

MATTHEW: Introduction

Matthew's book was not the first of the four Gospels to be written, but it is perfectly suited to come first in our Bibles. After turning the last page of the Old Testament, Matthew gives readers a bridge from the old to the new. He introduces Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, constantly pointing out the ways that Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled in Him.

Matthew (or Levi) was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, so he had first-hand knowledge of the stories he tells. He writes as a man who wants his own people to recognize their Messiah, but he wants the whole world to know Jesus too.

Matthew is especially concerned with the teaching of Jesus, and the book is organized around five major blocks of teaching:

- Matthew 5-7** – The Sermon on the Mount
- Matthew 10** – Sending out the Disciples
- Matthew 13** – Parables
- Matthew 18** – General Instructions
- Matthew 24-25** – The End of the Age

Each of the four Gospels tells the story of Jesus' life in a unique way. Watch for these characteristics as you read the book of Matthew:

- Matthew's account is **organized and orderly**.
- Matthew **emphasizes the teaching of Jesus**, focusing on five major discourses interspersed with narrative.
- Constantly pointing out ways that Jesus fulfills prophecy, Matthew has the strongest **connection to the Old Testament**.
- Matthew focuses on the **Kingship of Jesus**, using phrases like "Son of David" and "Kingdom of Heaven."
- A **call to discipleship** is at the center of this book, with clear instructions and examples for followers of Jesus.