

Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew (as with all of the Gospels) does not say who wrote this text. A tradition that goes back to the 1st century ascribes it to Matthew the disciple. It was probably written before 70 AD.

1. Matthew's distinctives indicate that it is written for a **Jewish** audience.
 - a. Fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures emphasized.
 - b. The Law is often mentioned.
 - c. The genealogy of Jesus goes back to Abraham.
 - d. Eschatology is important.
 - e. There is an emphasis upon symbolic numbers like #3,5,7,14 & etc.
 - f. Special inclusion of Gentiles is featured.
 - g. Matthew uses more O.T. quotations and allusions (130) than any other book.
2. The five fold literary structure of Matthew

"It came to pass that when Jesus had finished these sayings" 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1

1. **THE NEW LAW**

Narrative 3-4
Teaching 5-7

2. **CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

Narrative 8:1-9:34
Teaching 9:35-10:42

3. **THE MEANING OF THE KINGDOM**

Narrative 11-12
Teaching 13:1-52

4. **THE CHURCH**

Narrative 13:53-17:27
Teaching 18

5. **JUDGMENT**

Narrative 19-22
Teaching 23-25

This is the story of Jesus and more importantly it is the story of the Kingdom of God. We read this gospel with ears to hear that story and appreciate our participation in the life and Kingdom of Messiah Jesus. The book of Matthew can be divided into four movements.

1. The King is revealed (ch.1:4-11)

2. The Kingdom is revealed (4:12- ch.10).

3. The King and His Kingdom are rejected (ch.11-27).

4. The King is raised (ch.28)

There are five discourses or sermons in Matthew (ch.5-7, 10, 13, 18, 24-25).

**The King is
Revealed**

**The Kingdom is
Revealed**

**The King and His Kingdom are
Rejected**

**The
King is**

- A. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt.5-7) presents challenges to us.
1. How are we to understand Jesus' teaching and its application to us today?
 2. How are we to live this teaching out in our lives?
- B. Interpretive challenges.
1. Examples
 - a. What is literal and what is hyperbole?
 1. Most people would see some passages as hyperbole (not to be taken literally)

Matthew 5:29-30 "And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell."
 2. But where do we draw the line. Should we take the following passages at face value?

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Matthew 7:12 "therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
 - b. How is this harmonized with the Apostles' teaching?
 1. Are we saved by our righteousness or faith in Christ's righteousness?

Matthew 5:20 "For I say to you, that **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees**, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Romans 3:28 "For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**"
 2. Do we forgive so that we will be forgiven or because we have been forgiven?

Matt. 6:15 "but **if you do not forgive** men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Eph. 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, **just as God in Christ also has forgiven** you."
 2. All Scripture is written for us but not about us or to us.
 - a. How is the Sermon on the Mount written for us?
 1. It is widely accepted to be the core teaching of God's Kingdom ethic.
 2. It reflects the basic ethical teaching of Jesus who is the cornerstone of the Christian faith and church.

3. Much of its teaching has long been accepted as of universal significance and application.
- b. In what way is the Sermon on the Mount not written to us or about us?
 1. The context
 - **Matthew 4** “²³ And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming **the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. . . ²⁵ And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan”
 - **Matthew 5** “¹ And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, **His disciples** came to Him. ² And opening His mouth He {began} to teach them, saying,” (Luke 6:17“a great multitude of his disciples,”)
 - Note that the 12 disciples were not called until Matthew 10. The term “disciple” simply means “follower.” The followers (disciples) of Jesus over the course of His ministry were a mixed group ranging from the curious to the committed.
 2. It is addressed to Jewish seekers only. The Gentiles were not included (with rare exception) until after Pentecost.
 3. It is addressed to a community living under the Mosaic Covenant with its emphasis on faithfulness as the equivalent of faith.
 4. It is written to those who had been led to believe that the demands of the Law could and must be met by anyone who would participate in the blessings of the Kingdom. The Jewish community then as now believed that the commandments given to Moses could and would be obeyed successfully. In other words there was no real need for a moral surrogate.

C. How does the change in covenants influence the way we read the Sermon on the Mount? More detailed notes can be found at apptoteach.org (theology file #106, #107).

