

# Matthew

## Authorship

The First Gospel is traditionally attributed to the literary efforts of the disciple Matthew, also named Levi, one of the Twelve. This tradition is consistent and wide-spread. Rejection of authorship by Matthew is normally based on conformity to a hypothesis dealing with the literary relationship of Matthew, Mark, and Luke rather than a straight forward handling of the internal and external evidence. As a tax collector living in Palestine, Matthew would have possessed the language and writing skills necessary to produce such a work. As a member of the officially designated eyewitnesses he would have been qualified to produce an authoritative account of Jesus' ministry.

## Date

The nature of the Olivet Discourse along with the general content of the rest of the Gospel have been understood as arguing that Matthew was likely written before A.D. 70. The consistent testimony of church history is that Matthew was the first Gospel produced.<sup>1</sup> Its "Jewish" flavor and explicit development of Old Testament prophetic themes favors a setting early in the life of the church in a Palestinian context. A case has been made that Paul is quoting from Matthew in his correspondence with the Thessalonian church.<sup>2</sup> These letters could not have been written later than A.D. 50/51. Consideration of the Gospel's occasion and purpose will affect conclusion about dating (see below). In light of those and the above evidence a date as early as A.D. 44 is not unreasonable.

## Historical Setting

The contents of Matthew pertain to the birth, ministry and death of Jesus of Nazareth, covering the years between 4-2 B.C. and A.D. 33 in the environs of Jerusalem, Judea and Galilee.

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<sup>1</sup> See Bernard Orchard and Harold Riley, *The Order of the Synoptics: Why Three Synoptic Gospels?* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press), 111-226. See also Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. revised (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 43-53 for a summary of issues pertaining to authorship.

<sup>2</sup> Orchard and Riley, *Order*, 118-20

## Original Readers

Even a casual reading of Matthew reveals the assumption of a readership steeped in the Old Testament. It addresses the issue of discipleship under Israel's rejected King following his death, resurrection and ascension. The original readership was comprised of Jewish believers living around the middle of the first century, who needed to know how they were to live in light of the postponement of the Davidic kingdom.

## Occasion

Orchard and Riley conclude that Matthew was the result of the early Jerusalem church's need for a formulation of Jesus' teaching in written as well as oral form.<sup>3</sup> This would have been a normal desire for the literate people that they were and a sensible thing for the leadership of the early church to provide. Such a project would have been commissioned by the twelve who plainly exercised control over the teaching of the Jerusalem church, as even Paul recognized in his visits, and who would, therefore, have been responsible for shaping and controlling the traditions concerning Jesus and his ministry. The experience at Pentecost would have impressed the apostles with the need to share the "good news" of Jesus with the rest of the world. Regarding the language of origination Orchard and Riley observe: "The medium of their apostolate would of course have to be the Koine Greek, the language of the whole Roman world and beyond; it was also fortunately the second language of all educated people in Palestine."<sup>4</sup> When the church was ready to move out of its homeland, Matthew was the document that became the norm for Christianity's early spread. Orchard and Riley conclude: "Our belief is that the Gospel of Matthew was the light in these earliest years and thus rightly came to be regarded as 'the Gospel of the Church,' the principal source for the logia of Jesus, and the doctrinal norm for the first stage of apostolic evangelization. It is also the only Gospel that provides the necessary continuity between the Old Covenant and the New, between the time of preparation and the time of fulfillment, between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 239-45.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 242. Regarding the tradition that Matthew was first written in Hebrew (or Aramaic) Orchard and Riley demonstrate that this was the result of a gradual misinterpretation of Papias's statement as quoted by Eusebius—Ibid., 198.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Special Issues

Matthew's relationship to Mark and Luke. The majority opinion in modern synoptic studies is that Mark is the earliest Gospel, composed from oral tradition and perhaps other sources, and that Matthew and Luke are dependent upon Mark for pattern, and order, supplemented by other documentary sources.<sup>6</sup> It is apparent that some literary dependence must be involved due to the many instances of exact wording and editorial comments among the three works. The question is open though as to who is dependent upon whom. The common assumption of Markan priority seems to be that the shorter must necessarily be the earlier (a common fallacy with biological evolutionary theories). In fact, other factors may well account for the difference in the lengths of these three Gospels. In addition, in the actual repeated material Mark is usually the longest of the three. Recent scholarship has raised serious objections to Markan priority on the basis of the evidence, both external and internal.

It is more reasonable to envision Matthew's production as an effort directed by the Apostles, acting in accordance with common rabbinic practice, in setting down for the early church a record of the *logia* and actions of Jesus in order to accurately pass that tradition on to subsequent generations of disciples. The sources, then, for Matthew's Gospel were the words and activities of Jesus, as recalled by the remaining eleven Apostles, under the leadership, no doubt, of Peter. This accounts for the content and literary nature of Matthew better than the theory of dependence on Mark, "Q," and "M."<sup>7</sup>

## Theme Statement

The story of the ministry of Jesus reveals that upon rejection as Israel's Davidic King, Jesus instituted an intermediate form of kingdom expression and authorized agents to carry out its mission until the end of the age on the basis of his own work as sin-bearer.

