

Pine Bush Men's Bible Study 2022 Studies In The Gospel Of Matthew

Author: “Before his conversion, Matthew the son of Alphaeus had collected taxes for the Romans in Capernaum. His name was then Levi, [Mark 2:14](#). The Lord commanded Levi to follow him, which he did. It is probable that he subsequently changed his name to Matthew, which means ‘gift of God’. He had been a servant of the greatest earthly kingdom then known, that of the Roman Empire. It is appropriate therefore that, in his Gospel, he has much to tell us of a far greater kingdom—the kingdom of heaven. The first Gospel records a high percentage of Jesus’ teachings. Over half of the Gospel consists of His parables and sayings. The people were forever astonished at His doctrine, [7:28](#); [13:54](#); [22:33](#). Apart from its introduction and conclusion, the Gospel can be divided into five sections, each ending with a discourse that is followed by words such as ‘when Jesus had finished these sayings’. See [7:28](#); [11:1](#); [13:53](#); [19:1](#) and [26:1](#). It is practically certain that Matthew wrote his Gospel for the Jews. To such, the humiliation, rejection and death of Jesus was a very real stumbling block. They had expected a military and political deliverer, [Luke 24:21](#). Matthew set out to show that Jesus was indeed their Messiah. Chapter 1 shows that His genealogy was sound; He was entitled to the promises of Abraham and the throne of David. Chapter 2 shows that His infancy was in complete accord with the Old Testament. Chapter 3 shows that the foretold forerunner had come. Chapter 4 shows that His temptation proved Him competent to reign. Chapters 5–7 detail the principles according to which He would rule. Chapters 8–9 record the fulfilment of the Messianic signs of [Isaiah 35](#) and [61](#). All the important events of Jesus’ life took place to fulfil the prophecies of the Old Testament. Ten times Matthew uses words like, ‘that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets.’”^[1]

“Including Matthew 2:23, there are ten passages that use the fulfillment formula (Matt. 1:22–23; 2:15, 17–18, 23; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:35; 21:4–5; 27:9–10). Possibly 2:5–6 could also be included, but the verb *pleroo*, ‘to fulfill,’ is not used on this occasion, and the quotation from Micah 5:2 is written in the context of the chief priests and teachers of the law informing Herod regarding the birthplace of the Messiah.”^[2]

Date: Late 50’s-early/mid 60’s A. D.^[3]

On the genealogy: “In combining David and Abraham Matthew is drawing attention to two strands in Jesus’ Hebrew ancestry and implying that he fulfilled all that would be expected in a Messiah with such connections.”^[4]

“These men were mighty figures in their day: one was the founder of a nation unique in the annals of world history; and the other was famous as the founder of its royal dynasty. In telling us that Jesus Christ is the son of Abraham and the son of David, Matthew is not merely saying that he is physically descended from these two men: he is claiming that Jesus Christ is heir to what they were and stood for, and to the covenants that God made with them (see Genesis 15; 2 Samuel 7). And we shall scarcely comprehend all that without studying lengthy passages of the Old Testament.

Moreover, in prefacing his Gospel with Christ’s detailed genealogy, as he does, Matthew is obviously not content simply to list the individual links in the chain of Christ’s biological descent from Abraham; 2 for Matthew divides the generations that led from Abraham to Christ into three roughly equal groups (Matt 1:17):

1. From Abraham to David, the king (1:1–6);
2. From David to the exile to Babylon (1:6–11);
3. From the exile to the birth of Christ (1:12–17).

This at once tells us that God’s preparation of Israel for the coming of Christ was not achieved through a mere succession of monotonous, undifferentiated sequences of births. Within the centuries that led from Abraham to Christ there were three great, easily distinguished, epochs in the experience and spiritual

education of the nation. The Old Testament's record shows that each period began with God setting before his people a great and glorious hope, designed to motivate and energise them to move forward into the future with confident expectation of greater and better things to come. Each period, of course, had its darker side. Just as a child has little idea of the endless ramifications of sin, and discovers them only by experience as it progresses through life, so the nation of Israel, and so, of course, all nations, have had to learn the extent of the seemingly ineradicable poison of sin in individuals, families, nations, national and international institutions, that blights human progress and frustrates our best hopes and endeavours. But learning this sad lesson was in its way progress towards the coming of Christ; for how else would Israel come to realise that the only solution would be the coming of a more than human, divine Saviour? At the same time God kept alive, strengthened, and progressively enlarged Israel's hope, not only by issuing advance notices, predictions and prophecies of the coming Redeemer, but by shaping history so as to give them from time to time provisional examples, foreshadowings, types, prototypes, illustrations, thought-models of what the Redeemer and his redemption would be like. Thus did God educate people, expand and refine their concepts, and provide criteria by means of which they might eventually evaluate the claims of Jesus Christ to be the son of Abraham, the son of David, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. 2 Contrast Luke's genealogy of Christ (3:23–38), which simply lists the biological links between Christ and Adam, because its special purpose is to assert that Christ is truly—though not solely—human.”^[5]

“In addition, Matthew shows his careful arrangement by framing his presentation of Jesus's genealogy in the form of a chiasmic (A-B-C-C'-B'-A') structure:

A Jesus Christ
 B Son of David
 C Son of Abraham (1:1)
 C' Abraham (1:2)
 B' David (1:6)
 C' Christ (1:16).

