

All Nations Biblical Study Center
Synoptic Gospels I
Spring 2010
Student Outline – Class 4 - The Gospel of Matthew

A. INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

I. Authorship

The gospel does not identify the author. Early tradition ascribes the gospel to the disciple Matthew Levi. Both Papias in the early second century and Irenaeus in the mid second century A.D. attribute the gospel to Matthew.

II. Time and Place of Origin

Most date the gospel between 70-90 A.D., which would allow the city of Jamnia to be established as the center of post-Temple Pharisaic Judaism. This is an important factor, as it seems certain based on the material included in the gospel, that there was heated debate taking place between Pharisaic Judaism and the early church.

The place of origin is unknown. Many have suggested the city of Antioch, Syria, as it was a Jewish community that held to its *Jewish-ness* yet was very enthusiastic about the Gentile mission.

III. The Target Audience

As we stated earlier, the writer is very open to the evangelization and discipleship of the Gentiles. Yet, it appears that his overall target audience is a group of Jewish believers in Jesus and other Jews, who had not trusted in Jesus as the Messiah. The dominant themes in the gospel of Matthew revolve around: **1)** The audiences relationship to the Jewish Torah in light of their relationship with Jesus, **2)** the need for love in the community; and **3)** The issue of eschatology (end-times) and the time of the Kingdom.

IV. Purpose in Writing

As we noted, the majority of scholarship recognizes Matthew as a revision and expansion of the gospel of Mark written to answer the specific needs of Matthew's community.

