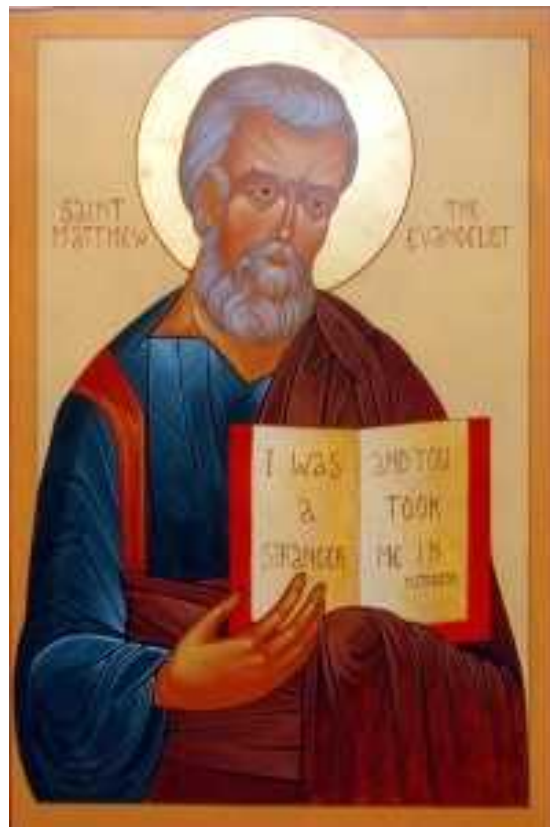


# The Gospel According to St Matthew



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## Introduction

### Author:

Until very modern times, the church has always attributed the first Gospel to St Matthew, also called Levi, one of Jesus' twelve disciples who was called from collecting taxes to follow Jesus. (See Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32) After the first six disciples (Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, James and John), Matthew's call is the only one recounted in the Gospels.

Matthew's grasp of the depth of the Lord's mercy can be traced back to his calling, when Jesus said, "For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." [Matthew 9:13]

Matthew's apostolic works are known only through the tradition of the church, which says that he remained, for a while, in Palestine preaching to the Jews, and then traveled (according to different traditions) to Ethiopia or Persia.

### Date:

The date of the composition of the Gospel is derived from these three indicators:

- 1) Matthew 28:15 indicates that some time had passed between the events of Jesus' death and resurrection and the writing of the Gospel, dating it a few years after the resurrection (33 AD).
- 2) In Matthew 24:1-2, Jesus predicts the



*St Matthew and the Angel*  
Contarelli Chapel, San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome



*The Calling of Saint Matthew* | Terbrugghen | 1621

- total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, an event which occurred in 70
- 3) The church has always considered We can offer a date of composition between

### Place of Composition

Eusebius, church historian writing between 303 and 337, states that Matthew wrote the Gospel to leave behind when he was preparing to leave Palestine and travel abroad.

“Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under pressure of necessity. For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue (Aramaic), and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence.” [Eusebius, *Church History*, III.24.6-7]

Even if it was not first written in Aramaic, the Gospel according to Matthew does have very Jewish flavor, rooted in the life and traditions of Palestine. It is with confidence, then, that we can assume that the Gospel of Matthew was composed in Jerusalem or the surrounding area.

## Purpose

The purpose of St Matthew in writing his Gospel is, like all of the Evangelists, to set before all who hear the Gospel Jesus Christ who came to die to atone for sin and save and deliver all mankind. “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” [St John 20:30-31]

There are a few emphases that are unique to St Matthew. Matthew, for example, focuses on Jesus as the prophesied Messiah. There are at least 62 quotations of the Old Testament, more than any other New Testament book (besides Romans, which has 66). Also, the genealogy which serves as an introduction to the Gospel serves to connect Jesus with the history of the Old Testament, which is nothing more than the history of the promise of the Gospel. This strong connection to the Old Testament fits well with the ancient understanding of the context of the writing (see the Eusebius quotation above), that Matthew was writing for the churches in Jerusalem and Palestine.

Of course Matthew was, like all of the prophets and apostles who composed the Holy Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that the very words that he wrote were given to him by the Holy Spirit (verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Jesus is pleased to build His church on the teachings of the prophets and His apostles. “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints of God, having been build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.” [Ephesians 2:19-22]



*The Four Evangelists pictures as the Four Beasts from Ezekiel 1*

*St Matthew -- The Man  
St Mark -- The Lion  
St Luke -- The Ox  
St John -- The Eagle*

## According to the Scriptures

St Matthew puts Jesus before us as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesies. In his Gospel there are at least 62 quotations. Aside from Romans (which has 66 quotations), Matthew quotes the Old Testament more than any other New Testament book. Here they are in the order they appear in the Gospel:

Matthew

1:23 **Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

1:23 **Isaiah 8:8,10** And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. (10) Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

2:6 **Micah 5:2** But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

2:15 **Hosea 11:1** When Israel was a child, then I loved him, called my son out of Egypt.