As mentioned above, Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, similar to Luke's, is not exhaustive but rather selective (i.e., Matthew skipped certain generations he considered less significant, at least for his purposes). In addition, Matthew employed a Jewish literary device called gematria (numerical symbolism). Accordingly, he structured his genealogy in three blocks of fourteen generations each (whereby fourteen is a multiple of seven, symbolically conveying the notion of perfection):

- Fourteen generations from Abraham to David (his patriarchal lineage)
- Fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian exile (his royal lineage)
- Fourteen generations from the Babylonian exile to Jesus^[15]

Not only this, but the name 'David' in Hebrew has a numerical value of fourteen when letters are converted into numbers, like this:^[16]

- Dalet (Hebrew d) = 4
- Waw (Hebrew v) = 6
- Dalet (Hebrew d) = 4
- Total = 14

For Jewish readers, this numerical symbolism applied to Jesus would have added further persuasiveness to Matthew's argument that Jesus was the Davidic Messiah. In his genealogy, the first evangelist had furnished incontrovertible proof that the number of generations for each of the three salvation-historical periods presented in his listing of Jesus's ancestry added up to fourteen, the exact numerical value of the name 'David'! Now you may be unimpressed, but Matthew didn't write his Gospel originally for twenty-first-century Westerners but for first-century Jews.^[17] In all these ways, Matthew has provided an orderly account of Jesus's messianic pedigree—as mentioned, genealogies were not necessarily expected to be comprehensive in the ancient Near East—which reflected God's purposeful design and providential ordering of history.

Finally, there's an interesting twist toward the end of the genealogy. While the repeated refrain throughout the genealogy is 'X was the father of Y,' when the reader arrives at the end of the genealogy, upon reading 'Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph,' the familiar pattern suddenly breaks off. Rather than writing, 'and Joseph the father of Jesus,' Matthew writes, 'Joseph the husband of Mary,' adding, 'of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.'^[18] That is, Jesus was born 'of Mary,' his actual mother, but Joseph, while being Mary's husband, was not Jesus's actual father! Rather, Joseph was merely Jesus's adoptive, or legal, father; Jesus's actual Father was God. In this way, the end of Matthew's genealogy anticipates the account of the virgin conception and birth of Jesus that is about to follow and that it is designed to introduce.^[19]

Footnotes

15 [Matthew 1:17](#).

16 Note that there are no letters for vowels in Hebrew, only consonants; vowels are pointed below a given letter but not counted as letters themselves, which is why the a and i in "David" are not represented or counted in the conversion of letters into numbers below.

17 Note, by the way, that this in no way condones everything that's done with gematria in ancient times or even today. I've seen people do crazy things with numerical symbolism (such as calculating the number of the "beast"—the Antichrist—in Revelation)!

18 [Matthew 1:16](#).

19 [Matthew 1:18–25](#).^[6]

Literary Structure / Outlines:

“Discourses begin with ‘disciples coming to Jesus’ and end with ‘ended these sayings’

I. Narrative 1 Ch. 1-4 Preparation of the King

A. 1 & 2: Physical Preparation of the King

1:1-17 Natural Preparation (Abraham is of value)

1:18-25 Supernatural preparation

2:1-15 Opposition from Human King (worship & Scripture)

2:16-23 God's response and tactics to opposition (departs & withdraws; no sword to combat sword)

B. 3 & 4: Spiritual and Moral Preparation of the King

3:1-12 Voice from Earth – Wilderness (Abraham of no value)

3:13-17 Divine supernatural – Voice from Heaven

4:1-11 Opposition from spiritual king (worship & Scripture are issues)

4:12-25 God's tactics in face of opposition – Lord Jesus withdraws

II. Collections of teachings 1: [Ch. 5-7:28 – The Discourse of the King]

III. Narrative 2: [Ch. 7:29-9:38 Key words: Authority and its use and following the Lord Jesus]

IV. Collection of teachings 2: Delegation of Authority 10:1-11:1

10:1-15 Source of Authority

10:16-39 Power and use of Authority

10:40-42 Weight of Authority

V. Narrative 3: 11:2-13:9 Judgment on evil is future and the absence of the King (radical concept to a Jew)

VI. Collection of teachings 3: [13:10-53 Mystery Kingdom – coexistence of good with evil to the end of the age when it's judged]

VII. Narrative 4: [13:54-17:27 – Whose Son is He? We're linked to a glorified Son; Unique witness of Church to the Son of God.]

By contrast, Israel bore witness to YHWH, One True God – Is. 43:10ff.

VIII. Collection of teachings 4: [18:1-19:1 Instructions to the Church]

IX. Narrative 5: [19:2-24:2 Stories that reveal what the kingdom will be like, but do they want it on/with such character?]

X. Collection of teachings 5: [24:3-26:1 Preparation for second coming]

Randal P. Amos & Henry Sardiña added:

XI. Narrative 6: [26:2-28:15 The Gospel agenda rather than an immediate kingdom and evidence that He didn't leave defeated]

XII. Collection 6 [28:16-20 Gathered to Him, but He hasn't finished speaking (unto end of age) His authority for victory in this age]"^[7]

“These five main sections cover:

- Kingdom living—the Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29).
- Kingdom mission—instruction on mission (10:1–42)
- Kingdom principles—the parables of kingdom (13:1–58)
- Kingdom attitudes—caring for the weak and forgiving others (18:1–35)
- Kingdom perspective—God's plan for history, including the imminent destruction of Jerusalem and Christ's return at the end of the age (24:1–25:46)”^[8]

