

SIMPLE PLAN OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

This Gospel displays a remarkable structure in that the five major discourses by the Lord are preceded and followed by narratives and summaries of events. The words, used in the Greek text only five times in Matthew and nowhere else in this form, "it happened when Jesus had completed or finished," each time introduce a new major section of this gospel (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). This divides the gospel in seven parts, as follows:

- (1) Messiah's coming to Israel (Mt. 1-4);
- (2) the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7);
- (3) Messiah's Service and His Rejection (Mt. 8-12);
- (4) the Kingdom in Mystery-form, the Church & the Coming Kingdom in Glory (Mt. 13-18);
- (5) Messiah in Judea and in Jerusalem (Mt. 19-23);
- (6) The Son of Man's Coming and Kingdom (Mt. 24-25);
- (7) Messiah's Death and Resurrection (Mt. 26-28).

Narratives in Matthew	Christ's Discourses in Matthew
Mt. 01-04: Messiah's Coming	Mt. 5-7: The Laws of the Kingdom
Mt. 08-09: Messiah's Ministry in Galilee	Mt. 10: The Messengers of the Kingdom
Mt. 11-12: Messiah's Works & Words Rejected	Mt. 13: Parables of Kingdom in Mystery-form
Mt. 14-17: The Church & Kingdom in Glory	Mt. 18: Disciple's Conduct in the Kingdom
Mt. 19-23: Messiah in Judea and in Jerusalem	Mt. 24-25: Son of Man – His Coming & Kingdom
Mt. 26-28: Messiah's Death & Resurrection	

Another way to divide Matthew's Gospel is in twelve sections:

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| 1. | Christ's Beginnings | 1:1-4:25 |
| 2. | Christ's Teachings | 5:1-7:29 |
| 3. | Christ's Miracles | 8:1-9:34 |
| 4. | Christ's Preaching | 9:35-12:46 |
| 5. | Christ's Parables | 13:1-52 |
| 6. | Christ's Kingdom and Israel | 13:53-16:12 |
| 7. | Christ's Secrets | 16:13-18:35 |
| 8. | Christ and Life | 19:1-21:11 |
| 9. | Christ and the Religious Leaders | 21:12-23:39 |
| 10. | Christ and the Future | 24:1-25:46 |
| 11. | Christ's Betrayal | 26:1-75 |
| 12. | Christ's Death and Resurrection | 27:1-28:20 |

OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

I. The Incarnation and Preparation of the King (1:1–4:11)

A. The Incarnation of the King (1:1–2:23)

1. The Genealogy of the King (1:1-17)
2. The Birth of the King (1:18-25)
 - a. Joseph's Betrothal to the Virgin (1:18-19)
 - b. The Angelic Visit to Joseph (1:20-21)
 - c. The Fulfillment of Prophecy (1:22-23)
 - d. The Birth of Jesus (1:24-25)
3. The Childhood of the King: Foreshadowing Events to Come (2:1-23)
 - a. The Worship of the Magi: Foreshadowing of Gentile Worship (2:1-12)
 - 1) Magi Coming to Jerusalem (2:1-5)
 - 2) The Fulfillment of Prophecy (2:6)
 - 3) Magi Worshipping the King (2:7-12)
 - b. The Escape to Egypt: Foreshadowing of Christ's Withdrawals (2:13-15)
 - 1) The Escape to Egypt (2:13-14)
 - 2) The Fulfillment of Prophecy (2:15)
 - c. The Slaughter of the Innocent Ones: Foreshadowing of Christ's Death (2:16-18)
 - 1) Herod's Slaughter of the Babes (2:16)
 - 2) The Fulfillment of Prophecy (2:17-18)
 - d. The Return to Nazareth: Foreshadowing of Jewish Rejection of the Messiah Jesus (2:19-23)
 - 1) The Return to Nazareth (2:19-22)
 - 2) The Fulfillment of Prophecy (2:23)