2:18 **Jeremiah 31:15** Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

3:3 **Isaiah 40:3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4:4 **Deuteronomy 8:3** And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

4:6 **Psalms 91:11-12** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. (12) They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

4:7 **Deuteronomy 6:16** Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

4:10 **Deuteronomy 6:13** Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

4:15-16 **Isaiah 9:1-2** Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. (2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

5:21 **Exodus 20:13** Thou shalt not kill.

**Deuteronomy 5:17** Thou shalt not kill.

5:27 **Exodus 20:14** Thou shalt not commit adultery.

**Deuteronomy 5:18** Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

5:31 **Deuteronomy 24:1** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.



*The Prophet Isaiah*

- 5:33 **Leviticus 19:12** And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.  
**Numbers 30:2** If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.
- 5:38 **Exodus 21:24** Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,  
**Leviticus 24:20** Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.  
**Deuteronomy 19:21** And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.
- 5:43 **Leviticus 19:18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.
- 8:17 **Isaiah 53:4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
- 9:13 **Hosea 6:6** For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
- 10:35,36 **Micah 7:6** For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.
- 11:10 **Malachi 3:1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.
- 12:7 **Hosea 6:6** For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
- 12:18-20 **Isaiah 42:1-3** Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. (2) He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. (3) A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.
- 12:21 **Isaiah 42:4** He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.
- 12:40 **Jonah 1:17** Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.
- 13:14-15 **Isaiah 6:9-10** And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.
- 13:35 **Psalms 78:2** I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:
- 15:4 **Exodus 20:12** Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.  
**Deuteronomy 5:16** Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.  
**Exodus 21:17** And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.
- 15:8,9 **Isaiah 29:13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with

their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

18:16 **Deuteronomy 19:15** One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

19:4 **Genesis 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.  
**Genesis 5:2** Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

19:5 **Genesis 2:24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

19:7 **Deuteronomy 24:1** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.



19:18,19 **Exodus 20:12-16** Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (13) Thou shalt not kill. (14) Thou shalt not commit adultery. (15) Thou shalt not steal. (16) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

**Deuteronomy 5:16-20** Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (17) Thou shalt not kill. (18) Neither shalt thou commit adultery. (19) Neither shalt thou steal. (20) Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

19:19 **Leviticus 19:18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

21:5 **Isaiah 62:11** Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

**Zechariah 9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

21:9 **Psalms 118:25-26** Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. (26) Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

21:13 **Isaiah 56:7** Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

21:16 **Psalms 8:2** Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

21:42 **Psalms 118:22-23** The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. (23) This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

22:24 **Deuteronomy 25:5** If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

- 22:32 **Exodus 3:6,15** Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (15) And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.
- 22:37 **Deuteronomy 6:5** And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
- 22:39 **Leviticus 19:18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.
- 22:44 **Psalms 110:1** The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
- 23:39 **Psalms 118:26** Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.
- 24:30 **Daniel 7:13** I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.
- 26:31 **Zechariah 13:7** Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.
- 26:64 **Psalms 110:1** The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.  
**Daniel 7:13** I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.
- 27:9,10 **Zechariah 11:12-13** And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. (13) And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.
- 27:46 **Psalms 22:1** My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

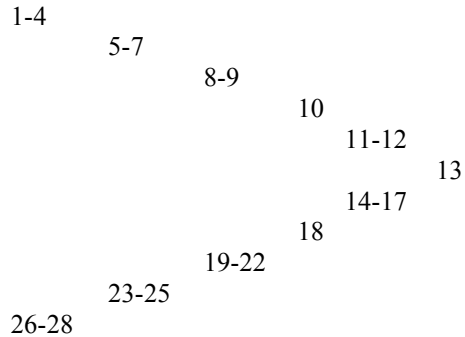
## Structure of the Gospel

Matthew's Gospel is perhaps the most structured of any Gospel, grouping many of the teaching and works of Jesus in groups of five, three and seven. Basic to the structure of the Gospel are the five great discourses:

1. The Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
2. Missionary Discourse (10)
3. Parable Discourse (13)
4. Church Discourse (18)
5. Eschatological Discourse (23-25)

Each of these sections concludes with the phrase similar to, "when Jesus had ended these sayings..." [7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1]

Also, in the structure of Matthew there can be seen a separation between Jesus and Israel and a deepening connection between Jesus and His disciples. Some scholars have suggested a chiasmic structure as follows:



St Matthew Writing His Gospel

Dr. Martin Franzmann has written an outline built around these five groups of Messianic Deeds and Words. His outline follows (Martin Franzmann, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, CPH, 1961. p. 174-178):

## Outline

- I. Introduction, 1:1-4:16: Jesus the Messianic Fulfiller
  - A. The genealogy of Jesus (Jesus the climax of the history of God's people), 1:1-17
  - B. The beginnings, seven fulfillments of prophecy:
    1. The birth of Christ- "Emmanuel," 1:18-25
    2. The birth at Bethlehem and the coming of the Magi- "From you shall come a ruler," 2:1-12
    3. The flight to Egypt- "Out of Egypt have I called My Son," 2:13-15
    4. Slaughter of the children at Bethlehem- "Rachel weeping for her children," 2:16-18
    5. The return to Nazareth- "He shall be called a Nazarene," 2:19-23
    6. The ministry of the Baptist, the baptism and temptation of Jesus- "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord," 3:1-4:11