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<sup>6</sup> For a summary of this approach to the synoptic problem see R. H. Stein, "Synoptic Problem," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall, eds. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 784-92.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Orchard and Riley, *Order*, 242-44.

## Outline

- I. Introduction and Authorization of the King.....1:1–4:16
  - A. Jesus’ lineage as Son of David and Son of Abraham supports His messianic identity. ....1:1-17
  - B. Jesus’ birth and early life are in accordance with divine revelation given through the Old Testament prophets. ....1:18–2:23
    - 1. Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph according to prophecy. ....1:18-25
    - 2. Jesus is honored as royalty by sages from the East. ....2:1-12
    - 3. Jesus sojourns in Egypt in fulfillment of prophecy.....2:13-15
    - 4. Jesus escapes infanticide in accordance with prophecy. ....2:16-18
    - 5. Jesus grows up in Galilee in accordance with prophecy. ....2:19-23
  - C. Jesus is heralded by the prophesied forerunner. ....3:1-17
    - 1. John the Baptist carried out Messiah’s preparatory ministry as prophesied by Isaiah.....3:1-12
      - a. John proclaimed the nearness of the Davidic kingdom. ....3:1-4
      - b. John preached repentance in preparation for the coming kingdom. ....3:5-10
      - c. John predicts the coming of the Messiah. ....3:11-12
    - 2. John baptized Jesus in order to reveal his identity. ....3:13-17
      - a. John submitted to Jesus’ request to be baptized by him.....3:13-15
      - b. The Father authorizes Jesus’ ministry by confessing him as the divine Son. ....3:16-17
        - 1) Jesus receives the Holy Spirit for enablement in messianic ministry. ....3:16
        - 2) Jesus receives the Father’s approval for messianic ministry. ....3:17
  - D. Jesus is authenticated in his moral qualifications for messianic ministry..4:1-11
    - 1. Jesus resists Satan’s attempt to disqualify him through the lust of the flesh.....4:1-4
    - 2. Jesus resists Satan’s attempt to disqualify him through the pride of life. ....4:5-7
    - 3. Jesus resists Satan’s attempt to disqualify him through the lust of the eyes. ....4:8-11
  - E. Jesus authorizes his mission by first manifesting his presence in the area that had been in darkness the longest. ....4:12-16
- II. The presentation and rejection of the King and His kingdom. ....4:17–16:20
  - A. Jesus authorizes some to become special representatives of the message of the kingdom. ....4:17-22
  - B. Jesus establishes his messianic mission in Galilee through his teaching, preaching and healing.....4:23-25
  - C. Jesus instructs the disciples about life lived in hope of the kingdom so as to produce effective representatives. ....5:1–7:29
    - 1. Jesus pronounces anticipated blessedness on those displaying spiritual qualities appropriate for the kingdom. ....5:1-12
    - 2. Jesus extols the witness of the citizens of the kingdom.....5:13-16
    - 3. Jesus instructs on the correct application of Torah to the life of citizenship in the kingdom. ....5:17-48

- a. Jesus affirms his submission to Torah.....5:17-20
- b. Jesus corrects the wrong application of Torah. ....5:21-48
- 4. Jesus instructs on the rewards of the kingdom representative. ....6:1-7:14
  - a. Jesus promises that spiritual disciplines done in secret will be rewarded openly. ....6:1-18
  - b. Jesus teaches about the value system of the kingdom. ....6:19-34
    - 1) Treasure in heaven to be valued above treasure on earth...6:19-21
    - 2) Light must be valued over darkness. ....6:22-23
    - 3) Money must not be served as a master.....6:24
    - 4) Possessions must not be sought before righteousness.....6:25-34
  - c. Jesus instructs on the proper spirit of brotherhood.....7:1-6
  - d. Jesus extols persistence in pursuing the Father's delights.....7:7-12
- 5. Jesus warns the uncommitted about not entering the kingdom. ....7:13-27
- 6. Jesus' teaching is recognized as authoritative by the people.....7:28-29
- D. Jesus manifests and delegates the power of the kingdom. ....8:1-10:42
  - 1. Jesus manifests the power of the kingdom in his healings and miracles.....8:1-9:34
    - a. Jesus demonstrates his power to purify the defiled in preparation for the kingdom. ....8:1-4
    - b. Jesus responds to the faith of a centurion in his struggle with the darkness.....8:5-13
    - c. Jesus restores Peter's mother-in-law to service to the kingdom.8:14-15
    - d. Jesus delivers from spiritual bondage. ....8:16-17
    - e. Jesus manifests his authority to call disciples. ....8:18-22
    - f. Jesus manifests his authority over nature. ....8:23-27
    - g. Jesus manifests his authority to direct the spirit realm. ....8:28-34
    - h. Jesus manifests his authority to forgive sins. ....9:1-8
    - i. Jesus manifests his ability to bring sinners to repentance.....9:9-13
    - j. Jesus declares his authority to work in new ways. ....9:14-17
    - k. Jesus shows his ability to restore life to the dead and living to the disabled. ....9:18-26
    - l. Jesus shows his ability to give light to the blind.....9:27-31
    - m. Jesus declares his authority to release from bondage. ....9:32-34
  - 2. Jesus delegates the power of the kingdom according to divine plan. .9:35-10:42
    - a. Jesus is moved with compassion for the people. ....9:35-38
      - 1) Jesus views them as sheep without a shepherd.....9:35-36
      - 2) Jesus directs the disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest of the kingdom. ....9:37-38
    - b. Jesus selects the twelve as laborers for the harvest.....10:1-42
      - 1) Jesus delegates his power to the twelve.....10:1-4
      - 2) Jesus sends the twelve to the lost sheep of Israel.....10:5-42
        - a) Jesus specifies their immediate ministry to Israel.....10:5-15
        - b) Jesus adumbrates their future ministry to all. ....10:16-26
        - c) Jesus exhorts to steadfast loyalty in all situations. ....10:27-42
- E. Jesus, rejected in his offer of the kingdom, reveals a new course. ....11:1-16:20
  - 1. Jesus is rejected in his offer of the kingdom. ....11:1-12:50

