger) the Pharisees' charge was a premeditated rejection of his claims. Jesus recognizes that if the leadership can be fully aware of the most powerful evidence of Jesus' Messiahship and then reject it, that nothing will convince them, and those who persist in this sin will be eternally lost. Thus, already having drawn their verdict, Jesus refuses to present them with any further evidence (12:38-42) in the form of miracles. From this point on no public miracles are performed for the purpose of convincing the crowds.
- 3B Illustrated (DISCOURSE III) 13:1-52
 At this point Jesus seeks to teach the twelve about the seriousness and implications of this opposition. Apparently their mood was one of hopeful anticipation. They evidently gave far too much credit to the fascination of the crowds grossly underestimated the significance of the Pharisees' blasphemy.
- 1C Teaching of the crowds 13:1-35
 Jesus first speaks four parables (without explanation) to the crowds. He later interprets these to the disciples once they were in private conversation. Since not even the disciples could understand these parables without explanation one must conclude that Jesus' purpose was simply to confuse (13:14, 15) and consequently diffuse the crowds.
- 1D The sower: non-unanimous, partial response to the message 13:1-23
 Jesus teaches that the response by the people to his offer of the kingdom, although outwardly and presently impressive (three out of four seeds grow up), would, eventually, prove to be very limited (only one of four survives and brings forth fruit). This false harvest would become very obvious during his passion week.

- 2D The wheat and tares: satanically inspired counterfeits 13:24-30
The second parable builds on the first. Like the first it also teaches an insufficient and deceptive response on the part of the crowds. It advances upon the first in that it teaches that more than simply being unfruitful, the crowds are, in reality, permeated with satanically inspired unbelief.
- 3D The mustard seed: satirical comparison 13:31-32
With careful choice of words, Jesus alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's vision of his kingdom, from the book of Daniel. The gentile, world ruler's dominion was likened to a tree which could be seen from one end of the earth to another. Jesus compares that kingdom to the current response to His kingdom in terms of a squatty bush called a mustard tree. Apparently the crowds which the disciples had witnessed did not represent the beginning of a world-wide kingdom.
- 4D The leaven: comprehensive influence of unbelief 13:33
The leaven (identified later in 16:4 as the teaching of the Pharisees) will not be overcome by the dough (the nation) but *visa versa*. The rejection by the Pharisees of chapter 12 would soon permeate the uncommitted multitudes until they, fully leavened with evil, would cry out, "crucify Him."
- 5D The justification: Old Testament anticipation of this method 13:34-35
The Old Testament foretold that Jesus would speak in parables.
- 2C Teaching of the twelve 13:36-52
At this point Jesus leaves the multitudes and enters the house to address his disciples privately. If they were to comprehend in any small way the truth which Jesus had uttered in the first four parables they would have cause to question the value of the kingdom as it was represented at this point. Jesus apparently found it necessary to issue the following disclaimers, that although the kingdom message was in serious jeopardy of being rejected, the kingdom itself was still a reality in the plan of God. In this section Jesus teaches "old" truths about the kingdom, truths which have long been known about the surpassing value of the kingdom. Although it is being rejected, it is still of incomparable value, worth giving one's life for. Thus, every scribe who understands these parables is like the owner of a house who understands new truth (about the rejection of the kingdom) and old truth (about the incomparable value of the kingdom (13:52).
- 1D THE REJECTION OF THE KING 14:1-27:61
From this point on, everything relates to the final rejection of the king. While rejection arises from all quarters Jesus concentrates more and more on preparing the Twelve for His death.
- 1B The Background: Cycles of Progressive Rejection 13:53-16:4
This section contains three identical cycles of rejection. Each one begins with (1) some kind of antagonism from which (2) Jesus withdraws and then (3) performs a miracle. In the final cycle Matthew records that Jesus emphatically and fully withdraws from the crowds (16:4b).
- 1C Cycle #1 13:53--14:36
1D Antagonism: from the laity 13:53--14:12
2D Withdrawal 14:13
3D Miracles 14:14-36
- 2C Cycle #2 15:1-39
1D Antagonism: from Pharisees/scribes 15:1-20
2D Withdrawal 15:21