B. The Preparation of the King (3:1–4:11)

1. The Preparation for the Kingdom by John the Baptist's Preaching (3:1-12)
2. The Inauguration of Ministry by John's Baptism of the Lord Jesus (3:13-17)
3. The Demonstration of Worthiness by the Devil's Temptation of Jesus (4:1-11)

II. The Declaration of the Principles of the King (4:12–7:29)

A. The King's Ministry Begun (4:12-25)

1. The Occasion: John's Imprisonment (4:12-16)
2. The Message: The Nearness of the Kingdom (4:17)
3. The Calling of the First Disciples (4:18-22)
4. Summary of the King's Ministry (4:23-25)
 - a. Proclamation (4:23a)
 - b. Proof (4:23b-25)

B. The King's Message Declared (5:1–7:29)

1. The Setting (5:1-2)
2. The Subjects of the Kingdom (5:3-16)
 - a. Blessings by God (5:3-12)
 - b. Responsibilities before Men (5:13-16)

Parenthesis on 5:3-16 – Ten Characteristics of True Disciples

1. Poor in spirit – i.e. humble, not having high thoughts about themselves
2. Mourner – because the King, Christ, is rejected in this world
3. Meek – willing to endure, not pushing for own rights or ideas
4. Hungry and thirsty for righteousness – His rights honoured in their lives
5. Merciful – God's attitude reflected in the disciple
6. Pure in heart – in tune with God's heart
7. Peacemakers – while this world is at war with God
8. Persecuted – for Christ & His rights; features 1-7 are in opposition to this world
9. The salt of the earth – having a preserving moral effect by behaviour & separation
10. The light of the world – by their good works pointing to the Father in heaven

3. The Truth about the Kingdom (5:17–7:12)

a. Exposition of the Intent of the Law (5:17-48)

- 1) The Law's Principles Affirmed (5:17-20)
- 2) The Law's Intentions Explained (5:21-48)
 - a) Regarding Hatred and Murder (5:21-26)
 - b) Regarding Lust and Adultery (5:27-30)
 - c) Regarding Commitment and Divorce (5:31-32)
 - d) Regarding Honesty and Oaths (5:33-37)
 - e) Regarding Rights and Retaliation (5:38-42)
 - f) Regarding Love and Hatred (5:43-46)
 - g) Conclusion and Standard to Follow (5:46-48)

b. Exhortation toward Internal Righteousness (6:1-18)

- 1) Summary: External vs. Internal Righteousness (6:1)
- 2) Specifics: Rewards of External and Internal Righteousness (6:2-18)
 - a) *Man-ward* - The Rewards for Almsgiving (6:2-4)
 - b) *God-ward* - The Rewards for Praying (6:5-15);

The Lord's Prayer – Seven Petitions

1. Hallowed be Thy name
2. Thy kingdom come
3. Thy will be done, as it is in heaven
4. Give us this day our daily bread
5. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive who trespass against us
6. And lead us not in temptation
7. But deliver us from evil.
- c) *Self-ward* - The Rewards for Fasting (6:16-18)

c. Examination of the Intentions of the Heart (6:19–7:11)

- 1) The Rich – Regarding Treasures/Investments (6:19-24)
 - a) Right Attitude to Temporal Possessions: Treasure in Heaven
 - b) Right Object: Single Eye and true Light
 - c) Right Master: One Master and true Love
- 2) The Poor – Regarding Worry (6:25-34) – Seek ye first ...
 - a) Unfaithful to our Master, who owns & controls all & provides
 - b) Unnecessary – He provides food, stature, clothing (vv.26-30)
 - c) Inconsistent – with faith & priorities (vv.31-33)

- d) Unwise – He cares, we need to be content (v.34)
- 3) Regarding a Critical Spirit toward Believers (7:1-5)
- 4) Regarding Discernment toward Unbelievers (7:6)
- 5) Regarding Petitions toward God (7:7-11)
- d. Summary on the Intent of the Law (7:12)
- 4. The Way to Enter the Kingdom (7:13-27)
 - a. The Two Gates and the Two Ways (7:13-14)
 - b. The Two Trees (7:15-23)
 - c. The Two Men and the Two Houses (7:24-27)
- 5. Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount: Response of the Multitudes (7:28-29)