“1. Introduction (1:1–4:16)

a. Genealogy, Birth, and Childhood of Jesus (1:1–2:23)

b. Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (3:1–4:16)¹⁸

2. Galilean Ministry (4:17–16:20)

a. First Stage of Jesus' Galilean Ministry (4:17–25)

b. First Discourse: Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29)¹⁹

c. Second Stage of Jesus' Galilean Ministry (8:1–9:38)

d. Second Discourse: Instruction of the Twelve (10:1–11:1)²⁰

e. Third Stage of Jesus' Galilean Ministry (11:2–12:50)

f. Third Discourse: Parables about the Kingdom (13:1–53)²¹

g. Rejection and Withdrawal to the North (13:54–16:20)²²

3. Journey to Jerusalem (16:21–20:34)²³

a. Return to Galilee (16:21–17:27)

b. Fourth Discourse: Parables of the Kingdom (18:1–35)

c. Journey through Judea (19:1–20:34)²⁴

4. Jerusalem Ministry (21:1–28:20)^[9]

a. Final Ministry in Jerusalem (21:1–22:46)

b. Rebuke of the Pharisees and Abandonment of the Temple (23:1–39)

c. Fifth Discourse: The Fall of Jerusalem and the Coming Kingdom (24:1–25:46)

d. Jesus' Passion (26:1–27:66)

e. Jesus' Resurrection (28:1–20).”

15 B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Holt, 1930), 82, 265–335.

16 Jack D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 1–39.

17 Craig A. Evans, *Matthew*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 9.

18 ‘From that time Jesus began to . . .’ (4:17).

19 ‘And when Jesus finished these sayings . . .’ (7:28).

20 ‘When Jesus had finished . . .’ (11:1).

21 ‘And when Jesus had finished . . .’ (13:53).

22 ‘Jesus . . . withdrew’ (14:13; 15:21). Jesus travels to Gennesaret (14:34), the district of Tyre and Sidon (15:21), and the district of Caesarea Philippi (16:13).

23 ‘From that time Jesus began . . .’ and ‘he must go to Jerusalem’ (16:21).

24 ‘Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan’ (19:1).”^[10]

“Kingsbury outlines the Gospel as follows:

1:1–4:16 The Presentation of the Person of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of God
 4:17–16:20 The Presentation of Jesus in Terms of His Public Proclamation
 16:21–28:20 The Presentation of Jesus in Terms of His Passion and Resurrection.”^[11]

“Jesus presents none of his great speeches to the religious leaders, for there is never a time in Matthew’s story when their ears are not deaf to his teaching. Instead, the audience he addresses are the crowds and especially the disciples. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks to both the crowds and the disciples (5:1; 7:28–29), and it is primarily to the crowds that he also delivers the first half of his discourse in parables (13:1–35; but cf. 13:10–23). Otherwise, the recipients of Jesus’ great speeches are exclusively the disciples: the latter half of the discourse in parables (13:36–52); and the missionary, ecclesiological, and eschatological discourses (chaps. 10; 18; 24–25).”^[12]

“The very sayings in Jesus’ speeches that are so ill-suited to address the immediate situation of the crowds or the pre-Easter disciples prove to be well-suited indeed to address the situation of the implied reader.”^[13]

On Matt. 28:18-20: “In narrating in this fashion the story of the life and ministry of Jesus, Matthew advances a bold theological claim. This claim is, as the passages 1:23 and 28:20 reveal (cf. 18:20), that in the person of Jesus Messiah, his Son, God has drawn near to abide to the end of time with his people, the church, thus inaugurating the end-time age of salvation. This claim, which lies at the heart of ‘the gospel of the Kingdom,’ is, in Matthew’s view, of decisive significance for Israel and the Gentiles alike (4:23; 9:35; 24:14). The disciples, whom the risen Jesus commissions to a worldwide ministry at the end of Matthew’s story, understand this, and so does the reader. It is apparent that the first evangelist, who wrote this story, would also have wanted any real reader both to understand this and to act on it.”^[14]

On 4:17-11:1:

“The first half of this large division can be outlined as a chiasm:

4:17 The Proclamation of the Kingdom

A 4:18–22 The calling of disciples (to fish for people)

B 4:23–25 Summary of Jesus’ ministry to Israel

C 5:1–7:29 Illustration of Jesus mighty in word (teaching as one clothed with divine authority)

C’ 8:1–9:34 Illustration of Jesus mighty in deed (working as one clothed with divine authority)

B’ 9:35 Summary of Jesus’ ministry to Israel

A’ 9:36–11:1 The calling of disciples (to be harvesters) for the mission to Israel and an in depth explanation of what discipleship and mission will mean.”^[15]

Ch. 8 – “Mt. 8 - The King’s Applied Authority

A vv. 1-4: Cleansing

B vv. 5-13: Relief & fellowship; Christ overcomes physical distance

C vv. 14-15: Service [Saved to serve]

* vv. 16-17: Healing via substitution

C1 vv. 18-22: The Cost of Discipleship [Cost of service]

B1 vv. 23-27: Deliverance from fear; Christ overcomes wind & seas

A1 vv. 28-34: Deliverance from demonic oppression; Christ overcomes demons.”^[16]

Ch. 10: “The discourse begins with (1) the commissioning of twelve with the authority to expand Jesus’ ministry of healing (10:1–4). It is followed by (2) specific mission instructions (10:5–23) that are bracketed by the reference to ‘Israel’ in 10:6 and 23. This unit divides into two subunits, 10:5–15 and 10:16–23. Both begin with the verb ‘send’ (10:5, 16) and end with a saying introduced by ‘Truly, I say to you’ (10:15, 23). The first has to do with the nature and manner of their mission; the second warns of its perils. (3) The next unit, 10:24–33, ties the calling of discipleship to fearless confession. Two general

statements about disciples frame an argument about whom to fear (10:26–31): the disciple is not greater than the teacher and can expect no better treatment (10:24–25), and everyone who confesses Jesus before others he will vouch for before his Father in heaven, and everyone who denies him before others he will renounce before his Father in heaven (10:32–33). The phrase ‘therefore, do not fear’ brackets this unit (10:26, 31). (4) The last unit of the discourse, 10:34–42, warns that confession will bring division, requires sacrifice, and promises reward for those who welcome the missionaries even if it is only with a cup of cold water.”^[17]

