

Overview of the Gospel according to Matthew

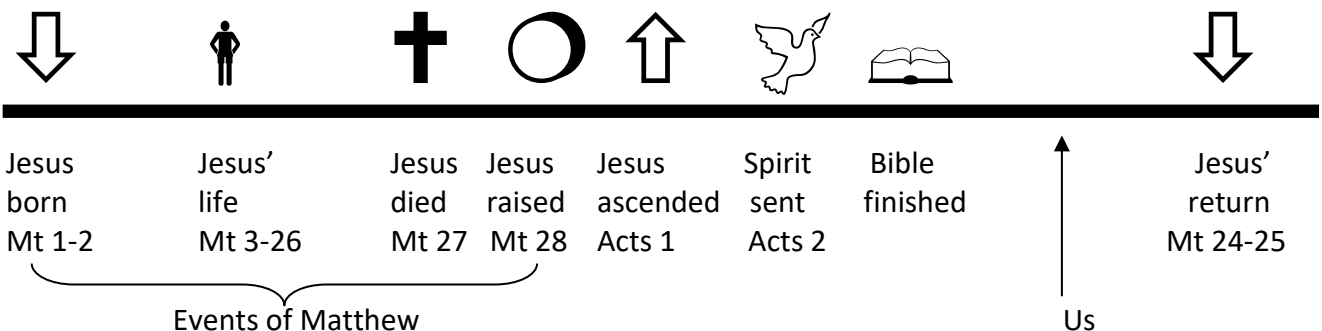
The following overview is a lightly modified version of an introduction to Matthew written by Revd Chris Watson Lee, of All Saints Loose, and shared with his permission.

1. Genre

- we read biographies, newspapers, novels and instructions differently
- the Gospel according to Matthew/Mark/Luke/John
- ? biographies of Jesus. Yes, but more: (1) *theological narratives which include (2) key historical events. The Gospels are (3) based on eyewitness accounts, and (4) are written to change our lives.*
- distinct, but united, proclamation of God's good news
- *but what is distinctive about Matthew?*

2. Author, Audience, and Date

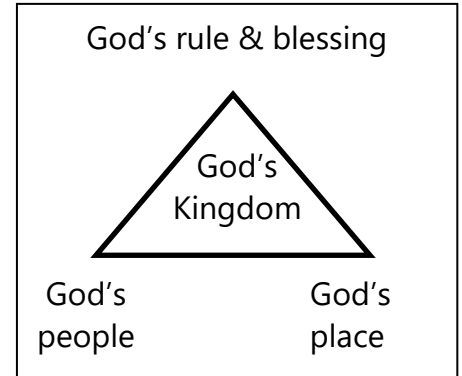
- don't know for sure. Early church took the **author** to be Matthew the tax collector and disciple (9:9, 10:3).
- lots of Old Testament links. Was the initial **audience** first century Greek-speaking Christians with a Jewish background? Maybe...
- *Matthew* has a much **wider audience**: 'make disciples of all nations ... to the end of the age' (28:19, 20). So, *Matthew* 'is for anyone, anywhere at any-time.'
- hard to **date** the book exactly
- where do **we** fit in? Ask: what difference do these events make to how we apply a passage now? e.g. Matthew 10:5-8 – a manual for 21st century mission??



3. Message and Purpose

**** Matthew longs to make his readers growing disciples of Jesus, who is the promised Servant Christ, that they may enjoy life in His kingdom together forever.****

- God's Son Jesus is the "Servant Christ".
Christ or Messiah (1:1, 16:16).
Servant (12:17-21 cf. 3:16-17, & Isa. 42:1-4).
- As King Jesus, God's own Son, comes near, so does God's **kingdom** (4:17) = God's unopposed, sovereign, saving rule in the world. God's kingdom has been described as 'God's people in God's place, under God's rule and blessing'.



- To be a **disciple** is summed up in 4 commands of Christ = turn, trust, travel and tell.
 1. **Turn** to Christ from sin, realign yourself with God's rule, 4:17b
 2. **Trust** in Jesus, the Son of God, the Servant Christ, 11:28
 3. **'Travel'** with Jesus Christ along the way of the cross, 16:24
 4. **Tell** others the good news about the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, 28:19a



REPENT
4:17



COME
11:28



FOLLOW
16:24



MAKE DISCIPLES
28:19

- Only Jesus can make discipleship possible: **he must serve us before we can serve him**: 'he will save his people from their sins' (1:21 cf. 9:18, 20:28, 26:28)
... then → Isaiah 49:6, "he says: 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth'."
- So, *Matthew* is a book **for the not-yet-Christian...** AND **for the Christian** learning to obey all Jesus' commands and teaching others to do the same (28:19-20a)

4. Structure and Outline: some clues...

- four "problems" or "crises" emerge in the first 25 chapters = the sinfulness of the world, and the rejection of Jesus' identity, mission and authority. All are resolved in chs 26-28 through Jesus' death and resurrection. i.e. *read the whole book in the light of the end*
- twice Jesus commissions his disciples to go on a mission: in the middle (10:5-6) and at the end (28:19-20). In a sense, this splits the book into two (unequal) halves: 1-10 and 11-28.
- Five times *Matthew* tells us "Jesus finished" teaching (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). These reveal five major blocks of Jesus' teaching: chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 24-25.
- In the second half of the book Jesus' location helps break up the narrative.