- a. Jesus' past ministry had received a poor response.....11:1-30
    - 1) John's ministry as forerunner had largely failed.....11:1-19
      - a) John himself had questions about Jesus identity. ....11:1-6
      - b) John's message had not been accepted. ....11:7-15
      - c) John's fate would become Jesus' as well. ....11:16-19
    - 2) Witnesses to Jesus' works had not repented. ....11:20-24
    - 3) Because the Father reveals the Son, rest is still available. ..11:25-30
  - b. Jesus' present conflict with the Pharisees results in rejection. ....12:1-45
    - 1) Jesus is faulted for plucking grain on the Sabbath.....12:1-8
    - 2) Jesus is judged for healing on the Sabbath. ....12:9-14
    - 3) Jesus will bring light to the Gentiles as a result of the present rejection.....12:15-21
    - 4) Jesus is rejected through blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.....12:22-37
    - 5) Jesus rejects the request for a sign, being the greater than Jonah and Solomon. ....12:38-42
    - 6) Jesus foretells the coming plight of the nation.....12:43-45
  - c. Jesus will redefine relationships by spiritual condition. ....12:46-50
- 2. Jesus reveals the new way of manifesting God's kingdom. ....13:1-52
    - a. Jesus delivers parables of the kingdom to the people. ....13:1-35
      - 1) Jesus tells the parable of the soils.....13:1-9
      - 2) Jesus reveals the principle of parables. ....13:10-17
      - 3) Jesus relates the parable of the soils to response to the Word of God. ....13:18-23
      - 4) Jesus describes the new kingdom program as a field with mixed occupants. ....13:24-30
      - 5) Jesus likens the great growth of the new kingdom program to that of a mustard seed.....13:31-32
      - 6) Jesus likens the expansive growth of the new kingdom program to that of leaven. ....13:33
      - 7) Matthew summarizes the principle of parables. ....13:34-35
    - b. Jesus delivers parables of the kingdom to the disciples.....13:36-52
      - 1) Jesus describes the resolution of the conflict between sons of the kingdom and sons of the enemy as a final separating harvest. ....13:36-43
      - 2) Jesus likens the value of the kingdom to treasure.....13:44
      - 3) Jesus likens the value of the kingdom to a pearl. ....13:45-46
      - 4) Jesus likens the final separation of kingdom subjects to a dragnet.....13:47-50
      - 5) Jesus describes the responsibilities of the new scribes of the kingdom, his disciples.....13:51-52
  - 3. Jesus, though rejected in his offer of the kingdom, maintains his compassion for the people and his commitment to the disciples.....13:53-16:12
    - a. Rejection will not alter Jesus' commitment to his own.....13:53-14:36
      - 1) Jesus is rejected even by his own family. ....13:53-58
      - 2) John's death is a pre-shadowing of Jesus' death.....14:1-12
      - 3) Jesus retains his compassion for the multitudes and his commitment to train his disciples. ....14:13-21
      - 4) Jesus continues to develop the faith of his disciples. ....14:22-33