“The resumption of the narrative launches the second half of the large division, 4:17–16:20. It opens with a question, raised by John the Baptist, about who Jesus is, and a beatitude for a positive response to Jesus (11:2–6), and it concludes with a question about who Jesus is, raised by Jesus himself, and a beatitude for Peter’s response (16:13–20). The preceding discourse warns the disciples to be prepared for hostility when they go out on mission to Israel, and the narrative now offers some clues as to why they will be ostracized: Jesus himself is rejected. The narrative begins with doubts about Jesus raised by none other than John the Baptist. This is followed by reports of indifference to Jesus’ salvific ministry in Galilean cities (11:16–24) even though his fame has spread throughout the whole land (9:26). An open confrontation with the Pharisees ensues (12:1–14) with the result that they map out plans to destroy Jesus (12:14) and to defame his reputation (12:24). Reasons for this turn of events are interspersed throughout the narrative (11:25–27), but a fuller explanation is provided by the discourse of parables in 13:1–52. The parables also make it clear that rejection of Jesus will result in condemnation at the end of the age. The disciples, however, are affirmed as those who understand; and Jesus turns increasingly to them as the fertile ground who will produce the desired fruit. The narrative that follows in 13:53–16:20 shows Jesus continuing to minister to the needs of Israel but concentrating on giving the disciples further instruction. Like the first half of this large block (4:17–11:1), this second half can be outlined as a chiasm:

- a 11:2 Question about Jesus
- b 11:3–5 Jesus’ answer
- c 11:6 Beatitude for those who respond to Jesus
- d 11:7–15 John’s role explained
- e 11:16–12:45 Unbelief and rejection from the Jewish leaders
- f 12:46–50 Jesus’ mothers, brothers, and sisters
- g 13:1–52 Parables of the kingdom that explain the reaction to Jesus
- f 13:53–58 Jesus’ mothers, brothers, and sisters
- e’ 14:1–16:12 Belief and acceptance by the disciples and warnings about the Jewish leaders
- a’ 16:13–20 Question about Jesus
- b’ 16:14–16 Answers from various ones and from Peter
- c’ 16:17 Beatitude for Peter’s response
- d’ 16:18–20 Peter’s role explained.”^[18]

Ch. 11-12: “Chapters 11–12 have illustrated the growing divisions among men in their attitude to Jesus, culminating in the sharp contrast between true disciples and all others in 12:46–50. Division, and the problem of how some could reject Jesus’ message while others responded, are the underlying themes of this chapter too; the parables thus provide some explanation of the attitudes revealed in the preceding narrative.”^[19]

11:2-30: “This section divides into three parts. (1) The first part (11:2–19) is composed of three units each beginning with a question: (a) 11:2–6 (Are you he who is to come?), (b) 11:7–15 (What did you go out into the wilderness to see?), and (c) 11:16–19 (How shall I compare this generation?). Each paragraph contains a reference to ‘coming’: ‘Are you the coming one?’ (11:3), ‘he is Elijah who is to come’ (11:14), ‘John came’ (11:18), ‘the son of man came’ (11:19). The reference to the works of the Christ in 11:2 and Wisdom’s works in 11:19 form an inclusio. (2) The second part of the section (11:20–24) contains a

condemnation of three Galilean cities for their failure to repent. (3) The third part (11:25–30) contains an explanation for the indifference, a declaration about Jesus and his mission, and an invitation to discipleship.”^[20]

“The second part of this section (11:20–24) opens with Jesus uttering woes on the unrepentant cities of Capernaum, Jesus’ home base, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. This outburst comes as a surprise for a couple of reasons. The response of the Galilean towns, to this point, has not been portrayed as negative (9:31). To contend that they will suffer a fate worse than the infamous Sodom in the judgment is surely a terrible fate, and for what sins? Capernaum is not accused, as Sodom was, of adultery and walking in lies (Jer 23:14; Jude 7; see Testament of Levi 14:6; Testament of Benjamin 9:1) or of pride and the neglect of the poor (Ezek 16:49); it has only given Jesus the cold shoulder. This startling judgment does two things. (a) It impresses on the reader that indifference toward Jesus or rejection of him is the deadliest of sins (see the warning in Testament of Asher 7:1: ‘Do not become like Sodom, which did not recognize the Lord’s angels and perished forever’). (b) It prepares the reader for what will follow. Judgment is first announced, and then the developing story shows how it is justified (Luz, Matthäus (Mt 8–17), 2:194). The failure of these towns to respond marks a new stage in the relationship between Jesus and Galilee. The gap between Jesus and the people will only continue to widen. In chapter 12, the rejection of Jesus becomes more evident in the heated disputes between Jesus and the Pharisees.”^[21]

Ch. 12: “The next section (12:1–45) portrays overt controversy and falls into two parts. (1) The first part (12:1–21) contains two sabbath controversies (in a field, 12:1–8; in their synagogue, 12:9–14) and concludes with a long fulfillment quotation from Isaiah 42 (12:15–21). The opening phrase, ‘at that time’ (12:1), ties these disputes to Jesus’ offer of rest in 11:28–30, which is closely related to the sabbath (Gen 2:1–4a; Heb 4:4, 8–10). It is a one-sided debate that bears out Jesus’ claim that his yoke is kind by showing that he interprets the law according to the needs of individuals. (2) The second part (12:22–45) contains the churlish reactions of the Pharisees to Jesus (12:24, 38) and corroborates Jesus’ observation that the significance of his works is hidden from the ‘wise and understanding.’ It begins with Jesus healing the demon-possessed, blind, and lame (12:22). It concludes with a parable about a house swept clean of a demon, but because nothing has filled the void (=belief in Jesus), the demon returns with a vengeance (12:43–45).”^[22]