Matthew chapters 1-10: The Introduction to Jesus' Servant-Christ Ministry

1:1-2:23 The Background to Jesus' Ministry as Christ

- 1:1-17 God's long promised Christ is born to restore the kingdom
- 1:18-2:23 Responses to Christ Jesus, 'Immanuel', who is born as Saviour into a sinful, hostile world in fulfilment of Scripture

3:1-4:22 The Beginning of Jesus' Servant-Christ Ministry

- 3:1-17 John the Baptist prepares the way
- 4:1-22 God's true Son Jesus, tempted by the devil but obedient to God, preaches: "Repent, for the kingdom [is] near" (4:17)

4:23-10:42 Jesus the Servant-Christ: he proclaims the kingdom in his words, and authenticates His identity by his deeds

- 4:23-7:29...**words** about how to live for the kingdom
- 8:1-9:38 ...**and deeds** authenticating Jesus as King, and showing what kingdom life will be like"
- 10:1-42 **The mission of the King**

Matthew chapters 11-28: The Fulfilment of Jesus' Servant-Christ Mission...

11:1-16:20 ...in Galilee: Jesus' identity and opposition

- 11:1-12:50 "Come to Jesus" (11:28) *who is God's chosen Servant*, amidst confusion and growing opposition
- 13:1-52 Parables: the kingdom will prevail despite opposition
- 13:53-16:20 Jesus rebukes doubt & encourages faith

16:21-20:34 ...on the road: Jesus' mission

- 16:21-17:20 "Follow Jesus" (16:24): "lose" your life now to "gain" it in the future
- 17:22-18:35 This cross-shaped life is lived out in a family-like community
- 19:1-20:16 This cross-shaped life is a worthwhile struggle
- 20:17-34 Jesus' Servant-work *really* is vital, follow him

21:1-25:46 ...in Jerusalem: Jesus' authority

- 21:1-23:39 the religious establishment is "put on trial"
- 24:1-25:46 Keep watch, don't be led astray, the Son of Man *will* come back

26:1-28:20: Jesus fulfils his Servant-Christ mission through his death and resurrection

- 26:1-56 Jesus is handed over
- 26:57-27:54 Jesus is crucified
- 27:55-28:20 Jesus is raised
- 28:16-20: so "go and make disciples" of Christ (28:19)

5. Further Resources and Bibliography

Beginner's "Commentary" (top free resource):

If you'd like help as you read through *Matthew's Gospel* Ben Cooper has kindly published online material on the whole book. They include much more explanation about the text and structure as well as questions to think about. See <https://thematthewphile.wordpress.com/open-wednesday/>

Introductory Article:

- Ben Cooper, 'Matthew' in Lee Gatiss ed., *NIV Proclamation Study Bible*, (Hodder & Stoughton, 2013) pp. 1047-1048

Introductory Notes:

- Michael J. Wilkins, 'Matthew Notes' in Justin Taylor, ed., *ESV Study Bible*, (Crossway, 2008), pp. 1815-1888

Intermediate Commentaries:

- D. A. Carson, 'Matthew' in Frank E. Gaebelin ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 8*, (Zondervan, 1984), pp. 3-599
- R.T. France, *Matthew: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, (Inter-Varsity Press, 1985)

Small group Bible study guides

- Phillip Jensen & Tony Payne, *The Good Living Guide* (Matthew 5:1-12)
- Peter Collier, *Fear and Freedom* (Matthew 8-12)
- Andrew Cornes, *One2One: Book 2* (Matthew 26-28)

6. Sixty Day Matthew Reading Plan

<input type="checkbox"/> Day 1	1:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 21	12:22-37	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 41	22:1-14
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 2	1:18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 22	12:38-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 42	22:15-33
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 3	2:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 23	13:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 43	22:34-46
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 4	3:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 24	13:24-43	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 44	23:1-22
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 5	4:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 25	13:44-52	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 45	23:23-39
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 6	4:23-5:16	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 26	13:53-14:12	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 46	24:1-14
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 7	5:17-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 27	14:13-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 47	24:15-35
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 8	5:33-48	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 28	15:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 48	24:36-44
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 9	6:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 29	15:21-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 49	25:1-13
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 10	6:19-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 30	16:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 50	25:14-30
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 11	7:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 31	16:21-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 51	25:31-46
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 12	7:13-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 32	17:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 52	26:1-16
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 13	8:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 33	17:22-18:14	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 53	26:17-35
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 14	8:23-9:13	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 34	18:15-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 54	26:36-56
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 15	9:14-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 35	19:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 55	26:57-75
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 16	10:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 36	19:13-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 56	27:1-26
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<input type="checkbox"/> Day 20	12:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 40	21:23-46	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 60	28:16-20