

Overview of Matthew

Who

There is some uncertainty around the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew, but most scholarship attributes it to the tax collector Matthew, who was one of the 12 apostles.

When

The exact dating is unknown, but it is likely to have been written around 70-80AD given the usage of material from Marks Gospel which was written around 65AD.

Audience/Context

Matthews Gospel is originally address to Jewish-Christians who already believed in Jesus and confessed him as the Son of God. This can be seen through Matthews emphasis on how Jesus fulfils Old Testament prophecy; his usage of typical Jewish terminology, such as 'kingdom of heaven; his tracing of Jesus' ancestry to Abraham and David; and Matthews comparison of Jesus with Moses.

Major Themes

Matthews main message is to demonstrate how Jesus is the continuation and fulfillment of the whole biblical story about God and Israel. More specifically, Matthew highlights that Jesus is the Messiah from the line of David; that he is a new authoritative teacher like Moses; and that he is Immanuel, or God with us.

Structure

Matthew is broken up into 7 sections, with 5 blocks of teaching

Intro, Ch 1-3

Matthew connects Jesus to the Old Testament by highlighting that Jesus is from the messianic line of David and from the lineage of Abraham meaning that he is going to bless all nations. It is in these first 3 chapters where Matthew also records the birth narrative and demonstrates how Jesus fulfils Old Testament prophetic promises.

Block 1, Ch 4-7

Jesus announces the new kingdom, and delivers his first big block of teaching in the sermon on the mount. His teaching here is specifically focused on how to live in Gods kingdom.

Block 2, Ch 8-10

Following Jesus' teaching on how to live in the new kingdom, this second block of teaching shows Jesus bringing the kingdom into the lives of people through acts of grace and power.

Block 3, Ch 11-13

Collection of stories of how people are responding to Jesus' message. There is a mix of positive where people believe that Jesus is the Messiah through to negative responses where people believe that Jesus is not the Messiah and is blaspheming against God. In this section we also get Jesus' parables on the kingdom illustrating the responses of people, and demonstrates how God's kingdom is of ultimate power

Block 4, Ch 14-20

This fourth block explores people different expectations of the Messiah. There's a comparison to Moses through he feeding of the 5000. The text draws out how Jesus isn't the victorious military leader that the religious teachers were expecting, and so rather Jesus teaching his disciples what it means for him to be the Messiah - one who becomes a servant and will suffer for the people of Israel.

Block 5, Ch 21-25

In this last block of teaching we see how Jesus presents himself as the long-awaited King at the Passover festival and claims the temple as his own. In the rest of this section is a series of 'conflict stories' interspersed with parables which together illustrate the clash of Jesus' authority that leads to his execution.

Conclusion, Ch 26-28

Here we see the last supper where Jesus. It retells the story of Israel's rescue from slavery through the death of the Passover lamb. Jesus takes the bread and the wine as new symbols showing that his coming death would be a sacrifice that will redeem his people from slavery of evil and sin. The book concludes with the great commission sending his disciples out into the world to proclaim his teaching. Matthew here echoes to the theme of Immanuel in his last line where he records Jesus saying "and I will be with you".

Link:

This is a great resource which gives an overview of the Gospel of Matthew
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/matthew/>