- 5) Jesus still ministers to the multitudes of Israel.....14:34-36
- b. Rejection will change the objects of Jesus' ministry. ....15:1-16:12
  - 1) Jesus reveals the terminal unbelief of the Jerusalem establishment. ....15:1-20
  - 2) Ministry to a Gentile woman marks a shift in focus of the kingdom program. ....15:21-28
  - 3) The multitudes are still the objects of Jesus' ministry. ....15:29-31
  - 4) The disciples are still agents of Jesus' mission.....15:32-39
  - 5) Jesus' next work will be redemption. ....16:1-12
- 4. The Disciples' commitment to Jesus as Messiah and Son of God will become the basis for a new kingdom program through the church....16:13-20
- III. Death of the King and Redeployment of the Kingdom representatives. ....16:21-28:20
  - A. Jesus alters the mission of the kingdom. ....16:21-18:35
    - 1. Jesus reorients the disciples to the new mission of the kingdom.....16:21-17:27
      - a. Jesus sets his death & resurrection as the new context of the mission of the kingdom. ....16:21-23
      - b. Jesus redefines discipleship in terms of the future kingdom. .16:24-28
      - c. Jesus' identity and performance are re-approved by the Father.....17:1-13
      - d. Jesus reemphasizes spiritual opposition to the kingdom.....17:14-21
      - e. Jesus reasserts the certainty of his death & resurrection. ....17:22-23
      - f. Jesus recasts the relationship of the world and the kingdom. 17:24-27
    - 2. Jesus instructs the disciples on the responsibilities of servants of the kingdom. ....18:1-35
      - a. Jesus teaches on the necessity of faith and humility. ....18:1-5
      - b. Jesus warns about causing new believers to sin. ....18:6-9
      - c. Jesus affirms the value of every believer to God.....18:10-14
      - d. Jesus instructs on order in the new kingdom arrangement....18:15-20
      - e. Jesus instructs on the need for forgiveness in the new kingdom arrangement. ....18:21-35
  - B. Jesus sets forth the final disposition of the two kingdom programs. ....19:1-25:46
    - 1. Jesus sets forth the priorities of the new kingdom program. ....19:1-20:34
      - a. Commitment to God's ideals characterize kingdom service....19:1-12
      - b. Care for every kingdom member reflects God's priorities.....19:13-15
      - c. Pursuit of heavenly treasure marks true kingdom service. ....19:16-30
      - d. Complete trust in the King's reward marks true kingdom service. ....20:1-16
      - e. The servant of the kingdom ministers in the shadow of the cross. ....20:17-19
      - f. Kingdom greatness lies in service not lordship. ....20:20-28
      - g. Kingdom servanthood is the fitting response to salvation. ....20:29-34
    - 2. Jesus explains the interruption of the original kingdom program...21:1-23:39
      - a. The kingdom was not suspended for lack of a King. ....21:1-27
        - 1) The triumphal entry confirmed Jesus' Davidic royalty. .21:1-11
        - 2) The coming judgment of God would confirm Israel's culpability for rejecting the King. ....21:12-22
      - b. The kingdom was not suspended for lack of kingly authority..21:23-27

- c. The kingdom was suspended due to failure of the nation. ....21:28–22:36
  - 1) The kingdom was suspended for unbelief. ....21:28-32
  - 2) The kingdom was suspended for rejection of the Son. ....21:33-46
  - 3) The kingdom was suspended because Israel refused its invitation. ....22:1-14
  - 4) The kingdom was suspended for the failure of its leaders. ....22:15–23:39
    - a) The Pharisees failed. ....22:15-22
    - b) The Sadducees failed. ....22:23-33
    - c) The Scribes failed. ....22:34-40
    - d) They failed to identify Jesus as David’s Son. ....22:41-46
    - e) They failed due to basic character flaws. ....23:1-36
  - d. The kingdom will be suspended until the King returns. ....23:37-39
- 3. Jesus discourses on the future of both kingdom programs. ....24:1–25:46
  - a. Jesus discusses the timing of Israel’s kingdom. ....24:1-44
    - 1) Jesus’ prediction prompts the disciples’ interrogation. ..24:1-3
    - 2) Jesus identifies the sign of the end of the age. ....24:4-28
    - 3) Jesus identifies the sign of the Son of Man’s coming. ....24:29-31
    - 4) Jesus assures the certainty of the signs’ identification. ..24:32-35
    - 5) Jesus discusses the event of timing. ....24:36-44
  - b. Jesus discusses the application for kingdom subjects. ....24:45–25:46
    - 1) Servants of the new kingdom program must continue expectantly in wise and faithful service. ....24:45-51
    - 2) Attendants of the Davidic kingdom must heed the signs of the King’s return and watch expectantly. ....25:1-13
    - 3) Servants of the new kingdom program must continue in profitable ministry in light of the Lord’s coming. ....25:14-30
    - 4) Believers and unbelievers will be separated once the King has finally returned. ....25:31-46
- C. Jesus offers himself in redemption for the subjects of the kingdom. ....26:1–28:20
  - 1. Jesus is executed as a ransom for sin. ....26:1–27:66
    - a. Jesus is plotted against for his destruction. ....26:1-49
      - 1) The divine determination is revealed. ....26:1-2
      - 2) The plot is set. ....26:3-5
      - 3) Jesus is anointed for his burial. ....26:6-13
      - 4) Judas agrees to betray Jesus. ....26:14-16
      - 5) Jesus prepares with his disciples. ....26:17-46
        - a) They celebrate the Passover, anticipating his death. ....26:17-25
        - b) Jesus institutes a memorial observance for the new kingdom program. ....26:26-30
        - c) Peter’s denial is predicted. ....26:31-35
        - d) Jesus prepares himself through prayer. ....26:36-46
    - b. Jesus is arrested and tried for blasphemy & sedition. ....26:47–27:26
      - 1) Jesus is betrayed by a companion. ....26:47-56
      - 2) Jesus is examined by the council for blasphemy. ....26:57-68