- 3D Miracles 15:22-39
- 3C Cycle #3 16:1-4
 1D Antagonism: from Pharisees/Sadducees 16:1-4a
 2D Complete Withdrawal 16:4b
- 2B Teaching of the Twelve 16:5--18:35
 Jesus' strategy at this point is to impress upon the insensitive disciples the reality of his death and their responsibility to carry on afterwards.
- 1C Reminder of the permeating influence of the Pharisees and Sadducees 16:5-12
 Jesus once again warns that the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees will permeate the nation and dominate its decisions. This teaching was not simply their theology, bankrupt though it was, but more specifically, their teaching as represented in chapter 12, the blasphemy of the Spirit and rejection of the Messiah.
- 2C Revelation of His death 16:13--17:13
 Jesus teaches very carefully concerning His death. Lest they despair when they are confronted with the horrible news, Jesus prefaces the news with some reassurances about His person and program.
- 1D Encouragement about the kingdom in light of His death 16:13-20
 He begins by reassuring the Twelve that He is the Messiah and His program will be successfully completed. In addition, the Twelve will be an important part of that program.
- 2D The plain statement of His death 16:21
 Having reassured the Twelve He plainly states the fact and manner of His death. This is the first mention of His death in the gospel.
- 3D The responses to the statement 16:22--17:13
 While Peter misses the point, Jesus takes the opportunity to explore the implications for the Twelve. If the Messiah is killed, all faithful followers will likewise suffer. Finally, to encourage them with the fact that the kingdom will one day come, He allows Peter, James and John to see Him in the glory which He will have in the coming kingdom.
- 3C Various teachings 17:14--18:35
 After the revelation of His death, Jesus teaches the disciples other lessons pertinent to their roles of leadership in the kingdom. Faith, humility, concern for the lost and concern for erring brothers are all traits which leaders must exhibit.
- 3B Various Responses to Others 19:1--20:34
 Jesus answers several questions put to Him by the public concerning various areas. These areas of concern include divorce, the treatment of children, eternal life, and rank in the kingdom.
- 4B The Record of Rejection 21:1--27:61
 Matthew clearly presents the fact that Calvary was the result of wholesale rejection by the entire nation. After two days of possessing the Temple the entire leadership of the nation was poised to take his life.
- 1C Presentation of the King 21:1-17
 Although his fate had long since been settled Jesus presented Himself formally to the nation. Although initially accepted by some from Galilee, His cleansing of the Temple incited the leadership which plotted his death.

- 2C His rejection of the nation 21:18--23:39
 After numerous failed attempts by various factions of the leadership to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people, He warns the city of its failure and certain doom. Through a series of very plain parables and strikingly pointed condemnations Jesus clearly indicts and convicts the unbelief of the leadership.
- 3C Assurance of the Establishment of the Kingdom in Light of the Rejection (DISCOURSE V) 24:1--25:46
 Matthew includes this expansion of the Old Testament concept of the Day of the Lord which confirms God's good intentions of setting up the millennial kingdom after the tribulation. The current rejection of the King does not mean that God's plans for the Kingdom have been canceled, merely postponed. The calling and promises of God are irrevocable.
- 1D The disciples' questions 24:1-3
 Upon leaving the city the Twelve inquire when the Lord's coming in glory will be.
- 2D Jesus' answer 24:4--25:46
 Jesus first outlines the chronology of the tribulation period and then follows with a warning for those who will live at that time. Through a series of parables and warnings Jesus exhorts his listeners to prepare for judgment.
- 1E The Chronology 24:4-35
 1First First Half of the Tribulation 24:4-8
 1Second Second Half of the Tribulation 24:9-28
 1Third The Second Coming and Regathering of Israel 24:29-31
 1Fourth Summary and Encouragement 24:32-35
- 2E The Warning: Judgment 24:36--25:46
 2First The general statement 24:36-41
 1G The comparison: Noah's day 24:36-39
 2G The principle: One taken, another left 24:40-41
- 2Second Concerning Israel 24:42--25:30
 1G The householder 24:42-44
 2G The foolish servant 24:45-51
 3G The foolish virgins 25:1-13
 4G The talents 25:14-30
- 2Third Concerning Gentiles 25:31-46
 1G The time: 2nd Coming 25:31
 2G The participants: lost and saved Gentiles 25:32-33
 1H The sheep 25:34-41
 1G Their reward 25:34
 2G The basis 25:35-40
 2H The goats 25:41-46
 1G Their reward 25:41
 2G The basis 25:42-46
- 4C The event 26:1--27:61
 Jesus' arrest, trials and crucifixion all demonstrate the guilt of the nation. His death was not the result of one disgruntled faction.
- 1D The background 26:1-46

Although betrayed by a friend, Jesus is in complete control of the events leading to His crucifixion. Through obvious manipulation of the events of Thursday night and Friday morning Jesus forces his enemies to deal with him at the providentially correct moment.

2D The arrest and trials 26:47--27:26
Matthew records three of the six illegal trials, all of which demonstrated Jesus' innocence. Both Peter and Judas find themselves unwittingly fulfilling prophecy on this night.

3D The mockery 27:27-44
In ignorant mockery the soldiers derided Jesus as a king. In deliberate scorn the leadership challenged him to save Himself, at the very moment that He was providing for the salvation of the world.

4D The death 27:45-56
Jesus' death and separation from God was witnessed by friend and foe alike. Jesus' words are taken from king David before him who only experienced a small portion of this ultimate isolation from God.

1E THE RESURRECTION OF THE KING 27:62--28:20
The king, rejected by the people, is resurrected to eventually reign. This is the preeminent proof of the acceptance of the work of Calvary by the Father.

1B The Proof from the Leaders 27:62-66
The paranoia of the leaders led them to post a Roman guard which should assure every skeptic that no mere human power could account for the missing body of Jesus. Just as Jesus had spoken, they were confronted with only one more miracle, the sign of Jonah, and even that they consciously rejected.

2B The Power of the Lord 28:1-20
Jesus, having been resurrected in power (Romans 1:3, 4), first demonstrates that power to many of his followers by His appearances to them and then by that same power sends them throughout the world to proclaim Him.