Ch. 13: “The works of the Christ have been done in Israel; why does Israel not embrace its messiah? Why are so many, including Jesus’ own family and hometown, scandalized? The collection of parables in chapter 13 explains this tide of events. Part of the blame can be pinned on slander from such as the Pharisees who malign the work of the Spirit (12:24); but this discourse traces the failure to respond to three other sources: (a) human hardness of heart (13:3–23), (b) the wiles of Satan (13:24–30; 36–43), and (c) the deceptively humble presence of the kingdom prior to its final apocalyptic manifestation (13:31–34). New themes emerge in this discourse that address the following issues: (a) the different kinds of response among persons (13:3–9, 18–23); (b) the parables and their purpose (13:10–17, 34–35); (c) the requirement of understanding (13:11, 19, 51); and (d) the nature of the kingdom of God (13:31–33, 44–46). (e) A theme found in every discourse reappears: the threat of judgment (13:40–42, 48–50).”^[23]

Ch. 14: “It is composed of two parts: (1) the report of the death of the greatest of the prophets (14:1–12) and (2) further demonstration of Jesus as both divine provider and savior (14:13–36). The summaries of Jesus’ healing the crowds in 14:13–15 and 14:34–36 enclose the report of the miracles of the feeding of five thousand and the walking on the sea, which demonstrate Jesus to be both divine provider and savior.”^[24]

Ch. 15:1-16:12: “The structure of this section centers on the theme of food and bread, which ties the units together. It begins with (1) a controversy with the Pharisees over eating bread with unwashed hands and the purity of food (15:1–20), bracketed by the phrase ‘to eat with unwashed hands’ (15:2, 20). This unit

contains three segments: (a) 15:19, the condemnation of the tradition of the Pharisees; (b) 15:10–11, the calling of the crowds to hear and understand; and (c) 15:12–20, the explanation of true purity to the disciples. (2) The following incident with the Canaanite woman (15:21–28) raises the question of the possibility of healing (bread crumbs) for gentiles. (3) The feeding of the four thousand (15:29–39) reveals the abundance still available for Israel. (4) The warning about the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees (16:1–12) returns to the condemnation of the Pharisees’ tradition.”^[25]

“. . . 16:21–17:23, is framed by two predictions of Jesus’ passion and resurrection (16:21; 17:22–23). In between are (1) Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ announcement of his impending suffering (16:22–23); (2) Jesus’ teaching on the implications of his suffering for discipleship and gaining life (16:24–26); (3) a warning about the coming judgment (16:27); (4) assurance of Jesus’ vindication (16:28); (5) the transfiguration (17:1–8); (6) clarification about the coming of Elijah and the resurrection from the dead (17:9–13); and (7) an episode that underscores the need for faith during Jesus’ physical absence (17:14–23). The passion/resurrection predictions indicate that Jesus does not want his disciples to have any illusions about where following him will lead. They alone have discerned who he is and are judged ready to be given another, even deeper, mystery of the kingdom—the necessity and significance of his suffering and death as messiah (16:21). The ‘must’ in classical Hellenistic literature frequently referred to blind, impersonal fate that had to be played out. In Matthew, as in the rest of the Gospels, it refers to the purpose and will of God. As the suffering servant (12:15–21), Jesus has been sent by God to take away the sins of the people through his death (1:21; 20:28; 26:28), and he now makes ready to fulfill that mission.”^[26]

17:1-8: “The chiasmic structure of this scene indicates that what is most vital is what the disciples hear from the cloud, not what they see (Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 2:684):

- a Narrative introduction (17:1)
- b Jesus is transfigured (17:2–3)
- c Peter’s response (17:4)
- d The divine voice (17:5)
- c’ The disciples’ response (17:6)
- b’ Jesus speaks (17:7)
- a’ Narrative conclusion (17:8)

The voice decrees that they are to listen to Jesus. The disciples’ great fear is a typical reaction to a theophany (Gen 17:3; Josh 5:14; Ezek 1:28; Dan 8:17; 10:9–10; Acts 26:13–14; Rev 1:17). In Mark, they fear immediately after the transfiguration of Jesus and the vision of Moses and Elijah (Mark 9:6). In Luke, they fear at the descent of the cloud (Luke 9:34). In Matthew, fear comes upon the disciples when they hear the voice (17:6) that affirms Jesus as the supreme teaching authority.”^[27]

Ch. 18: “How does this account fit into Matthew’s story? (a) First, the incident provides a theological object lesson. Jesus’ concern for the feelings and needs of others lays the groundwork for the discourse that follows on how the church is to live together as a family. The reason that Jesus will comply is not because of any obligation or loyalty to the temple but to avoid giving offense to others. ‘The sons may be free, but they are not free from the claims of love’ (D. E. Garland, ‘Matthew’s Understanding of the Temple Tax (Matt 17:24–27),’ *SBLSP* [1987]: 205).

(b) Second, it is further confirmation that Jesus is God’s son (17:5). The miracle, although not reported, shows him to have divine foreknowledge as one who rules over nature and the sea (14:28–33).

(c) Third, it underscores the fact that the disciples as Jesus’ ‘brothers’ (12:49; 25:40; 28:10) are also ‘sons’ and are also exempt from the tax by virtue of their relationship to him. As they share in his authority to cast out unclean spirits and to heal every disease (10:1, 8), they also share his authority to make governing decisions for the church (18:18–20; 16:19).