3)	Jesus is denied by Peter. ....	26:69-75
4)	Jesus is tried by Pilate for the charge of sedition. ....	27:1-26
a)	He is delivered to Pilate. ....	27:1-2
b)	Judas hangs himself in remorse. ....	27:3-10
c)	Pilate examines Jesus for his claims to kingship. ....	27:11-14
d)	Barabbas is released in preference to Jesus. ....	27:15-26
e)	Jesus is bound over for execution. ....	27:26
c.	Jesus is executed. ....	27:27-66
1)	He is abused by the soldiers. ....	27:27-31
2)	He is crucified with two robbers. ....	27:32-44
3)	He voluntarily dies as the Son of God. ....	27:45-56
4)	He is buried and his body guarded. ....	27:57-66
2.	Jesus is raised from the dead. ....	28:1-15
a.	Jesus is raised from the dead. ....	28:1-8
b.	Jesus appears to two women. ....	28:9-10
c.	The guard is bribed to lie about the resurrection. ....	28:11-15
D.	Jesus authorizes the making of disciples in all the world until the end of the age. ....	28:16-20

### Theme Statement

The story of the ministry of Jesus reveals that upon rejection as Israel's Davidic King, Jesus instituted an intermediate form of kingdom expression and authorized agents to carry out its mission until the end of the age on the basis of his own work as sin-bearer.

### Theme Development

Matthew wrote his Gospel to inform Jews, believing and non-believing, how it was that the Messiah had come and gone without establishing the Davidic kingdom. His concern was to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth had been authenticated in every way as Israel's long anticipated Messiah but had been rejected by the nation thus postponing that long awaited kingdom. In the meantime Jesus had instituted an intermediate form of expression of the kingdom of heaven and authorized agents to invite all peoples into its company by means of faith in his work of redemption.

Matthew has two major structural features. The first is the phrase "From that time Jesus began . . ." (4:17; 16:21). This divides the book into a before and after arrangement centered upon Jesus' rejection as King. The second feature is the five narrative/discourse sections marked off by the notice "Now it came to pass/And so it was when Jesus had finished/ended these

sayings/commanding/parables . . .” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). The central section (11:1–16:20) concerns the *de facto* rejection of Jesus’ ministry and is served by the transitional marker at 13:53, “Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables . . . .”

### I. Introduction and Authorization of the King (1:1–4:16).

If someone were going to lay legitimate claims to being the prophesied Messiah of Israel, he would have to meet many criteria, as clearly specified in the Old Testament prophets. Jesus’ messianic claims are validated in every possible way.

Jesus is introduced as the promised seed of Abraham and David (1:1-17). This would naturally bring to bear all Old Testament prophecy having to do with God’s covenant promises to Israel as His unique people.

Jesus’ unique birth fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy of Immanuel, “God with us” (1:18-25). Visitors appropriate to royalty (2:1-12), identification with Israel as God’s Son (1:13-15), severe opposition of a jealous monarch (2:16-18), and even his humble estate (2:19-23) were all marshaled as proofs of messianic identity. At the inception of his ministry, Jesus was authorized by the prophesied forerunner of Isaiah (3:1-15) and by the divine attestation of Sonship at his baptism (3:16-17). Finally, Jesus’ identity is revealed in a display of his moral credentials through his temptation by Satan in the wilderness (4:1-11). Whereas the original kingdom representatives failed in the garden of Eden, and the initial national kingdom servant, Israel, had failed in the wilderness, Jesus demonstrated the moral qualifications needed to lead God’s people into righteous obedience. When Jesus does actually begin his ministry he does so in the area that had first gone into captivity under the Assyrians, the area that had sat in the darkness of exile the longest and which would ostensibly appreciate all the more the dawning of the new day of kingdom hope (4:12-17).

### II. The presentation and rejection of the King and His kingdom (4:17–16:20).

In this first major section Matthew carefully lays out the evidence for Israel’s wrongful dismissal of Jesus’ Davidic royalty and messianic claims, along with Jesus’ measured response. This section also sets forth the selection and careful training of the Disciples.

