

BOOK OF MATTHEW

1. This book connects the Old Testament to the New Testament.
2. It was written by Apostle Matthew to the Jewish believers. The first batch of believers in Jerusalem were Jewish.
3. It should be noted that all 40 authors of the Bible did not know their writings would be included in the Bible and read by us. The contents to be included in the Bible was inspired by God.
4. Matthew's goal was that, now that the Jewish believers were converted, they ought to know that they have a new lifestyle, a new mission, a new family, and a new future. This applies to all new Christians too!
5. This book has more Old Testament quotes than the other 3 Gospels because the Jews were familiar with Old Testament.
 - a) Matthew's intent was to show that what were spoken by the Old Testament prophets were being fulfilled.
 - b) He connected the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah to Jesus! Matthew wanted the spotlight to be on Jesus! One person only! All the prophecies in the Old Testament fulfilled in one life, the life of Jesus.
6. Structure of the Book of Matthew
 - a) The first half of the book of Matthew is about the life of Jesus in Galilee, the countryside which is the non-religious part of Israel.
 - b) The second half of the book is about the life of Jesus in Jerusalem, where the educated and religious people were.
 - c) The first half of book of Matthew emphasises the first 2½ years of Jesus' 3 years of ministry. Hence, majority of His time was spent in Galilee. It speaks a lot about His lifestyle, reaching out to the poor and the uneducated. Today, Christians spend too much time amongst religious people. We should learn to be like Jesus and spend more time amongst outsiders since we are all on a new mission in life.
 - d) He emphasized 3 things about Jesus:
 - i. Jesus is the King of the Jews
 - ii. Jesus is the new Moses
 - iii. Jesus is God!

Matthew emphasized that Jesus is not just a man or a carpenter!

Jesus is King of the Jews

1. Matthew 1:1 starts with the genealogy of Jesus as Son of David, the One whom the Jews have been waiting for! The Jews have waited for long time for a more glorious Kingdom which is to be restored by the Messiah, the New King.
2. Matthew 1:17 shows 3 sections of Genealogy. Note that the number "3" is the number of God:
 - a) 14 Generations from Abraham to David
 - b) 14 Generations from David to the exile in Babylon
 - c) 14 Generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ!

Note that $14 = 7 \times 2$ and “7” has great significance because “7” is the number for completion.

3. The book of Matthew begins with the birth of Jesus unlike the book of Mark. This is because for a king, the birth origin is very important! E.g. The birth of a prince from a royal bloodline unlike those people who became famous later on in life. It is unlike the book of Mark which starts with Christ’s baptism because Mark’s intent was to emphasize Jesus as Servant. Therefore, Mark and Matthew have different focuses.
4. In Matthew 2:11, the wise men came to worship Jesus as a baby! When a new prince is born, people will come and visit. They gave 3 gifts, all with significances.
 - a) Gold is the symbol of royalty.
 - b) Frankincense is an incense with fragrance, this speaks of God.
 - c) Myrrh is a spice used for embalming dead body!

The meaning of these 3 gifts combined is: “A King is born who is God and who will die!”

5. Jesus’ death was elaborately described just like the death of any king. Jesus wore a crown of thorns (in Matthew 27:29) and was holding a reed in His right hand and He also wore a robe.
 - a) Though He was being mocked, it reminds the Jews that Jesus is a King with a crown, a sceptre in His hand and a robe!
 - b) Roman soldiers mockingly bowed down to Jesus and said “Hail, the King of the Jews!” In Matthew 27:37, the title over Jesus said, “King of the Jews” on the Cross!
 - c) This is important to note because Jews had a different expectation of their coming King. They were unaware and had ignored the fact that His 1st coming will be as a Suffering King!
 - d) Even John the Baptist struggled with this. In Matthew 11:2-3, though John baptised Jesus and witnessed God calling Jesus the “Son of God”, he too doubted when he saw that Jesus didn’t look like a king! John even asked Jesus, “Are You the One?” though it was him, John the Baptist, who declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God” when he first saw Him. They only expected a Conquering King.
 - e) In Matthew 16:22, even Peter couldn’t accept that Jesus was going to the Cross! Hence, Jesus responded with Matthew 16:23-26! To the Jews, this shocked them and wondered what kind of King would allow himself to be tortured. Therefore, Matthew had to write a lot to show that Jesus is indeed the King they were looking for!

