

MATTHEW

It has been 400 years since Malachi gave his last words of prophecy, and the world scene has changed. When the Old Testament closed, the Persians were in control of the land of Israel. Then control of the land passed to the Greeks. Now the _____ [a] are in control. The official language of business is still _____ [b] though, so that's the language in which the New Testament is written.

Matthew, whose Jewish name is _____ [c], is a tax collector until Jesus calls him to become one of His twelve disciples (they will eventually become His twelve apostles). Although he's one of "the Twelve," he is not one of the more prominent apostles. In fact, he is rarely mentioned in any of the Gospels. His tax booth was located at _____ [d] on the north-south highway from Damascus to Egypt. The taxes he collected were "toll" or "transport" taxes which both locals and long-distance caravans were required to pay as they carried their goods to market. He was an employee of Herod _____ [e] who ruled Galilee as a _____ [f] appointed by Rome. A "Tetrarch" was a king of sorts who ruled a small territory subject to oversight from Roman authorities.

Matthew must have been a meticulous record keeper, and so he would have been very well qualified to write about the life of Jesus. His Gospel is the _____ [g] longest book of the New Testament (_____ [h] and _____ [i] are the two longest). Also, according to citations found in early Christian writers, Matthew's Gospel was the most popular of the Gospel accounts for the first two centuries of the Christian era.

MATTHEW: A GOSPEL

In order to rightly interpret Matthew's Gospel, we need to understand what it is and what it's not. First, we need to remember that *it's not a* _____ [j] *letter*. In other words, it's not like Paul's letters to the church at Corinth or his letters to Timothy and the church at Ephesus. Congregational letters primarily address a particular congregation in a certain situation.

Second, as you read through Matthew (or the other three Gospels) you'll notice that *it's not a complete* _____ [k] *of Jesus*. Matthew doesn't try to include every minute detail of Jesus' life. Matthew carefully chose the stories from Jesus' life to accomplish a specific purpose.

Matthew includes what he does because he wants to say something specific about the person and work of Jesus.

Third and finally, as you read through Matthew, you'll see that *it's not* _____ [l] *history*. While time obviously plays a role in Matthew's arrangement of his material—he does, after all, begin with Jesus' birth and end with His death and resurrection—he arranges most of his material around five distinct teaching sections (we'll take a look at these in a moment).

The book of Matthew is a _____ [m]. Why is it called a “gospel”? It could be because Mark used the word “gospel” in the first sentence of his account. Mark's use of that word may have led to it later becoming a title for the other three records of Jesus' life. The word “gospel” literally means “_____ [n] _____ [o],” and that's what Matthew is. It's an account of the “good news” of Jesus—how Jesus came, what He did, what He said, and what He accomplished in His death and resurrection.

Matthew is one of four Gospels along with Mark, Luke, and John. Each writer gives us an account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so similar in many places that some people question whether or not they depended on each other, and they wonder which one came first. We don't really know for sure how the Holy Spirit guided each of the Gospel writers, and it's hard to be 100% certain which Gospel came first. Maybe they did depend on each other. Maybe they used a common source. Maybe they did a little of both. What we know for sure, and what matters most, is that each Gospel was ultimately written by the _____ [p] _____ [q] (2 Tim 3:16).

JESUS THE SOVEREIGN KING

Each of the four Gospels have a different emphasis as they give us an account of Jesus' life. The following is a bit of an oversimplification, but it will help us see some of the different emphases of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John:

- **John: Jesus is the** _____ [r] **of** _____ [s]. Instead of including a genealogy like Matthew, John begins by saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). John is showing us Jesus' divinity from the start. He even gives us a purpose statement toward the close of the book: “But these [signs] are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).
- **Luke: Jesus is the** _____ [t] **of** _____ [u]. Jesus' significance for all humanity is emphasized from the very beginning of

Luke's Gospel. For instance, his genealogy (Luke 3) is framed differently from Matthew's. *In ascending order, Luke traces the _____ [v] lineage of Jesus to Adam*, whereas Matthew begins with Abraham and moves forward to Jesus.

- **Mark: Jesus is the _____ [w] _____ [x].** Mark doesn't give us a genealogy. Instead, from the very start, there is a clear emphasis on Jesus coming, not to be served, but "to serve, and give His life—a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Mark also highlights the suffering that will come to all who follow Jesus.
- **Matthew: Jesus is the _____ [y] _____ [z].** From the very beginning, Matthew makes clear that Jesus is the King, coming from the line of David (Matt 1:1), and He is the Messiah, the promised One from the line of Abraham (Matt 1:1). *In descending order, Matthew traces the _____ [aa] lineage of Jesus from Abraham.* Matthew shows us that Jesus came not simply from Adam, but more specifically from the line of the kings in Israel. He is the promised King.