(d) Fourth, it prepares the reader for the rejection of the temple that will follow later in the narrative. Jesus will declare the temple to be a den of robbers (21:13) in a defiant demonstration in the outer court. His last words in the temple pronounce its abandonment (23:38), and he will predict its complete destruction as he exits (24:1–2). Matthew omits the touching story that commends a widow for donating all that she had to the temple treasury not only because it would interrupt the mood of judgment that connects 23:37–39 with 24:1–2 but because it implicitly sanctions support for the temple (Mark 12:41–44; Luke 21:1–4). Prior to Jesus’ execution at the instigation of the temple authorities (16:21), the blood money for Jesus’ betrayal winds up in the sanctuary (27:4–7); and at his death the veil of the sanctuary is split from top to bottom (27:51). The reader has already been told that something greater than the temple is here (12:6), and this division presenting Jesus’ passion and resurrection spells that out more clearly. ‘The children’s’ exemption from the temple dues indicates their freedom from its sacrificial cultus. The temple tax was associated with sin atonement provided by the sacrifices it funded. It is called ‘atonement money’ and a reminder of ‘the ransom given for your lives’ in Exodus 30:16 (see Tosefta Šeqalim 1:6). The death and resurrection of Jesus, however, will replace temple sacrifices for the forgiveness of sin (18:32; 20:28; 26:28; 27:42).

The sayings collected in the following discourse (18:1–35) have to do with living together as the family of God (see Mark 9:50, ‘be at peace with one another’). They candidly anticipate that the church will include those who arrogantly look down their noses at others, those who cause scandal, those who stray, those who defy admonition, and those who are unforgiving—a tangled assortment of sinners. The structure of this discourse divides into two units: (1) concern for the ‘little ones’ (18:1–14), and (2) reproof and forgiveness of fellow members of the church (18:15–35). Both units contain three paragraphs concluding with a parable: The sequence in unit 1 is: (a) the significance of the child in the kingdom (18:1–5); (b) a dire warning against causing offense to little ones that makes them stumble (18:6–9); (c) the parable of the lost sheep (marked off by an inclusio with the term ‘little ones,’ 18:10–14). The sequence in unit 2 is: (a) procedure for reproof and gaining a fellow member (18:15–18); (b) an affirmation of the community’s disciplinary decisions (18:19–20); (c) the parable of the unmerciful servant (marked off by an inclusio with the reference to forgiveness, 18:21–35).²⁸¹

Ch. 19: “The suffering that Jesus forecast (16:21) draws nearer as he leaves Galilee and moves toward Judea. The crowds again follow in his train as he continues to heal them. But the emphasis in this section falls on teaching that further illustrates the greater righteousness and the self-denial required of those who want to follow him as disciples (16:24; 19:27–28). Themes from the Sermon on the Mount resurface: the issue of divorce (19:3–9=5:31–32); the low worldly status of those who will receive the kingdom of heaven (19:14=5:3–10); the commandments of Moses (19:18–19=5:17–48); the command to be perfect (19:21=5:48); treasure in heaven (19:21=6:19–21); the danger of mammon (19:22=6:24); the obstacles to entering the kingdom of heaven (19:23–24=7:13–14). The promise of reward (19:27–20:16=5:3–10) culminates the section.

The difference between Matthew’s account of the passage on divorce (19:3–12) and Mark’s (10:2–12) is significant for discerning the structure of this section. Jesus’ assertion that divorce and remarriage is adultery (19:9) forms part of his public declaration about divorce and is not, as it is in Mark 10:10–12, a private clarification for the disciples (‘in the house’). The saying about becoming eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven (19:10–12), which appears only in Matthew, is introduced as the private explanation for the disciples. The rearrangement fits Matthew’s reshaping of the whole section, ‘which is concerned with the distinction between what the gospel explicitly requires from all and the specific demands which for reasons of personal vocation or sheer spiritual prudence it may make on individuals’ (Green, Matthew, 167). This observation provides a helpful pointer to the structure of the seven paragraphs in this section. They oscillate between what is applicable to all and what is pertinent only to some: (1) the prohibition of divorce, applicable to all (19:3–9); (2) the renunciation of marriage, applicable to some (19:10–12); (3) childlikeness and the kingdom, applicable to all (19:13–15); (4) the renunciation of wealth, applicable to some (19:16–22); (5) the vain hope of salvation from human resources, applicable to all (19:23–26); (6)

the rewards awaiting the twelve and those who deny themselves for the sake of Jesus' name, applicable to some and to all (19:27–30); and (7) the lack of distinction in the rewards, applicable to all (20:1–16).”^[29]

20:17-21:22 - “Jesus pushes on to Jerusalem knowing full well that death by crucifixion awaits him there. This section begins with him on the way and giving his disciples a third and even more precise forewarning of coming events (see 16:21; 17:22–23): ‘The son of man will be handed over to the high priests and scribes; they will condemn him to death; they will hand him over to the gentiles to be mocked, scourged, and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day’ (20:18–19). The section ends with him on the way to the city for the last time (21:18). The prediction of his passion and resurrection (20:17–19) is followed by five scenes. First, there are two petitions: (1) a request for positions of glory for two brothers (20:20–28); (2) a request to see again from two blind men (20:29–34). These are followed by three symbolic actions of messianic consequence: (3) Jesus’ royal entry into Jerusalem (21:1–11); (4) Jesus’ entry into the temple, the overturning of the tables of the money changers and the seats of the dove vendors (21:12–13), and the healing of the blind and lame cheered by the adulation of the children (21:14–15); and (5) Jesus’ condemnation of a barren fig tree (21:18–22). The first and the last scenes involve only the disciples. The first begins with a request (20:20–23), and the disciples’ reaction leads to a lesson on discipleship and servitude (20:24–28). The last begins with the cursing of a fig tree (21:18–19), and the disciples’ reaction leads to a lesson on making requests with believing prayer (21:20–22). The episodes in between hail Jesus as the son of David. Two blind men cry out to the son of David (20:29–31). The crowds lining the road into Jerusalem hail him as the son of David (21:9). Blind persons reappear, and the acclamation is repeated in the temple (21:14–15).”^[30]