Jesus is the new Moses

1. In Matthew 2:15, Jesus was brought to Egypt to escape King Herod and He was brought back after King Herod died! So, why Egypt? Because it is a picture of Moses coming out of Egypt.
2. Jesus was baptized. Why does He need to be baptized when He was sinless? But again, this is a picture of Moses who went into the Red Sea and came out. Jesus therefore went into the Jordan River and came out in His baptism.

3. Jesus went and spent 40 days in the wilderness like Moses who spent 40 years in the wilderness!
 - a) Jesus' first sermon was on a Mount just like Moses when he received the Law on Mount Sinai.
 - b) To the Jews, they will use these similarities like buzz words.
 - c) Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is about how to live a Christian life pleasing to God just like Moses' Law which was given by God for the Jews to live an obedient life!
 - d) Except, this time, Jesus promised to give a new heart and new spirit to help us live the way we should.
 - e) Matthew 5:17 says, "Do not think that Jesus has come to abolish the Law but to fulfil the Law!"
4. All these points are not taught in the other 3 Gospels because they are meant mainly for the Jewish Christian audience!
5. While Moses brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, Jesus brought us out of the bondage of sins to be part of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus is God

1. Matthew 1:23 shows
 - a) The virgin birth of Jesus.
 - b) The child was called Immanuel which means "God with us".

This is recorded only in the Gospel of Matthew.
2. Matthew 1:22 says this is the fulfilment of Old Testament. For the Jews, the name "Immanuel" is very important. Jesus' name is Immanuel which means "God with us".
3. Matthew worked hard to show the Jews that this ordinary man is not just King and not just a new Moses, but God Himself! The Jews had to unlearn that their coming King is not yet the Conquering King in His 1st coming.

The Goal of the Book of Matthew

1. Know that Jesus is King and God.
2. That we will all be like Jesus.
3. Help others to be like Jesus! The ending is clear, unlike other books, as is stated in Matthew 28:19-20. We believers have a new mission as Christians and that is disciple making! Jesus said to be "My disciple" and not "My student". Jesus wants us to know Him, not about Him.
4. Matthew is a book full of the works of Jesus and His life, about how He reached out, immersed in the crowd, lived like them, fed them, healed them, and helped them. It is not just bible study but going out and reaching the people.
5. Jesus taught with authority while working!
 - a) In Matthew 7:28, after His Sermon on the Mount, people realised He taught with authority unlike the Scribes.
 - b) Some pastors today read their sermons but their sermons are not part of their lives. Hence, they preach without authority but only discharge head knowledge. If we speak from personal life experiences, we can speak with authority. E.g. Even on secular experience, we can authoritatively say, "I tried this, it works"

or “I tried this and it does not work” rather than someone who never tried something and just say, “I read that it does not work”.

- c) Christianity today are word-based alone without works! See James 2:17. To them, Christianity is a Dead Sea religion and it means spiritual deadness.
- d) The book of Matthew describes a mixture of the works and words of Jesus, not just learn and learn. The best way to learn is to do, then learn, then do again. It is like learning how to cook! Not only watching how others cook but never try to cook any dish themselves. Discipleship is not like schooling where we go to school for 20 years then start to work!