#### A. Jesus authorizes some to become special representatives of the message of the kingdom (4:17-22).

John the Baptist had prepared the way for Jesus by preaching repentance in preparation for the kingdom. If the kingdom were to be set up then it would need citizens who would display

its heavenly standards. For that reason Matthew's opening scene of Jesus' public ministry is the selection of four disciples (4:18-22).

B. Jesus establishes his messianic mission in Galilee through his teaching, preaching and healing (4:23-25).

With disciples in tow Jesus established a pattern of teaching, preaching and healing with a view to the conversion of the multitudes (4:23-25). This early Galilean ministry established the pattern whereby Jesus would present the kingdom and train its divinely selected representatives.

C. Jesus instructs the disciples about life lived in hope of the kingdom so as to produce effective representatives (5:1-7:29).

One of Jesus' early activities was to instruct His followers in the spiritual qualities necessary for successful representation of God's kingdom. It was to disciples gleaned from the multitudes that the words of the Sermon on the Mount were addressed and upon whom the ultimate success of the kingdom proclamation would rest (5:1-7:27). Jesus' habit of teaching the disciples in the presence of the multitudes and preaching to the multitudes in the presence of the disciples is clearly illustrated in this first discourse, as Jesus shifts his attention to the uncommitted masses with his statements about entering through the narrow gate (7:13-27). Not only does Jesus communicate the lofty standards of kingdom citizenship, but he displays his authority as a teacher in the process (7:28-29). Jesus' pronouncements on the standards of the kingdom exceed even those of the Torah of Moses.

D. Jesus manifests and delegates the power of the kingdom (8:1-10:42).

The Old Testament indicated that the power of the Holy Spirit would be evident as a mark of the kingdom's advent.<sup>8</sup> Jesus manifests that power in virtually every way possible. He miraculously cleanses, heals, delivers from spiritual oppression, forgives, restores sight and speech, and even raises from the dead (8:1-9:34). Not only does Jesus show himself to be a man who possesses the power of the Spirit but he also exercises the prerogative of deity in the forgiveness of sins, directing attention toward his identity as the Son of God.

A second pattern statement occurs in 9:35-38. The first pattern statement (4:23-25) focused on Jesus' ministry to the multitudes. This second one, while involving the multitudes, actually focuses on the disciples as laborers whom Jesus will send to the scattered and

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28; Zech 12:10.

shepherdless sheep of Israel (9:37-38). While the first discourse focused on citizenship of the kingdom, this discourse (10:5-42) centers on the commissioning and sending of select disciples with the message of the kingdom (10:7). Since it is the Davidic kingdom that is in view it is only to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” that the disciples are sent (10:5-6). Jesus directs the messengers in their message and their means of support (10:5-15). However, the principles of kingdom agency will remain valid beyond the context of Israel’s needs, as Jesus’ broader admonitions reveal (10:16-42). At this point in Matthew’s account there has been very little controversy and virtually no opposition. That is about to change.

E. Jesus, rejected in his offer of the kingdom, reveals a new course (11:1–16:20).

At this point a major shift occurs in Jesus’ kingdom ministry. Misunderstanding abounds (as in the case of John the Baptist), opposition increases from every side, and Jesus himself becomes more pointed in his criticism of Israel’s unbelief. This section may be viewed as a discourse (the parables) preceded and followed by narrative sections. A major break at 16:21 begins a new narrative section with its own discourse (18:1-35). This section (11:1-16:20) is the climax of Jesus’ presentation of himself as King and the pivot to the new program.

1. Jesus is rejected in his offer of the kingdom (11:1–12:50). These two chapters bring to a quick climax the opposition to Jesus’ ministry and Israel’s rejection of King and kingdom. It begins with the doubts of John the Baptist due to the absences of what he had hoped for and anticipated in terms of the progress of the kingdom’s establishment (11:2-3). John is given reassurance of Jesus’ identity while Israel is chastised for failing to receive John’s witness and thereby accept Jesus’ kingship (11:4-19). The greatest of Jesus’ works had failed to produce the intended result of repentance (11:20-24). Only a few had received the Father’s revelation, though the invitation to rest and restoration was still extended to all (11:25-30). In addition to the failure of the people to respond, Jesus also experienced the hostile reaction of the rulers. Convinced of his impiety, they criticized Jesus and his disciples for actions perfectly in tune with the spirit and intent of the Law of Moses (12:1-14). As a result, Isaiah’s prophecy concerning Messiah’s ministry to the Gentiles was going to receive an unexpected boost (12:15-21). The true and undeniable evidence of the kingdom’s presence in the power of the Holy Spirit was denied so as to discount Jesus’ ministry (12:22-30). This blasphemy could not be forgiven (12:31-32); those who spoke it would be judged by their own words (12:33-37). Only the death and resurrection of Jesus would afford an indication of his identity and mission on a par with what he had already demonstrated by the Holy Spirit (12:38-42). The present generation was headed

for judgment (12:43-45). Relationships were no longer definable by ethnic or family ties but on the basis of one's spiritual relationship to the Father (12:46-50).

