

# BOOK OF MATTHEW

## STUDY GUIDE

### AUTHOR

The book itself does not name the author, but tradition attributes it to Matthew, the former tax collector become apostle. Other than his name & occupation, we really don't know much else about Matthew, except that he likely preached following the Resurrection and did missionary work in other nations.

### DATE

Much debate surrounds whether Matthew or Mark was the first written Gospel. Early church writings include frequent use of Matthew, so that proves it was written shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection. However, 601 verses from Mark's gospel appear in the Book of Matthew and many appear in Luke's gospel as well. So, did Mark write before Matthew & Luke or was Matthew truly first? We may never know.

In the end, scholars agree that Matthew was likely written between 50-65 AD. Much of this is based on evidence within the book showing ongoing tensions between Jews and Gentiles, suggesting a time when Judaism and Christianity still overlapped.

### LITERARY GENRE & STRUCTURE

Matthew is considered a gospel, a unique literary form. Gospels are not strictly biographical, historical, or theological. They are all the above! Gospel writers selectively choose material to present Christ to their target audience, which gives insight to what each writer thought was theologically important. The Synoptic Gospels include Matthew, Mark, & Luke, giving a collective synopsis of Jesus' life and works from three differing perspectives. The gospels serve as evangelistic tracts, each directed to a different audience. Matthew is specifically targeted to Jews.

The Book of Matthew can be divided into 5 main sections, each ending with the phrase, "When Jesus finished saying these things..." This fivefold structure may be Matthew attempting to present Jesus as the "new Moses," with each section reflecting a book within the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy).

1. Jesus' Birth, Ministry Beginning, & Sermon on the Mount (ch. 1-7)
2. Jesus' Instructions to Disciples on the Missionary Journey (ch. 8-11:1)
3. Controversies Involving Jesus & Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (11:2-13:52)
4. Conduct of Believers in Christian Fellowship (13:53-18:35)
5. Jesus' Final Journey, End Times, & Commission to the Church (19:1-28:20)

Every indication is that Matthew wrote his gospel to show Jews & Jewish Christians that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. Though Jewish focused, the entire world of the Gentiles is considered important & worthy of Jesus' salvation & teachings.

## SPECIAL NOTE

Matthew is the most copied, quoted, & used gospel by the early church, & for centuries served as material for Sunday & Holy Day readings. It also is the most systematic arrangements of Jesus' teachings & served as instructional material for new converts. Lastly, Matthew includes more quotes from the Old Testament (more than 40 times!) than any other gospel.

## OBSERVATION WORDS

- **Jesus**-- Don't just notice the references, but what do you learn about Him through those references? Names, functions, what He calls Himself, how others address Him, etc.
- **Holy Spirit** – When He's named directly, what He does, note miracles, etc.
- **God** -- Different ways He's referenced & what you learn about Him, how Jesus speaks of Him
- **Fulfill...** – What is fulfilled? What is the importance?
- **Kingdom** – What kind of kingdom? What do you learn about the kingdom?
- **You have heard / But I say / I tell** – Lessons learned from this exchange. Also pay attention each time you see, "I say/tell..." – what is Jesus saying?
- **Pharisees / Sadducees / Scribes** – Who are they? What are they doing? What do you learn?
- **Heal / Deliver** – Note anytime a miraculous healing or demonic deliverance takes place
- **Old Testament passages** – Usually identified by all capital letters. How are these references used? What's the purpose of them?

KEY WORD – How do you summarize the whole book in one word or short phrase?

KEY VERSE – What verse stands out to you as the summary of the whole book, or a verse that the Lord used to teach you something important. Why did you choose the verse you did?

## Summary Questions

- What did you learn about Jesus through this book?

- What did you learn about the Holy Spirit through this book?
  
- What did you learn about God through this book?
  
- What did you learn about the kingdom of God / kingdom of heaven?
  
- What was your favorite parable and why? What did it teach you?