Structure of the Book of Matthew

There are roughly about 5 major topics. The Pentateuch or Torah was also written as 5 books. Psalms was also written in 5 sections. The book of Matthew is structured with 5 major sermons:

1. Sermon on the Mount – Chapters 5 to 7

- a) Kingdom Lifestyle. It describes an Upside Down Kingdom, for example:
 - i. Who are most blessed? Blessed are the poor and persecuted.
 - ii. Who is the greatest? The servant is the greatest.
 - iii. Who is the richest? The one who gives.
- b) Jesus said this phrase “You have heard but I say to you” 5 times
 - i. Opposite of Human Wisdom.
 - ii. Normally, kings expect citizens to die for them, but Jesus, the King, went to the Cross to die for us!
 - iii. Kings are usually born in palaces, but Jesus was born in a manger! Jesus had nowhere to lay His head as in Matt 8:20.
 - iv. Normally, important people like to spend time with important people, but Jesus spent time with lowly men!
 - v. Kings like to be in big functions, but Jesus avoided Jerusalem.
 - vi. Kings dressed differently from normal citizens, but Jesus dressed like an ordinary man so much so that the priests had to pay 30 silver pieces to Judas to identify Jesus during His arrest.
 - vii. Jesus lived an upside down lifestyle which we don’t see in many of today’s pastors.

2. Kingdom’s Mission - Chapters 9 and 10

- a) The harvest truly is plentiful but the labourers are few.
- b) Jesus sent out His disciples.
- c) The Kingdom’s mission is to go out and be the salt and light of the world.

3. Kingdom’s Growth – Chapter 13

There are countless parables in the book of Matthew. Jesus taught in parables or stories as stated in Matthew 13:34. It is so different from pastors today who teach using PowerPoint slides, etc. Our brains remember stories better too. Some examples of parables that Jesus taught are:

- a) Parable of the Good Soil (Sower). It is alright if we preach and get rejected because few hearers of the God’s word will receive it.
- b) Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Expect it, this will happen. Wheat and tares will grow together. True believers and false believers will remain in the Church together until God’s judgement.

- c) Parable of the Mustard Seed. Sometimes, there is only one seed but it can grow very big.
 - d) Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. When you find joy of disciple making, you will throw everything else away! Everything else will become pointless.
 - e) Parable of the Net (Draught in NKJV). Just cast the net to bring in believers, God will sort them out on last day as to who are the true believers and who are not, when He separates the sheep and goat as in Matthew 25:31-46.
4. Kingdom's Relationship – Chapter 18
- a) We have a new spiritual family, therefore, we are to settle disputes within the family as in Matthew 18:15-20.
 - b) This chapter teaches us how to forgive. See Matthew 18:22.
5. Future of Kingdom – The Signs of End Times
- a) The Jews struggled with this. They thought that the Holy Kingdom is separate and happens only after the present evil world ends.
 - b) But we know the Kingdom of God is already here. Two worlds exist (overlap) in parallel. We are the children of Kingdom of God already but still struggle with our current lives.
 - c) The Jews wondered why Jesus talked about the new Kingdom when they were still struggling against the Romans.
 - d) The Kingdom is already inaugurated but is not consummated yet. Christians are already enjoying and tasting peace of God now on Earth.

Remember the Goal of the Book of Matthew

1. While we do not struggle with the concept of Jesus as the Suffering King like the Jews do, our struggle is in fulfilling the King's commandment in Matt 28:19-20. It says that all authority (in heaven and on Earth) have been given to Jesus because He is King Jesus!
2. Take note of several verbs:
 - a) GO
 - b) MAKE disciples
 - c) BAPTIZE
 - d) TEACH
 - e) TO OBSERVE

It looks like there are so many things to do, but NO! In Hebrew, there is only ONE imperative verb and the rest of the verbs are to help this imperative Verb "MAKE DISCIPLES!"

- a) Go for what? – To make Disciples
- b) Teach for what? – To make Disciples
- c) Baptize for what? – To make Disciples

The entire 28 chapters of the book of Matthew is for us to MAKE DISCIPLES!

3. Some Christians do not even disciple their own kids, instead they focus on their own lifestyle! We should remember that it is not the duty of Sunday school teachers to disciple our children.
4. Matthew 28:20 says "Behold, I am with you always...." Only God can say this, "Immanuel" means God with us! Not many Christians today can say "God is with me" because they don't see God doing His work in them. Why would "God be with us" if

we are only doing our own things, e.g. holidaying, making merry, etc.? You will see the reality of God's presence when you go forth to make disciples!

5. We are saved not just to escape hell but to be like Christ and help others to be like Christ! And also, to help others make disciples!