



The Gospel of Matthew

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1st page of Matthew in Lindisfarne Gospels, c. AD 715

Latin: "Liber generationis Iesu Christi filii David filii Abraham" Matthew 1.1

(The book of the generations of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham)

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The Chi Rho monogram - Chi Rho are the 1st 2 letters of Christos - Matthew 1.18

Latin: "Christi autem generatio sic erat..."

("Now the birth of Christ was in this way...")

Author and Audience and Date

- In contrast to Paul's letters, the Gospel writers do not identify themselves.
- We rely on the testimony of the early church.
- There is ample evidence attesting to Matthew as the author
- There were many living eyewitnesses to corroborate this
- If this were falsely attributed, it would not have been the Tax Collector, but rather one of the more eminent apostles like Peter or John

Who was Matthew?

- Matthew is the tax collector mentioned in Matthew 9:9–13 LSB.
- He is also identified as Levi in Mark 2:14 LSB and Luke 5:27 LSB.
- Tax collectors were Jews who had taken positions under the Roman authorities to collect taxes from their own countrymen.
- They were therefore hated, despised and rejected by the Jewish community, even by their own families

And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" (Matthew 9:11 LSB)

- Jesus calls as an apostle a person that the Jews despised.
- Jesus exalts the lowly and the despised. He befriends sinners and employs them to share the gospel with a lost and dying world (cf. Matt. 11:19 LSB).

for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (Matthew 9:13 LSB)

Audience and Date

- Primarily written for the Jews, to display Jesus as the long-expected Messiah
- But also to all the Gentiles ("make disciple of all the nations")

- Written before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70
 - No detail of Temple destruction, e.g. cannibalism, crucifixion, burning of the Temple, et al.
 - Frequent mention of the Sadducees, who were non-players after AD 70

Structure

- This gospel is highly structured and organized in order to highlight the Teachings of Jesus
- It was therefore widely used in the liturgies of the early church
- It is placed first in the New Testament books for this reason, not because it was the earliest
- Use of numbers in the genealogy and elsewhere
 - "David" in the genealogy: טד numerical value is 14 (Daleth, Vav, Daleth)
 - 3 sets of 14 - "David the King" is the focal point (has to omit 4 from the 2nd set)
 - Jesus is the 7th 7

Five Discourses

Matthew uses a formula that marks five distinct discourses in the book. Each discourse concludes with

“And it happened, when Jesus had finished saying these things, that...” (7:28–29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1).

- This formula does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament
- Matthew alternates between the deeds of Jesus, and the long discourses
- Matthew uses this structure to highlight the teachings of our Lord
- He matches the Torah (5 books) - Jesus is the ultimate Moses - the "prophet like me"

“Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers; you shall listen to him. (Deuteronomy 18:15 LSB)

The Outline

Chapters 1-2 Prologue and Introduction

1. Book I—Narrative: Ch. 3–4;

- 1st Discourse: Ch. 5–7 (Sermon on the Mount)
- 2. Book II—Narrative: Ch. 8–9;
 - 2nd Discourse: Ch. 10 (Mission and Martyrdom)
- 3. Book III—Narrative: Ch. 11–12;
 - 3rd Discourse: Ch. 13 (Parables of the Kingdom)
- 4. Book IV—Narrative Ch. 14–17;
 - 4th Discourse: Ch. 18 (Kingdom Community)
- 5. Book V—Narrative: Ch. 19–22;
 - 5th Discourse: Ch. 23–25 (7 Woes; Olivet Discourse - Last Things)

Chapters 26-28 Climax and Conclusion

Themes

Fulfillment

- Matthew uses the word “fulfill” 16 times to show Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises - "this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet..."
- Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah-King (though not what the Jews were expecting)
- His coming ushers in the long-awaited “Kingdom of Heaven”
- The opening sentence ties the message to the Old Testament promise - Jesus is the **son of David**, and the **son of Abraham**
- examples: Matthew 1.22-23 LSB, Matthew 2.15 LSB, Matthew 2.17-18 LSB, Matthew 8.16-17 LSB, Matthew 13.34-35 LSB, Matthew 21.4-5 LSB, Matthew 27.9 LSB

The fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17 LSB)

- In the first discourse (Sermon on the Mount) Jesus speaks from the Mountain
- This recalls Moses on Mount Sinai where God spoke and gave the Law

And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS **OUT OF THE MOUTH**

OF GOD.” (Matthew 4:3-4 LSB)

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And **He opened His mouth and began to teach** them (Matthew 5:1-2 LSB)

- Transfiguration in chapter 17
- Jesus is revealed in glory with Moses (The Law), and Elijah (The Prophets)
- God speaks from Heaven: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

Messiah

- "Messiah" means “anointed one” - it is translated "Christ" in the New Testament
- "Christ" is a title, not a name. When we say "Jesus Christ" we are saying Jesus, *the Messiah*
- Priests, Prophets and Kings are all anointed in Old Testament for their respective offices

Son of David

- This title occurs 10 times in this gospel, starting with the very first verse
- God swore covenant love to David (Ps. 89:29 LSB) and promised that one of his immediate descendants would establish the kingdom
- that David’s kingdom and throne would endure forever (2 Sam. 7:12–16 LSB)
- Isaiah foresaw that a “son” would be given, and that 'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.'

Son of Man

- This is the favorite designation that Jesus uses of himself, 29 times in this gospel
- This phrase occurs numerous times in the Old Testament
- Daniel 7, reveals the “son of man” as the a highly exalted one who rules over the kingdoms of the earth.