21:23-22:46: “This section finds Jesus teaching in the temple and challenged from all sides by enemies. It falls neatly into two parts. (1) The first part (21:23–22:14) begins with the high priests and elders of the people crossing swords with Jesus over his authority. Jesus deflects their challenge with an embarrassing question of his own and routs them with three slashing parables. The units are interconnected. The high priests’ inquiry (21:23–27) and Jesus’ first parable concerning the two children (21:28–32) are linked by the issue of believing and responding to John’s preaching (21:25, 32). The parable of the two children (21:28–32) and the parable of the wicked tenants (21:33–44) have in common a reference to a vineyard and a reference to ‘the kingdom of God’ (21:31, 43). An interlude apprises the reader that the chief priests and Pharisees recognize that the parables allude to them and that they want to seize Jesus (21:45–46). The parable of the wedding invitation and the guests (22:1–14) follows and is related to the parable of the wicked tenants by the mention of a son (21:37; 22:2), the sending of servants who are abused and murdered (21:35–36; 22:3–6), the destruction of the perpetrators, and the transfer of favor to another group (21:41, 43; 22:8–10). This first part exposes the culpability of the high priests as wayward leaders of Israel and highlights the judgment that they will incur on themselves and the nation. (2) The second part (22:15–46) exposes the inadequacy of the teachers of Israel as the Pharisees and Sadducees take center stage in futile attempts to entrap or humiliate Jesus with three challenges: (a) a question about paying taxes to Caesar (22:15–22); (b) a question about the resurrection (22:34–30); and (c) a question about the greatest commandment (22:34–40). Jesus successfully parries their verbal jabs and, in the final scene, silences the Pharisees with his own question about the messiah. They correctly acknowledge that the messiah is the son of David but have no answer to the riddle, ‘If David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?’ (22:45). The result is that the embarrassment of Jesus’ opponents frames the entire section. The high priests can only answer, ‘We do not know,’ to Jesus’ question about the divine or human origin of John’s baptism (21:26–27). The Pharisees who hoped to snare Jesus in his talk (22:15) also end up outmatched, unable to answer him a word (22:46).”^[31]

Ch. 23: “Jesus is the clear victor in the debate with the various spiritual guides of the nation, and next he is shown impeaching their personal character and false interpretations before the disciples and the crowds. The crescendo of charges against the scribes and Pharisees in the temple (23:1–39) leads into the

discourse on the earthly and the cosmic judgment to come that is directed only to the disciples on the Mount of Olives (24:1–25:46).”^[32]

“The structure of this discourse falls into three units: (1) the failure of the scribes and Pharisees as leaders and warnings to the disciples (23:1–12); (2) the failure of the scribes and Pharisees as interpreters and the pronouncement of judgment (23:13–36); (3) a lament directed to all Jerusalem (23:37–39).”^[33]

“The new section 23:1–39 is again closely linked to the preceding one,^[1] giving three closely linked sections: 21:12–46; 22:1–45; 23:1–39, beginning and ending with the prospect of judgment for the temple/Jerusalem. Given that the whole section 23:1–39 is a discourse of Jesus and that towards the end (at least from v. 34) it has a thematic unity with the continuing discourse materials of chaps. 24–25, a case can be made for chaps. 23–25 as the scope of the last of the five main discourse units of Matthew’s Gospel, which are distinguished by the shared manner in which their termini are reported (see at 7:28).^[2] The close links, however, between 21:12–46, 22:1–45, and 23:1–39, as well as the frame around them provided by the prospect of judgment for the temple/Jerusalem at the beginning and the end, suggest rather that the whole of 21:12–23:39 is intended to prepare for the discourse in chaps. 24–25.^[3]

The dominant structuring feature of chap. 23 is the seven woes, beginning in v. 13 and ending with v. 33, with vv. 32–33 also serving as a transition piece bridging to the future-oriented material of vv. 34–39. Vv. 1–12 provide the introduction for the section: Jesus’ disciples are dependent on the scribes and Pharisees for a knowledge of the Mosaic Law, but what these people do with it and how they live do not exemplify good practice.

Footnotes

1 Specifically Matthew has increased the number of references to the Pharisees between 21:12 and 22:45 from one in the corresponding Markan material to four. The scribes have, however, not done as well: Mark has five references to them to Matthew’s two (and one of these is with *νομικός* rather than *γραμματεὺς*), but Matthew has in mind in chap. 23 those scribes associated with the Pharisaic movement. So for him the Pharisaic identity provides the important link.