III. The Commission of the Messengers of the King (8:1–11:1)

- A. The Power of the King Demonstrated (8:1–9:34)
 - 1. Compassionate Miracles (8:1-17)
 - a. Leprosy (8:1-4)
 - b. Paralysis (8:5-13)
 - c. Fever and Demons (8:14-17)
 - 2. The Cost of Discipleship (8:18-22)
 - 3. Authoritative Miracles (8:23–9:8)
 - a. In the Realm of Nature (8:23-27)
 - b. In the Realm of the Supernatural (8:28-34)
 - c. In the Realm of the Spiritual (9:1-8)
 - 4. The Nature of Discipleship (9:9-17)
 - a. The Calling of Matthew (9:9-13)
 - b. The Question about Fasting (9:14-17)
 - 5. Courageous Miracles (9:18-34)
 - a. Life (9:18-26)
 - b. Sight (9:27-31)
 - c. Speech (9:32-34)
- B. The Proclamation of the King Delegated (9:35–11:1)
 - 1. The Compassion of the Lord Jesus (9:35-38)
 - 2. The Commission of the Twelve (10:1-42)
 - a. The Delegation of Authority (10:1-4) – This is the third call by the Lord
 - 1) The Nature of the Authority (10:1) – Their general mandate
 - 2) The Names of the Apostles (10:2-4)
 - b. The Directions to the Apostles (10:5-42)
 - 1) The Sphere and Nature of their Work (10:5-8)
 - 2) The Provisions for their Work (10:9-15)
 - 3) Their Perseverance in the Work (10:16-31)
 - a) In Spite of Persecution (10:16-23)
 - b) In Light of the Rejection of their Master (10:24-25)
 - c) In Response to God's Sovereignty (10:26-31)
 - d) In the Hope of Heavenly Acknowledgment (10:32-33)
 - e) In Recognition of the Claims the Lord Jesus Makes on them (10:34-39)
 - 4) The Reward for Hospitality (10:40-42)
 - 3. Conclusion of Commission, Continuation of Ministry (11:1)

MORE DETAILS ON THE DISCIPLES' MISSION – BEFORE THE OFFICIAL REJECTION OF THE KING – MT. 10

Seven Directives¹ for the Mission inside Israel (can also be sub-divided into 14 points):

1. Sent only to the house of Israel (occupied by Rome, but also by Beelzebub), i.e. to the lost sheep among them (10:5-6; 9:13, 36); cf. Rom. 1:16, first to the Jews.
2. Proclamation that the kingdom of heaven had drawn near (10:7; cf. 3:2; 4:17); this implies the need for repentance (4:17; Mk. 6:12) because of Israel's failure (morally, this applies to all, cf. Rom. 3:23).
3. Signs (works) accompanying the proclamation (words): 1. heal sick ones; 2. cleanse lepers; 3. raise dead ones; 4. cast out demons [4 - universal testimony]. These were signs of the age to come (Heb. 6:5), *morally* seen during the period of grace (e.g. 1 Cor. 6:9-11), demonstrating the power of the kingdom as shown in transformed lives, while the King is absent, but in view of His coming in judgment and glory.
4. Received freely, therefore, give freely; the girdle for service (also used to carry money), but no commercialism or consumerism, mixing God's Word with man's riches;
5. No extra or special provisions; go as you are, without taking extra things (Lk. 22:35)
6. 10:11-13a - a worthy reception brings peace to the house where there is a positive response.
7. 10:13b-15 - rejection and its consequences; the more light, the more responsibility: where much was received (Israel, Church), much will be demanded.