1. An analogy:
 - A man (Bob) owns an auto dealership and contracts a salesperson (John) to sell cars on commission.
 - After five years Bob changes the contractual relationship with John so that he is on a fixed salary (he is paid the same no matter how many or few cars he sells). Furthermore he gives him an interest in the dealership so that he is like an adopted son.
 - When Bob speaks to the sales staff (of which John is a part) he says many things that apply equally to everyone who is selling cars. But there are some things that are said that are no longer of meaning to John as they would have been before the contract changed. For example – the promise of a bonus commission for all who sell a certain number of cars.
 - In this analogy, Bob is God, John is the disciple, The first contract is the Old Covenant under Moses, The second contract is the New Covenant in Christ, The briefing is the Sermon on the Mount.
2. Most Christians respect some covenant distinctives in Jesus’ teaching.

- **Matthew 10:5-6** “**Do not go in the way of the Gentiles**, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
 - **Matthew 16:18** “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock **I will** build My church.”
 - In **Eph.3:2** (Col.1:25-26) the term oikonomia OIKONOMIA is used to refer to two dispensations: the **present age and the age to come**.
 - Other texts suggest a distinction between a period of **law and grace**. **Jn.1:17** “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” (Heb.7:12; Rom.7:4-7; II Cor.3:7-11).
 - A third dispensation is suggested in **Gal.3:15-19** where the promise to Abraham (Gen.12:1-3) is described as **preceding the Law of Moses** and fulfilled in Christ.
 - **Gal.4:4-5** “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, **born under the Law**, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”
 - **Heb.8:13** “When He said, “A new covenant,” **He has made the first obsolete**. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.” **9:15** “And for this reason **He is the mediator of a new covenant**, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”
3. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Christ changes at Pentecost. For more information see apttoteach.org (theology file #603).

Although men in every age are justified by faith (Gen.15:6), it seems clear that regeneration or new birth (at least in the New Testament sense of the word--John 3:3-7, Titus 3:5) is the unique experience of the Body of Christ which is, historically speaking, all believers between Pentecost and the coming of Christ for His Church.

- a. The Old Testament system offered pardon for sin but no power (new life).
 1. Cleansing was provided through the Levitical sacrifices and offerings, which pictures the coming cross of Christ.
 2. Change was promised through a NEW COVENANT (Jer.31:31-33; Ezek.36:26-27) which was viewed in the Old Testament and the Gospels as a future reality.
- b. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, spoke of a Spirit baptism which was to take place through Jesus in fulfillment of the Old Testament promise (Joel 2:28; Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; Gal.3:14).
- c. Jesus came preaching that the Kingdom of God (eternal life, age to come, regeneration) was at hand.
 1. People were to repent in preparation for it (Mark 1:4-8).
 2. He pointed His followers to a day (Pentecost) when they would experience union with Him (John 14:20), and new power (Luke 24:49) through the Spirit, Who would come after His ascension (John 16:7; Luke 24:49).
- d. The Apostles make it quite clear that “new life” (regeneration) is dependent upon -
 1. The death and resurrection of Christ (Rom.6:3-11,22; 7:6; Eph.2:4-9; I Cor.5:15-17; Gal.2:20; I Peter 1:3-4).
 2. The indwelling Holy Spirit (I John 3:24; 4:13; Rom.8:1-10).

- e. In the New Testament, the absence of the Holy Spirit is a sign that the person is unsaved, unregenerate, and outside the body of Christ (Rom.8:9).
- 4. The relationship of the disciple with the Law has changed. For more information see apptoteach.org (theology file #107).
 - a. We are not under the Law as the Jews were.
 - b. We are not outside the Law as the Gentiles were.
 - c. We are not above the Law as the church at Corinth felt it was.
 - d. We are free from the Law as Paul has taught us. This does not mean that we disregard the ethical teaching but rather that we no longer view it as a covenant of works defining our relationship with God and His Kingdom.

D. How should we read the Sermon on the Mount?

1. The Sermon represents Kingdom values and as such is a call to all who wish to live according to Kingdom principles. Christians should read it as a guide to following Christ in this age.
2. The Sermon is presented in an Old Covenant context and as such is designed (like the rest of the Law of Moses) to be a tutor, leading us to Christ. There are parts of the sermon that are best understood as having direct application to the period before a person is born of the Spirit and secured by the Covenant of Grace in Christ.