2. Jesus reveals the new way of manifesting God's kingdom (13:1-52). As a direct result of the preceding controversy (note "On the same day . . ." - 13:1) Jesus reveals, to those able to respond, a new way of manifesting God's kingdom. Since this mode of manifestation was entirely unforeseen in the Old Testament it is aptly called a "mystery" (13:11). The mediation of God's program of blessing the earth<sup>9</sup> will not be through the nation of Israel under resident rule of the Davidic king, as prophetically and popularly anticipated, but will be through the spiritual body of Christ, the church, as it displays the character of its Head, carry's out the will of the Father by the power of the spirit and proclaims the Savior's accomplished redemption. The parables of the mysteries of the kingdom are the first revelation of this type of kingdom manifestation, which becomes clearer with the addition of the rest of the New Testament. This kingdom gains subjects through response to Jesus' word and mediates God's blessing through growth unto fruitfulness (13:3-9, 18-23). Those who do not accept Christ as the authenticated head of the kingdom will remain ignorant of the truths of the kingdom. Since the kingdom will be manifest in a spiritual rather than a geo-political sense, the enemy will sow counterfeit subjects among the genuine, only to be distinguished at the end of the age (13:24-30). This kingdom will grow greatly and will pervade every part of the earth (13:31-33). All of this was available to the multitudes though they would likely not "hear" it (13:34-35).

For the responsive, there was the privilege of knowing the end of the good and the wicked (13:36-43), the joy of acquiring the true riches of the kingdom (13:44) and the real value of the kingdom (13:45-46). The disciples need not be concerned with the administration of judgment to the wicked (13:47-50) only with the clear communication of kingdom truth, old and new, as the true scribes of God's new order (13:51-52).<sup>10</sup>

3. Jesus, though rejected in his offer of the kingdom, maintains his compassion for the people and his commitment to the disciples (13:53-16:12). This bold new direction warrants an additional narrative section in order to set it in the context of the kingdom program as it had been presented up to this point. Had everything changed or was there still continuity in Jesus ministry? In two sections Matthew shows that Jesus continued in his commitment to the nation

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Gen 1:26-28; 12:1-3.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the parables of the kingdom see Mark Bailey, "The Kingdom in the Parables of Matthew 13" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1997).

and his disciples but that there would now be a new emphasis on Gentile subjects of the kingdom.

a. Rejection will not alter Jesus' commitment to his own (13:53–14:36). By highlighting the negative reaction of Jesus' own family and recounting the execution of John the Baptist, Matthew shows that rejection is now the prime contextual feature of Jesus' ministry, a rejection that will end in death (13:53–14:12). However, Jesus maintains compassion for the multitudes (14:13-21) and a commitment to the spiritual growth of his disciples (14:22-33). He still wields the power of the Spirit for the furtherance of the kingdom (14:34-36).

b. Rejection will change the objects of Jesus' ministry (15:1–16:12). The pattern of the preceding section (13:53–14:36) is repeated whereby illustration of rejection is followed by Jesus' response as indicative of his ministry intent. This time the rejection is by the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem over the issue of the tradition of the elders (15:1-2). Jesus' response exposes an unbelieving heart (15:8-9) and an incapacity to lead the nation (15:13-14). As a result, they will be removed from kingdom leadership (15:12) and the Gentiles will become the primary object of the kingdom ministry (15:21-28). However, the multitudes will remain as objects of Jesus' compassion (15:29-39) and the disciples will continue to receive training in kingdom service (15:32-39). Though the nation is still looking for signs of the kingdom, Jesus warns them that the next sign they see will be his resurrection, in their case a sign of judgment (16:1-4). The disciples must guard against the error of the rulers' false teaching (16:5-12).

4. The Disciples' commitment to Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God will become the basis for the new kingdom program through the church (16:13-20). The final paragraph of the post-narrative section (13:53-16:20) is another climax/pivot. The implications of Jesus' rejection, which were first adumbrated in the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom, are clearly stated in terms of the new kingdom ministry instrument, the church. On the basis of Peter's confession that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus prophesies the creation of a new body, the church, under new leadership. This new arrangement is not to be published (since it will depend upon Jesus' passion and glorification (16:20)).

### III. Death of the King and Redeployment of the Kingdom representatives (16:21–28:20)

The reasons for seeing this as a major breaking point are (1) the repetition of the phrase "from that time Jesus began . . ." (2) parallels between the opening sections of the two main parts (4:17 with 16:21-23; 4:18-22 with 16:24-28; 4:23-25 with 17:1-27; and 5:1–7:28 with 18:1-35) and (3) the thematic shift prepared for in the preceding hinge section (11:1–16:20).