Preparations in view of Persecution

1. The setting (v.16): sheep among wolves - vulnerable but relying on the Master, with prudence (as wise serpents) and purity/sincerity/innocence (as harmless doves).
2. Beware! A four-fold appeal in Matthew (6:1; 7:15; 16:6, 11). Persecution by religious & political/civil authorities - but help received from the Holy Spirit (vv.17-20).
3. Persecution inside the family circle (vv.21-22), the most aggressive/difficult form of persecution experienced, yet "for My name's sake." Therefore, "keep going" (endurance till the end); *morally* now till the rapture; in a prophetic sense, after the rapture, till the coming of the King in judgment and glory.
Notice the progression in rejection: 1. opposition / dangers (v.16); 2. persecution (vv.17-20); 3. delivering up to death by relatives (vv.21-22).
4. The work must go on, despite the persecution (v.23). Acts gives many examples of this.

General Points and Needed Balance

Understand differences between (1) the literal setting, partly fulfilled then and partly afterwards in church history; (2) the prophetic bearing or future fulfillment, before the Lord's return; (3) the moral and spiritual application for the Church period; (4) practical lessons, personally or collectively.

The Lord's Seven Words of Encouragement for Disciples

1. The disciple identified with the Master (vv.24-25); learns from Him, being formed and fed, serving Him.
2. The message cannot be kept hidden, but will be spread (vv.26-27).
3. They can kill the body, but not the soul (v.28) - three times, "Do not fear" or "Don't be afraid" (vv.26,28,31).
4. The Father's care (v.29); cf. the Lord *with* the disciples (v.16; 28:20), the Holy Spirit *in* them (v.20); the Father *for* them (vv.29-31).
5. The Lord Himself will be the great Advocate with the Father in heaven (cf. 1 John 2:1), as the Holy Spirit (v.20) in them (vv.31-32) to help them in their testimony.
6. The Prince of peace brings a sword (spiritually), by taking it away from the enemy, to give victory (morally) to those who love Him above all else (vv.34-39). Even though to "take up the cross" because of love for Him, implies going through this world to ultimately be executed, but it is for His name's sake.
7. The chain of command implies a chain of blessing (vv.40-42); those who receive the disciple receive the Master and so the Sender, and so are blessed.

The disciples are seen in many different aspects, *roles*, or abilities, as called from various backgrounds. This applies to believers today, as Christ calls them from various spheres of life.

[1] *apostles* (sent ones, vv.1, 5; the Lord Himself was also sent, 10:40) - or messengers. We need to understand the difference between the *official* authority they had received, then, accompanied by God-given signs and wonders, and

¹ For the moral qualifications needed, see Matthew 5:2-13.

- moral* authority, by being doers of the Word; this last point applies to us today;
- [2] *workmen* or labourers (v.10);
- [3] *sheep* (reaching out to the lost sheep, v.6) among wolves, in need of prudence (serpents) and purity (doves) (v.16);
- [4] *disciples* (learner/follower) (v.24);
- [5] *bondmen* (bond-servants or slaves) (v.24);
- [6] *members* of Messiah's household (v.25), in contrast to those who belonged to the house of Israel which had been occupied by the enemy (Beelzebul, lord of the dwelling), cf. Mt. 12:43-45;
- [7] *prophets*, the Master's spokes-persons (v.41);
- [8] *righteous ones*, representing the righteous King (v.41);
- [9] *little ones*, representing the One who humbled Himself (v.42).

IV. The Opposition to the King (11:2–13:53)

A. The Antagonism of the Jews (11:2–12:50)

1. Commendation of John in spite of his Doubts (11:2-19)
 - a. The Doubts by John (11:2-6)
 - b. The Commendation by the Lord Jesus (11:7-15)
 - c. The Capriciousness of the Multitudes (11:16-19)
2. Condemnation of the Cities because of their Unbelief (11:20-24)
3. Invitation to the Weary to Find Rest (11:25-30)
4. Confrontation with the Pharisees in Light of their Mounting Hostility (12:1-45)
 - a. Concerning Messiah's Authority over the Sabbath (12:1-21)
 - 1) Plucking Grain (12:1-8)
 - 2) Doing Good (12:9-14)
 - 3) Foreshadowing: Prediction of Gentile Reception (12:15-21)
 - b. Concerning Messiah's Power over the Supernatural (12:22-37)
 - c. Concerning Messiah's Proof of Spiritual Source (12:38-45)
5. Invitation to the Willing to Become God's Children (12:46-50)