As I just pointed out, the message of Matthew's Gospel centers on the theme of Jesus' kingship. Just as virtually every paragraph of John points to something of Christ's deity, so virtually every paragraph of Matthew points to something of His kingship.

Matthew presents the Messiah King who is _____ [bb], and then _____ [cc], and who will one day _____ [dd]. Not only is His ancestry traced from the royal line of Israel (i.e., from David) (Matt 1:1,17), but His birth is dreaded by a jealous earthly king (Matt 2:16). And when He is born, the magi bring Him royal gifts from the east (Matt 2:11). And then, of course, John the Baptist heralds the King and proclaims that His kingdom is at hand (Matt 3:1). Even the temptations in the wilderness climax with Satan offering Jesus the kingdoms of this world (Matt 4:8-11). The Sermon on the Mount is the _____ [ee] of life in the kingdom, as it comes on the heels of Matthew's declaration that "Jesus was going throughout all Galilee . . . proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom . . ." (Matt 3:23). The miracles serve as His royal credentials, and many of His parables portray the mysteries of His kingdom. Jesus identifies Himself with the king's son in a parable (Matt 22:1-14). While facing the cross He predicts His future reign, and He claims dominion over the angels in heaven. His last words are that all authority has been given to Him in both heaven and earth (Matt 28:18).

Matthew also focuses most uniquely on the _____ [ff] of Jesus as King. In no other Gospel are Jesus' character and claims so bitterly attacked than in Matthew. Before He was born, His mother, Mary, was in danger of being rejected by Joseph. Soon after He was born, Herod threatened His life and His parents had to flee with Him to Egypt. His

herald—John the Baptist, was tossed in a dungeon and then beheaded. During His earthly ministry Jesus had no place to lay His head, that is, no place to call home. In Matthew’s Gospel no penitent thief acknowledges Jesus’ Lordship, and no loved one is seen at the foot of the cross. The only people seen at the foot of the cross in Matthew’s Gospel are mockers and scorners. Even the women are pictured at a distance (Matt 27:55-56), and in His death Jesus cries out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou Forsaken Me?” (Matt 27:46). Only a Gentile centurion speaks a favorable word about the crucified One: “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matt 27:54).

Yet Jesus is also shown as the King who ultimately will _____ [gg] to _____ [hh] and _____ [ii]. All the earth one day “will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (Matt 24:30). His coming will be “at an hour when you do not think He will” (Matt 24:44), and He will come in glory and judgment (Matt 25:11-15).

THE STRUCTURE OF MATTHEW

The most obvious feature of Matthew’s structure is how much of it focuses on what Jesus _____ [jj]. Matthew contains _____ [kk] long speeches (or discourses) of Jesus. They are:

- The Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5-7)
- Sending out the Twelve (Chapter 10)
- Parables of the Kingdom (Chapter 13)
- Community Life (Chapter 18)
- Teaching On the End of the Age (Chapters 24-25)

Fully _____ [ll] percent of the 1,071 verses in Matthew contain the spoken words of Jesus. When it comes to what Jesus taught, Matthew contains the most complete record of His teaching.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Here are some additional interesting facts about the Gospel of Matthew:

- Matthew quotes the Old Testament more than the other Gospels—at least _____ [mm] times (Mark is next with 30 quotes).
- Matthew is the only Gospel to use the word “_____ [nn]” (he uses it twice: Matt 16:18; 18:17).
- Matthew records ten _____ [oo] not recorded in the other Gospels.
- Matthew records three _____ [pp] not recorded elsewhere (Matt 9:27-31; 9:32-33; 17:24-27)

- Matthew uses the expression “Kingdom of _____[qq]” (32 times) while the rest of the Bible uses “Kingdom of God.”

LESSONS FROM MATTHEW

- The kingdom _____[rr].
- The kingdom _____[ss].
- The kingdom _____[tt].
- The kingdom _____[uu].

KEY PASSAGES FROM MATTHEW

- Matthew 1:18-23
- Matthew 3:13-17
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Matthew 10:34-39
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Matthew 16:13-18
- Matthew 18:21-22
- Matthew 24:42-44
- Matthew 28:18-20

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] Romans
[b] Greek
[c] Levi
[d] Capernaum
[e] Antipas
[f] Tetrarch
[g] third
[h] Luke
[i] Acts
[j] congregational
[k] biography
[l] chronological
[m] Gospel
[n] good
[o] news
[p] Holy
[q] Spirit
[r] Son
[s] God
[t] Son
[u] Man
[v] physical
[w] Suffering
[x] Servant
[y] Sovereign
[z] King
[aa] legal
[bb] revealed
[cc] rejected
[dd] return
[ee] manifesto
[ff] rejection
[gg] return
[hh] judge
[ii] rule
[jj] taught
[kk] five
[ll] sixty
[mm] 57
[nn] church
[oo] parables
[pp] miracles
[qq] Heaven
[rr] lifestyle
[ss] mission
[tt] community
[uu] future