

# The Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. It is one of four books that are called “Gospels.” Each of the four Gospels contains two things: the story about Jesus and the teachings of Jesus.

**Writer:** The Apostle Matthew. Matthew was formerly a tax collector and later became a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 9:9) He is also known as Levi (Mark 2:14).

**Date of writing:** Written before the end of the first century.

**Original Audience:** Jewish people who spoke the Greek language.

## **Main Purpose of the Book:**

Matthew had two main purposes for writing his Gospel. First, he shows that the Lord Jesus is the promised Messiah sent by God for all people. Second, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus’ life and works fulfilled the Old Testament’s law and prophecies. There are eleven times after parts of Jesus’ story that Matthew tells us, “This was to fulfill what was said through the prophet.”

Since Matthew’s original audience was mainly Jewish, he points out all the ways Jesus fulfilled the prophecies spoken about him in the Old Testament. Matthew’s Gospel contains five large sections of Jesus’ teaching. Before each of the long teaching sections, there are stories of things Jesus did. Inside the story sections, there are sometimes short teachings that go along with the miracles Jesus did and other actions by him and his disciples. The story sections also serve to prepare the readers for the long passage of teaching that follows it. At the end of a large teaching section, Matthew uses similar words each time to mark the transition. He says, “When Jesus had finished saying all of these things,” and then introduces the new story section. You can find those transition statements in Matthew 7:28-29, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, and 26:1. These transition statements help us to easily identify the five different longer teaching sections in the book. The Gospel begins with Jesus’ birth, followed by the five stories and teachings sections, and ends with Jesus’ death and resurrection. Therefore, the outline of the book has seven important parts:

## **Look out!**

As you study, look for the ways Jesus weaves in Old Testament quotations into his teaching. All Old Testament quotations are marked with a footnote.



1. The story of Jesus’ birth (1:1-2:23)
2. The beginning of Jesus’ ministry (3:1-7:29)
  - Story section 1: 3:1-4:25
  - Teaching 1 - The Sermon on the Mount: 5:1-7:29
3. The revelation of Jesus’ authority (8:1-11:1)
  - Story section 2: 8:1-9:35

- Teaching 2 - Missionaries: 9:36-11:1
- 4. Jesus' ministry causes division (11:2-13:53)
  - Story section 3: 11:2-12:50
  - Teaching 3 - Parables about the Kingdom of Heaven: 13:1-53
- 5. What it means to be a disciple of Jesus (13:54-19:2)
  - Story section 4: 13:54-17:27
  - Teaching 4 - Rules for the community of disciples: 18:1-19:2
- 6. Jesus, coming judgment, and Jerusalem (19:3-26:2)
  - Story section 5: 19:3-22:46
  - Teaching 5 - Public rejection of the Pharisees and private teaching for his disciples: 23:1-26:2
- 7. Jesus' death, resurrection, and Great Commission (26:3-28:20)

**Don't miss these verses:**

The Lord's Prayer: 6:9-13

The Great Commandment:  
22:37-40

The Great Commission:  
28:16-20

**Jesus and Moses**

Many people who have studied the Gospel of Matthew have noticed similarities between Jesus and the prophet Moses. Moses was one of the most influential people in Jewish history and religion. Some believe that Matthew has organized his Gospel to show that Jesus is like a new, better Moses. For example, maybe Matthew organized the five large teaching sections to reflect the five books of Moses in the Old Testament. Here are some other similarities:

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt	Jesus came out of Egypt as a child
Moses was in the wilderness for 40 years	Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days
Moses received God's teaching on the mountain	Jesus gave God's teaching from the mountain

Matthew makes it clear that Jesus is better than Moses. Jesus delivered us from our slavery to sin, gave us new teachings from God, saved us from sin and death eternally, and started the New Covenant that replaced the Old Covenant.

As you read through Matthew's Gospel, listen to Jesus as a teacher. He is our one and only teacher (Matthew 23:10). His words are a rock to build our lives(Matthew 7:24-25), and his teaching will endure for all time (Matthew 24:35). Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth; and we must obey everything he commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). As you study each story and teaching, ask these questions:

1. What do we learn about Jesus?
2. What do we learn about people?
3. What do I need to do to obey Jesus?
4. Who can I share this with?

**A question to consider:**

Pay attention to the types of people that accept and follow Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. Are they the kinds of people you would expect to follow Jesus?