B. The Parables of the Lord Jesus (13:1-53)

1. The Setting (13:1-2)
2. The Responsibility of those who Hear (13:3-23)
 - a. The Parable of the Sower (13:3-9)
 - b. The Purpose of the Parables (13:10-17)
 - c. The Parable of the Sower Explained (13:18-23)
3. The Parables of the Kingdom (13:24-50)
 - a. The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds (13:24-30)
 - b. The Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)
 - c. The Parable of the Leaven (13:33)
 - d. Fulfillment of Prophecy (13:34-35)
 - e. The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds Explained (13:36-43)
 - f. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (13:44)
 - g. The Parable of the Pearl (13:45)
 - h. The Parable of the Net (13:46-50)
4. The Responsibility of those who Understand the Parable of the Householder (13:51-52)
5. Conclusion to the Parables, Continuation of Ministry (13:53)

V. The Reaction of the King (13:54–19:2)

- A. The Withdrawals from the Antagonists because of Rejection (13:54–16:20)
 - 1. The Catalyst (13:54–14:12)
 - a. Unbelief in Hometown of Nazareth (13:54-58)
 - b. Beheading of John by Herod (14:1-12)
 - 2. The Withdrawals (14:13–16:20)
 - a. To a Deserted Place (14:13–15:20)
 - 1) Miracles Performed (14:13-36)
 - a) Feeding of the Five Thousand (14:13-21)
 - b) Walking on the Water (14:22-33)
 - c) Healings at Gennesaret (14:34-36)
 - 2) Pharisees Confronted: Clean Vs. Unclean (15:1-20)
 - a) Confrontation with the Pharisees (15:1-9)
 - b) Declaration to the Crowd (15:10-11)
 - c) Instruction of the Disciples (15:12-20)
 - b. To the Region of Phoenicia: The Healing of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter (15:21-28)
 - c. To the Sea of Galilee: The Feeding of the Four Thousand (15:29-38)
 - d. To Magadan (15:39–16:12)
 - 1) The Withdrawal to Magadan (15:39)
 - 2) The Pharisees' and Sadducees' Demand for a Sign (16:1-4)
 - 3) The Pharisees' and Sadducees' Teaching Warned Against (16:5-12)
 - e. To Caesarea Philippi: The Revelation of Jesus' Person (16:13-20)
- B. The Return to Judea in spite of Rejection (16:21–19:2)
 - 1. The Catalyst: The Prediction of Jesus' Death and Resurrection (16:21-28)
 - 2. The Comfort: The Transfiguration (17:1-13)
 - 3. The Instruction of the Disciples in Galilee (17:14–18:35)
 - a. Concerning Faith (17:14-21)
 - 1) The Healing of a Demon-Possessed Boy (17:14-18)
 - 2) The Challenge to the Disciples (17:19-21)
 - b. Concerning His Death and Resurrection: Second Mention (17:22-23)
 - c. Concerning Tribute (17:24-27)
 - d. Concerning Humility (18:1-4)
 - e. Concerning Salvation (18:5-14)
 - 1) Warning against Stumbling Blocks (18:5-9)
 - 2) Searching for Lost Sheep (18:10-14)
 - f. Concerning Discipline (18:15-20)
 - g. Concerning Forgiveness (18:21-35)
 - 4. Conclusion of Instruction, Continuation of Journey (19:1-2)

VI. The Presentation and Rejection of the King (19:3–26:1)

- A. The Instruction of the Disciples in Judea (19:3–20:34)
 - 1. Concerning Divorce, Marriage, and the Kingdom (19:3-12)
 - a. Confrontation about Divorce (19:3-9)
 - b. Celibacy and the Kingdom (19:10-12)
 - 2. Concerning Childlikeness and the Kingdom (19:13-15)