I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,

And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And came near before Him. And to Him was given dominion,
Glory, and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations, and men of every tongue
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not be taken away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14 LSB)

- Consider the following passages where Jesus identifies himself as the Son of Man: 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:40; 13:41; 16:13–16; 20:18; 26:64
- At his trial the high priest charged Jesus by the Living God to say if He was the Christ. He quoted this and they accused Him of blasphemy.

And the high priest stood up and said to Him, “Do You not answer? What are these men testifying against You?” But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus *said to him, “You yourself said it; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” Then the high priest tore his garments and said, “He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? (Matthew 26:62-65 LSB)

These titles "Messiah" (Christ, Anointed One), "Son of David", and "Son of Man" show Jesus fulfilling the promises of God. Jesus is not simply another prophet - He is the promised Messiah, who stands last and highest in the line of David the King, and who is the exalted Son of Man who will rule forever.

Gospel for all the Nations

- Written to convince Jews by the fulfillment of prophecy
- But also emphasizing the promise is for all the nations

I am Yahweh, I have called You in righteousness;
I will also take hold of You by the hand and guard You,
And I will give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes,

To bring out prisoners from the dungeon

And those who inhabit darkness from the prison. (Isaiah 42:6-7 LSB)

4 Gentile women included in the Genealogy

- Tamar the Gentile named
- Rahab the prostitute named
- Ruth the Moabite named
- Bathsheba, not name, but referred to as the wife of Uriah the Hittite
- The first worshippers of Jesus in Matthew 2.1-12 LSB were Persian astrologers from the east, not Jews
- The Great Commission in Matthew 28.19-20 LSB "make disciples of all the nations"

many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; (Matthew 8:11-12 LSB)

Response to Jesus: Rejection and Acceptance

Rejection

- Even as Jesus worked miracles among the people, the religious leaders rejected him
- Example: as Jesus cast out a demon, the religious leaders accused him of doing so "by the prince of demons" (Matthew 9:34 LSB).
- In chapter 10 the twelve disciples are named and commissioned to travel throughout the region healing, casting out demons, and proclaiming the message of the kingdom.
- Just as some rejected Jesus, so there are those who rejected his disciples.

Acceptance

- Despite the rejection by some, there are those who had ears to hear and eyes to see.
- 2 notable examples
 - the Roman centurion in Matthew 8.8-9 LSB
 - the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:27-28 LSB
- They believed in Jesus and accepted without question Jesus' authority and mission
- These both Gentiles! (not of the Jews)
- Matthew highlights that the mission of Jesus was to seek and save people from every nation (Matthew 28:19-20 LSB).

Even though the Old Testament was fulfilled before the eyes of all, there was still widespread rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The religious leaders and the people take their rejection to its ultimate end as they crucify Jesus. At the same time, there were those that were given eyes to see and ears to hear. By God's grace we read stories about those who did believe: the disciples leaving everything to follow Jesus, the Roman centurion exercising great faith, and the Canaanite woman humbling herself under the authority of Christ. Furthermore, just as many rejected Jesus during his earthly ministry, there are those who reject Jesus in our own time. However, in the same way that the rejection was not total during the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, there is not total rejection today. God still gives people eyes to see and ears to hear.

Kingdom of Heaven

- Matthew uses this term 32 times. In contrast he uses "Kingdom of God" only 4 times
- In Greek ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is literally "the Kingdom of the Heavens" - this is a Hebraism

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

- In Matthew 3:1–2 LSB, John the Baptist proclaims, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."
- In Matthew 4:12 LSB, when Jesus begins preaching, his message is the same: Jesus says, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."
- Jesus opens the Beatitudes in chapter 5 by saying that those who are "poor in spirit" possess "the Kingdom of Heaven"

What is this "Kingdom of Heaven"?

Is it the same as the "Kingdom of God"

Why do you think Matthew uses this phrase more than "Kingdom of God?"

Persecution and Perseverance

- There are many exhortations and warnings meant to encourage the saints facing persecution
- False disciples - those who look like believers but are not

Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME ... (Matthew 7:22-23 LSB)

Many false prophets will arise and will deceive many. And because lawlessness is multiplied, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Matthew 24:11-13 LSB)

The Great Commission

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:18-20 LSB)

- Matthew, and the other gospel writers are first and foremost preachers and teachers of the Good News, rather than historians
- This does not mean that their accounts are not accurate.
- It just means that primary purpose is not to compile a historical record of events for its own sake

How does Matthew support this mission?

Assignment

Respond to the following:

Knowing

1. Pick 2 or 3 of the following passages, and tell what is being fulfilled in Jesus, and then identify the Old Testament text(s) which foretell it: 1.22-23, 2.15, 2.17-18, 8.16-17, 13.34-35, 21.4-5, 27.9
2. "Christ" is a title, not a name. In Greek "Christos" is a translation of the Hebrew "Messiah" which means "Anointed One." What is the significance of this title and how does it demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy? Hint: What kinds of people were

anointed in the Old Testament?

Reflecting

Choose two or more of the following:

1. Write a one paragraph summary of the Gospel of Matthew
2. Write a one sentence summary of the Gospel of Matthew. (probably harder)
3. Read 1.21-23 and 28.19-20. What is the connection between the beginning and the end of this gospel? What does Matthew show us by bookending his writing in this way?
4. In Matthew 22:41–45 LSB there is an exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees. He asked them who the “Christ” is and they respond that he is the "Son of David." Jesus then quotes Psalm 110:1 LSB and asks them how David can call him "Lord" if he is his son. How would you answer?

Communicating

You are talking to a skeptic, and he says that Jesus never claimed to be God, but that He called himself the "Son of Man." How would you respond?

Preparing for Next Class

- **Read** chapter 4 of *Introducing the New Testament* (Mark)
- **Read** Mark 1:1 — 3:6, 15:33–41
- **Watch** The Bible Project [Mark](#)

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