2 Mt. 13 has within it a change of audience which is comparable to that between Mt. 23 and 24.

3 Mt. 11:2–30 is also more or less a discourse, and it has also not been granted a place in the set of five main discourses. Whereas 23:1–39 comes immediately before one of the five labelled discourses, 11:2–30 comes immediately after one.”^[34]

Ch. 24-25: “. . . the theme addressed in the eschatological discourse is that of the ‘last times’ (24:3) . . . Here, three larger sections comprise the discourse: (I) On Understanding Aright the Signs of the End (24:4–35); (II) On Being on the Alert for Jesus’ Coming at the Consummation of the Age (24:36–25:30); and (III) On the Second Coming of Jesus and the Final Judgment (25:31–46).”^[35]

Matt. 26:2-56: “The first component of the passion narrative (26:2–56) relates the preparations for Jesus’ death. It begins with Jesus’ final announcement of his death and the plot by ‘the high priests and elders of the people’ (26:3–5) and ends with Jesus’ arrest by the posse from ‘the high priests and elders of the people’ (26:47–56). In between, there are six scenes: (a) the anointing of Jesus ‘for burial’ (26:6–13); (b) Judas’s bid to betray Jesus (26:14–15); (c) the command to the disciples to prepare for the Passover (26:17–19); (d) the last supper, when Jesus forecasts his betrayal (26:20–25) and explains the meaning of his death (26:26–30); (e) the prediction on the way to the Mount of Olives that all the disciples will be scattered and that Peter will deny him three times (26:31–35); and (f) Jesus’ preparation for death through prayer in Gethsemane (26:36–46). The key themes are Jesus’ foreknowledge of what is to come and his acceptance of the divine plan for his death. He foretells his death by crucifixion (26:2; see 20:19), his dishonorable burial (26:12), Judas’s treachery (26:21–25), the flight of the disciples (26:31), and Peter’s denial (26:34). He also foresees his ultimate triumph in his resurrection (26:32), the preaching of the gospel in the whole world (26:13), and the joyous banquet with his disciples on ‘that day’ at the end of the age (26:29).”^[36]

Matt. 26:57-27:26: “The second component (26:57–27:26) relates Jesus’ condemnation to death and consists of two units. The first (26:57–27:1) is the hearing before the Jewish council and is marked out by an inclusio. Peter ‘enters into’ the courtyard of the high priest (26:58), and the high priests and the whole council seek false witnesses ‘against Jesus in order to put him to death’ (26:59). At the conclusion, Peter ‘went out’ from the courtyard (26:75), and all the high priests and the elders of the people took counsel ‘against Jesus to put him to death’ (27:1). The key theme in this unit is Jesus’ identification as the Christ, the son of God (26:63, 68). The second unit is the hearing before the governor (27:2–26) which begins when Jesus is ‘handed over’ to Pilate (27:2) and ends when Pilate ‘hands him over’ to be crucified (27:26). The themes of blood guilt (27:4, 6, 8, 24–25) and Jesus’ indictment as the ‘king of the Jews’ (27:11, 19) dominate. In this section, Jesus’ interrogation and condemnation by the Jewish council and his hearing before the Roman governor surround reports of the downfall of two of his disciples. Peter’s passionate denials of his master end the first unit of the section (26:69–75), and Judas’s confession and attempt to rid himself of the guilt of innocent blood begin the second (27:3–10).”^[37]

“The final component (27:27–56) records Jesus’ death. It includes the soldiers’ mockery of Jesus as king of the Jews (27:27–31), the mockery of him on the cross as both the son of God and the king of the Jews (27:32–44), Jesus’ final prayer, death, vindication by God through supernatural events, and the confession by the soldiers that he is the son of God (27:45–56).”^[38]

ENDNOTES

[1] Malcolm Horlock, “Introducing Matthew’s Gospel,” in *Day by Day through the New Testament*, ed. Denis Clapham and John Heading, Day by Day Series (West Glamorgan, UK: Precious Seed, 1979), 7.

[2] T. D. Alexander, *Discovering Jesus?: Why Four Gospels to Portray One Person?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 74.

[3] Charles L. Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew: Jesus Revealed as Deliverer, King, and Incarnate Creator*, ed. Robert A. Peterson (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 9–10; similar, Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 11. F. F. Bruce says “. . . almost certainly before the destruction of Jerusalem in ad 70.” F. F. Bruce, *Matthew*, Open Your Bible Commentary (Bath, UK; Nashville, TN: Creative 4 International, 2014).

[4] Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 21.

[5] David W. Gooding, *The Riches of Divine Wisdom: The New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament*, Myrtlefield Expositions. (Coleraine, Northern Ireland: Myrtlefield House, 2013), 21-23. [Boldface mine.]

[6] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Jesus of the Gospels: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2020), 37–39. [Italics original.]

[7] David W. Gooding, unpublished (modified by Randal P. Amos & Henry Sardiña)

[8] F. F. Bruce, *Matthew*, Open Your Bible Commentary (Bath, UK; Nashville, TN: Creative 4 International, 2014).

[9] Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 110.

[10] Charles L. Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew*, 12–15.

[11] David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001), 9; explained in detail in Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 14-16.

[12] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 107.

[13] *Ibid.*, 110.

[14] *Ibid.*, 163.

[15] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 47–48. [Boldface & italics mine.]

[16] KRK, unpublished.

[17] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 110.

[18] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 123-124.

[19] R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Vol. 1. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 219.

[20] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 126.

[21] *Ibid.*, 131.

[22] *Ibid.*, 135.

[23] *Ibid.*, 146.

[24] *Ibid.*, 155-156.

[25] *Ibid.*, 161.

[26] *Ibid.*, 181.

[27] *Ibid.*, 185.

[28] *Ibid.*, 189-191.

[29] *Ibid.*, 201-202.

[30] *Ibid.*, 211.

[31] *Ibid.*, 219-220.

[32] *Ibid.*, 231.

[33] *Ibid.*, 233.

[34] John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 920.

[35] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 112.

[36] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 251-252.

[37] *Ibid.*, 252.

[38] *Ibid.*, 252.