3. Concerning Wealth and the Kingdom (19:16–20:16)
 - a. The Rich Young Man: Security in Riches (19:16-26)
 - b. The Disciples: Security in Christ (19:27-30)
 - c. The Parable of the Vineyard: Rewards in the Kingdom (20:1-16)
4. Concerning His Death and Resurrection: Third Mention (20:17-19)
5. Concerning Servant-Leadership and the Kingdom (20:20-34)
 - a. John's and James' Request (20:20-23)
 - b. Messiah's Response (20:24-28)
 - c. Messiah's Example: Healing of Two Blind Men (20:29-34)
- B. The Presentation of the King (21:1-17)
 1. The Preparation for the King's Coming (21:1-7)
 2. The Entrance into Jerusalem (21:8-11)
 3. The Entrance into the Temple (21:12-17)
- C. The Rejection of the King by the Nation (21:18–22:46)
 1. The Withering Fig Tree: Foreshadowing of the Judgment of the Nation (21:18-22)
 2. Messiah's Authority Questioned: Foreshadowing of Conflict (21:23-27)
 3. Three Parables: Stimulus for Confrontation (21:28–22:14)
 - a. The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32)
 - b. The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-46)
 - c. The Parable of the Wedding Banquet (22:1-14)
 4. Four Confrontations: Evidence of Rejection (22:15-46)
 - a. By the Pharisees and Herodians: Paying Taxes to Caesar (22:15-22)
 - b. By the Sadducees: Marriage at the Resurrection (22:23-33)
 - c. By the Pharisees: The Great Commandment (22:34-40)
 - d. Against the Pharisees: Whose Son is the Christ? (22:41-46)
- D. The Rejection of the Nation by the King (23:1-39)
 1. Instructions to the Crowd and Disciples concerning the Pharisees (23:1-12)
 2. Warnings to the Pharisees concerning Themselves: The Seven Woes (23:13-36)
 - a. First Woe: Shut out of the Kingdom (23:13-14)
 - b. Second Woe: Swearing (23:15-22)
 - c. Third Woe: Straining out a Gnat (23:23-24)
 - d. Fourth Woe: Cleaning the Cup (23:25-26)
 - e. Fifth Woe: Whitewashed Tombs (23:27-28)
 - f. Sixth Woe: Murdering the Prophets (23:29-32)
 - g. Seventh Woe: Pronouncement of Judgment (23:33-36)
 3. Lamentation over Jerusalem (23:37-39)
- E. The King's Predictions concerning the Judgment of the Nation and the Consummation of the Kingdom (24:1–26:1)
 1. The Setting in the Temple (24:1-2)
 2. The Discourse on the Mount of Olives (24:3–25:46)
 - a. Signs of the End of the Age (24:3-35)
 - b. The Day and Hour Unknown (24:36-51)
 - c. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13)
 - d. The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30)
 - e. The Sheep and the Goats (25:31-46)
 3. The Conclusion of the Olivet Discourse (26:1)

VII. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of the King (26:2–28:20)

- A. The Crucifixion of the King (26:2–27:66)
 - 1. The Prediction of His Death: Fourth Mention (26:2)
 - 2. The Plot to Kill Jesus (26:3-5)
 - 3. The Preparation for His Death (26:6-46)
 - a. The Anointing at Bethany (26:6-13)
 - b. Judas' Agreement to Betrayal (26:14-16)
 - c. The Last Passover (26:17-30)
 - d. The Prediction of Peter's Denials (26:31-35)
 - e. Gethsemane (26:36-46)
 - 4. The Arrest of Messiah Jesus (26:47-56)
 - 5. The Trials of Messiah Jesus (26:57–27:26)
 - a. The Trial before the Sanhedrin (26:57-67)
 - b. Two Disciples' Responses (26:68–27:10)
 - 1) Peter Denies the Lord Jesus (26:68-75)
 - 2) Judas Hangs Himself (27:1-10)
 - c. The Trial before Pilate (27:11-26)
 - 6. The Crucifixion of Messiah Jesus (27:27-56)
 - a. The Mocking of the Soldiers (27:27-31)
 - b. The Actual Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus (27:32-44)
 - c. The Death of the Lord Jesus (27:45-56)
 - 7. The Burial of the Lord Jesus (27:57-66)
 - a. Joseph's Tomb (27:57-61)
 - b. Pilate's Guard (27:62-66)
 - B. The Resurrection of the King (28:1-20)
 - 1. The Empty Tomb (28:1-10)
 - 2. The Guards' Report (28:11-15)
 - 3. The Great Commission (28:16-20)
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EXAMINING THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The first thing to notice about the Gospels is that they are skillfully designed; each one is tailored to suit its specific perspective. Matthew was a Jew, a Levite; he presents Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel - the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. This first book of the New Testament straightway establishes the Lord Jesus as the Meshiach Nagid (Dan. 9:25), Messiah the Prince. After first summarizing the royal genealogy, Matthew then proceeds to focus on the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies: Matthew often uses the term "fulfilled" and similar expressions. Matthew emphasized what Jesus said. He evidently recorded the discourses verbatim. As a customs official, he was a tachygrapher, or shorthand writer. The reason Matthew's Gospel is so much longer than Mark's is that he includes Jesus' extensive discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Olivet Discourse; without these discourses, Mark's Gospel would be longer.