Whereas in the beginning of the book Jesus is ministering to the multitudes in the presence of the disciples (4:17–10:42), at this point Jesus primarily carries on a ministry to the disciples in the presence of the multitudes (16:21–25:46). For the disciples it was a time of refocusing on the new mission (though they often did not grasp it) in the context of hostile opposition. For Jesus himself it was a time of final preparation for the work of redemption.

A. Jesus alters the mission of the kingdom (16:21–18:35).

Rejection and the certainty of Jesus' imminent death become the backdrop for all that follows. Discipleship is now defined in terms of gaining and losing a life (16:24-26) that will only be fully realized in the distant future (16:27), even though there is still an expectation of a present manifestation of the King in his kingdom (16:28). The transfiguration confirms to the disciples that Jesus is still the Son who pleases his Father (rejection is not his fault) even though the kingdom as originally offered has been postponed (17:1-13). The disciples' focus must include an understanding of the real spiritual opposition they will face (17:14-21), perhaps even resulting in death (14:22-23), and the fact that they will now be members of two realms, the earthly and the heavenly (17:24-27). Jesus then instructs on the attitudes and responsibilities required of kingdom servants (18:1-35).

B. Jesus sets forth the final disposition of the two kingdom programs (19:1–25:46).

It would have been difficult for the disciples to unravel all that Jesus was telling them about the new program that he had been propounding. Therefore, in discussions, parables, actions and discourse Jesus seeks to put the two kingdom programs in their proper context.

1. Jesus sets forth the priorities of the new kingdom program (19:1–20:34). As he draws closer to Jerusalem, Jesus seeks more and more to ground the disciples in an understanding of the new kingdom program making use of every opportunity afforded him to do so. For example, in answer to an entrapment question concerning divorce Jesus extols those who will keep seemingly impossible commitments for the sake of the kingdom (cf. 19:11-12). Throughout the disciples are being counseled to serve not for the immediate gain of an earthly realm, but for spiritual reward in a future domain (19:1–20:28). No matter what the cost in the present life, following Jesus is always appropriate (19:29-34).

2. Jesus explains the interruption of the original kingdom program (21:1–23:39). The way Matthew has arranged his material, Jesus' time in Jerusalem serves to demonstrate why it was that the original kingdom program had been suspended. It was not for lack of a king. The triumphal entry revealed that and the judgment coming on Israel and the temple would confirm

it (21:1-21). Nor was it for lack of kingly authority (21:23-27). Rather the Davidic kingdom was temporarily being set aside because of Jewish unbelief (21:28-32) culminating in the rejection of God's Son (21:33-46), because of Israel's refusal to respond to the divine invitation to enter the kingdom (22:1-14), and because at the heart of it Israel's leaders had utterly failed the nation (22:15-23:36). That is why the Davidic dynasty was being vacated until the time when its rightful King would return to a believing nation (23:37-39).

3. Jesus discourses on the future of both kingdom programs (24:1–25:46). It has become evident that Jesus is preparing to depart. Whether or not the disciples are fully aware of that fact, Jesus takes opportunity to discuss the future of the kingdom program. Triggered by Jesus' prediction of the Temple's destruction, the disciples ask three questions regarding Jesus' return and the end of the Jewish age (24:1-3). Jesus answers their questions, in reverse order, assuring them that the end of Daniel's seventy weeks and his own return would be accompanied by unmistakable signs (24:4-35). However, the timing question does not receive such a definitive answer. An unexpected event will set the whole process in motion (24:36-44). As representatives of both Israel and the church, Jesus addresses both groups in terms of his anticipated return. Those disciples living during the age of the new kingdom program must be ready for Christ's return without notice. Their task is wise and faithful service (24:45-51) with the expectation of spiritual return for spiritual investment (25:14-30). Israel would have warning of the Lord's return and would have to endure for as long as three and one-half years (25:1-13). When he does return, judgment will ensue (25:31-46).

C. Jesus offers himself in redemption for the subjects of the kingdom (26:1–28:20).

The final "now it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these sayings" issues directly in Jesus' announcement of his impending death as the Passover lamb (26:1-2). Without a ransom for sin there ultimately could be no kingdom on earth. Therefore, Jesus offers himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for those who would become members of the kingdom. The opposition that has been steadily mounting climaxes in Jesus' arrest, trial and execution, but not until he has made final preparations for his remembrance. The disciples would be scattered for a brief moment but would be renewed in order to fulfill their kingdom calling. Jesus is falsely tried for blasphemy (claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God—26:57-68) and for sedition (claiming to be the King of the Jews—27:1-31). He was indeed both. His claim to be the Son of God would soon be vindicated by his resurrection. The vindication of his claim to be the King of the Jews would have to await his return.



The resurrection appearances are directed toward the reaffirmation of the new kingdom program via the commissioning of his disciples to a worldwide ministry of kingdom building with each and every people group. The promise of his presence guaranteed the certainty of his plan (28:16-20).

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