The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee- "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light," 4:12-16
- II. First Group of Messianic Deeds and Words: The Annunciation of the Kingdom and the Call to Repentance, 4:17-7:29
  - A. Deeds, 4:17-4:25. The theme of Jesus' proclamation, 4:17;p the calling of the first four disciples, 4:18-22; general description of Jesus' Messianic ministry: teaching, preaching, healing, expulsion of demons, 4:23-25.
  - B. Words, 5:1-7:29. The Sermon on the Mount, the meaning of Jesus' call to repentance: The free grace of the Kingdom and the higher righteousness which that grace makes possible and demands.
- III. Second Group of Messianic Deeds and Words, 8:1-11:1: The compassionate Messiah seeks the lost sheep of the house of Israel



- A. Deeds, 8:1-9:35. Ten Messianic deeds of power which reveal the authority and the compassion of the Messiah. The twofold reaction to the Messianic revelation, 9:33,34.
  - B. Words, 9:36-11:1. The compassionate Messiah extends His ministry to the whole twelve tribes of Israel through the twelve apostles, whom He authorizes and instructs to proclaim the Kingdom in word and deed. He prepares them to carry on their gracious work in the face of contradiction and opposition.
- IV. Third Group of Messianic Deeds and Words, 11:2-13:53: The contradicted Messiah conceals the Kingdom from those who have rejected it (those who “have not,” Matt. 13:12) and further reveals it to those who have accepted it (those who “have,” Matt. 13:12)
- A. Deeds, 11:2-12:50. The contradicted Christ: John's question from prison, 11:2-6; the fickle and petulant crowds who have rejected both the Baptist and the Son of man, 11:7-19; the impenitent Cities of the Lake, 11:20-24; the Son of God concealed from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes, 11:25-30; Sabbath controversies, 12:1-14; the unspectacular ministry of the Servant of the Lord, 12:15-21; the Beelzebub controversy, 12:22-37; the demand for a sign and Jesus' judgment upon His contemporaries, 12:38-45; the true family of Jesus, 12:46-50.
  - B. Words, 13:1-53. Seven parables of the kingdom as judgment upon unbelief and as deepened revelation to the faithful disciples.
- V. Fourth Group of Messianic Deeds and Words, 13:54-19:1. Toward the new Messianic people of God, the church: The Messiah separates His disciples from the mass of Old Israel and deepens His communion with His own
- A. Deeds, 13:54-17:27: (1) Separation: Jesus withdraws when Nazereth is offended and the king grows suspicious, 13:54-14:13; He separates His disciples from the false tradition of Judaism, 15:1-20; He rejects the demand for a sign and warns His disciples against the leaven of the teaching of the Pharisee and Sadducee, 16:1-12. (2) Communion: Jesus provides for those who seek Him (Feeding the Five Thousand), comes to His own across the waters, gives access to Himself by faith, and continues to help those who come to Him in their need, 14:14-36. He confounds no faith that trusts in Him (Canaanite woman), heals the afflicted, and provides for those who abide with Him, 15:21-39. He evokes the confession of His disciples and sets them on His way of the cross, 16:13-28; He permits the Three to see Him in the glory of His transfiguration, 17:1-13; He gives His disciples His unlimited promise to faith, 17:14-23, and asserts their freedom from Israel's temple, 17:24-27.
  - B. Words, 18:1-19:1. The Messiah deepens His communion with His disciples by making their fellowship a fellowship of faith and love, a fellowship in which divine forgiveness holds sway.
- VI. Fifth Group of Messianic Deeds and Words, 19:2-26:1.  
The Messiah gives His disciples a sure and sober hope
- A. Deeds, 19:2-22:46. The Messiah orders the relationship of the hoping disciple to the order of this age: His relationship to marriage, children, property, 19:2-20:16. He makes plain why Israel has no hope: Israel contradicts and rejects the Messiah who comes in ministry, 20:17-28, mercy, 20:29-34, and meekness, 21:1-11. Israel's worship is corrupt and therefore doomed, 21:12-22; in stead of heeding the voice of the Baptist, 21:23-27, and Jesus' call to repentance, 21:28-22:14, Israel's leaders seek to discredit and entrap Israel's Messiah, the Son of God, 22:15-46.
  - B. Words, 23:1-26:1. The doom of Israel and the hope of the disciple: Jesus' Messianic indictment of scribe and Pharisee and His lament over doomed Jerusalem, 23; the destruction of the temple, the return of the Christ, and the close of the age; parables of comfort, warning, and encouragement, the Last Judgment, 24-25
- VII. Conclusion, 26-28. The Passion, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. The risen Lord in the perfection of His power: the universal commission to the disciples