Early Origin

The Synoptic Gospels were written before Paul's first imprisonment in 57-60 AD, and virtually all of the New Testament books were written before Jerusalem's destruction, with the probable exception of John's Gospel and the Revelation. Nevertheless, there is no hint in the New Testament of Nero's persecutions after 64 AD, nor of the execution of James, the Lord's brother, in 62 AD. There is not the slightest mention of the Jewish revolt against the Romans, which began in 66 AD, nor of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, except for the call in Hebrews to "go outside the camp" (13:13). These historic events would have been irresistible in making many of the arguments in the New Testament documents, but this point shows the control of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, in hundreds of places the Greek sentence structure shows a Semitic influence, which could indicate a translation from the Hebrew, but this cannot be proven. In 1994, an ancient segment of the Greek text of Matthew's Gospel was analyzed and it appears to be dated before 66 AD. Known as the Magdalen Papyrus, it contains segments of Matthew 26:23 and 26:31 on both sides of three fragments. Using a scanning laser microscope, it has provided physical evidence that the Gospel according to Matthew is an eyewitness account written by contemporaries of Christ.

Your Challenge

Matthew's thoroughness and precision lends many special insights as one delves into his detailed presentations. His rendering of the Seven Kingdom Parables in Chapter 13 is remarkably parallel to the Letters to the Seven Churches in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3, etc. His presentation of the Lord's confidential briefing to His disciples about His Second Coming in Chapter 24 is an essential foundation in any eschatological (end-time) study. This basic book of the Bible represents a most rewarding study to both novice and experienced Bible students who are willing to diligently dig in. May you be blessed as you embark on this fascinating study!

Word-study on *Mountain*. The Greek word for *mountain* occurs 16 (2x8) times in Matthew. Eight represents a new order; *Christ* (Anointed) introduced a new order (8) in testimony (2); His name *Jesus* has a numerical value of 888. At the same time, we see perfection (7) as seen in the 7 different mountains *connected with the King*:

1. Mount of testing/temptation, 4:8; the true Overcomer.
2. Mount of blessings and instructions, 5:1-8:1; His teachings for true disciples, while He is rejected.
3. Mount of prayer, 14:23; illustration of His present position in heaven.
4. Mount of feeding, 15:29; then, literally; now, spiritually; and for the future remnant.
5. Mount of transfiguration, 17:1; picture/foretaste of His millennial glory (2 Pet.1:16-21).
6. Mount of Olives, 21:1; His coming glory displayed; 24:3 prophetic outline chs.24-25; the Olives speak of the Holy Spirit. Here was Gethsemane ('oil-press'), foretaste of His sufferings 26:30-56.
7. Mount in Galilee, 28:16; the risen One: His link with the remnant, then, and of the future.

Note. If we take the Mount of Olives twice, once linked with the past, once linked with the future, we can count eight mountains. In the Millennium, a completely different geological order will exist, with a new Mount of Olives (Ezk. 40-48; Isa. 2:2f; Zech. 14:4).

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