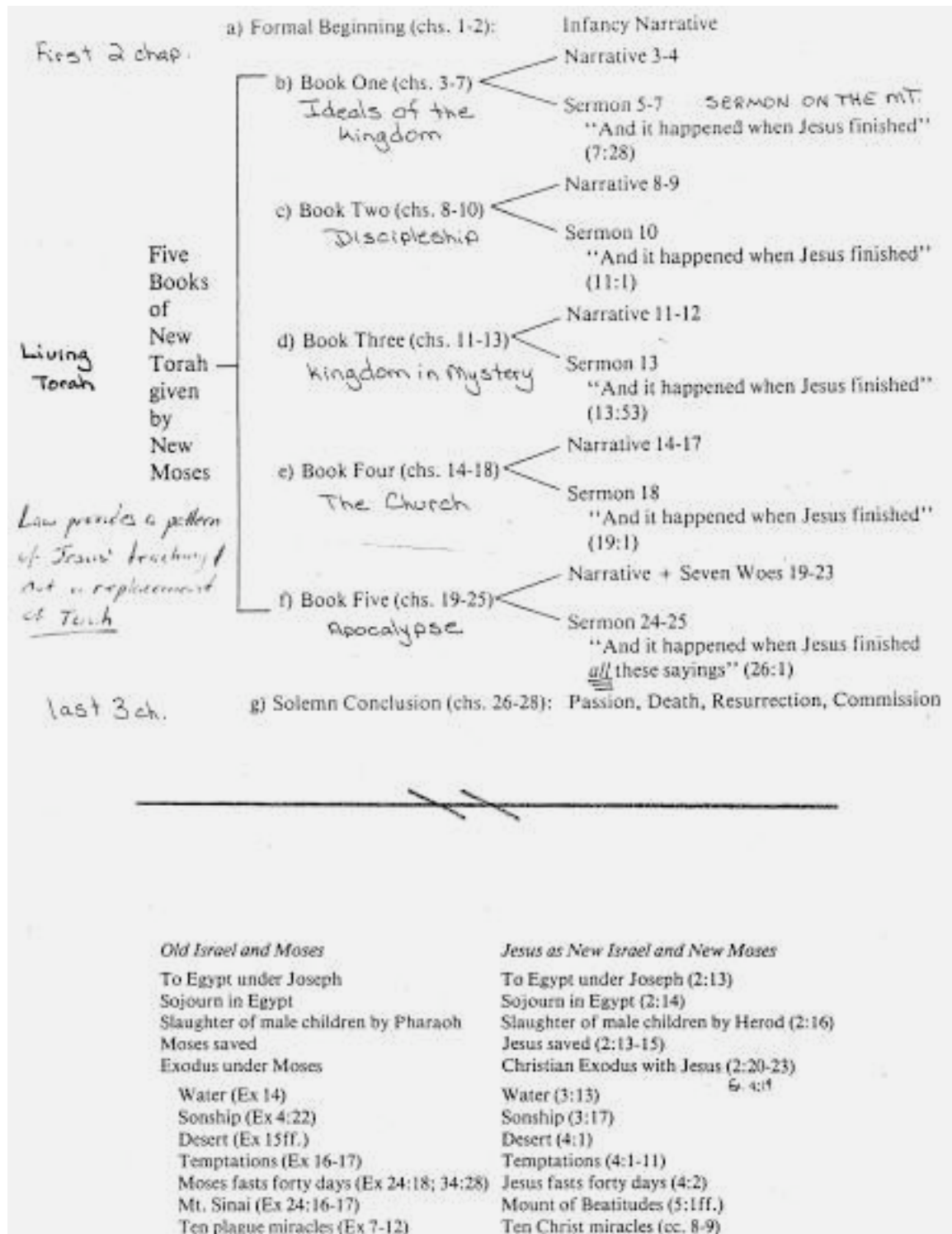
V. Outline of Major Divisions

The Gospel can be easily divided as follows:

A. Introduction – Chapters 1-2

B. 5 Books or Sermons – Chapters 3-25

C. Conclusion (with 7 parts) – Chapters 26-28



This outline reveals an overall division into 7 parts. We should note that the number 7 was highly significant in the Jewish tradition and is therefore prevalent in this gospel. The number seven is used in the following passages:

1. Genealogy that is based upon fourteen. (1:1-17)
2. 7 petitions in the disciples (Lord's) Prayer (6: 5-13)
3. 7 loaves (15:34)
4. 7 brothers (22:25)
5. 7 parables
6. 7 woes (23:13-36)
7. Forgive not 7 but 70x (18:22)

VI. Thematic Phrase

"and it happened when Jesus finished. . ." This is the key phrase found throughout the gospel of Matthew. This six word Greek phrase occurs in the following passages: Matthew 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1. It informs the reader when one section or topic is finished and a new section beginning.

VII. The Five Books or Sermons of Matthew

The above thematic phrase sets off the 5 groups of Jesus teaching found within Matthew's gospel. This is a clear allusion to the 5 Books of the Torah / Law given to the nation of Israel through Moses.

B. OUTLINE OF MATTHEW

a) Formal Beginning (Chapters 1-2)

Here the author emphasizes theology; that is the God-meaning he sees in Jesus. "He is the Christ (Messiah), the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Matt 1:1).

In **chapter 1**, the genealogy is divided up into 3 groups of 14. This division of 14 would have been appreciated by a Jewish audience, as David's name in Hebrew DWD = 14.

In **chapter 2**, the writer's openness to the gentiles is expressed through the story of the Magi, either a group of gentiles who come to seek out the Jewish Messiah, or a group of Jewish sages who lived outside the land of Israel, representing Jews in the diaspora (living outside the borders of Israel).

One of the most dominant theological subjects found within these early chapters is the **Exodus from Egypt**. This imagery is further developed in the following chapters.

In the first two chapters, we find **5 formal prophetic citations** that foretold of the recorded events. They are as follows: **1)** Matt 1:23 = Isa 7:14, the virgin birth; **2)** Matt 2:6 = Micah 5:1-2, Messiah born in Bethlehem; **3)** Matt 2:15 = Hosea 11:1, the son called out of Egypt; **4)** Matt 2:18 = Jer 31:15, the slaughter of the infants; and **5)** Matt 2:23 = Isa 4:3 and Judges 16:17, a move to Nazareth.

b) Book One – The Ideals of the Kingdom (Chapters 3-7)

Matthew uses extended narratives throughout his gospel to introduce or prepare his audience for Jesus' "sermons." In chapters 3-7, he basically follows Mark's order.

1) John the Baptist (3:1-12). John is presented as the new Elijah, prophesied by the prophet Malachi (Mal 4:5).

2) Jesus' Baptism (3:13-17). The *Bat Kol* pronounces Him as the Beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased (Psalm 2 & Isa 42:1, the suffering servant passages).

3) Testing & Temptation in the Wilderness (4:1-11). Just as Israel of old entered a time of testing in the wilderness, so too Jesus is compelled (driven out) by the Spirit in & throughout His time of desert testing.

After exiting the wilderness, Jesus' first order of business is to select a group of *talmidim*, or disciples (4:18-22).

FIRST DISCOURSE: The Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7)

Many Moses motifs are imbedded into these chapters (i.e., On "the" Mountain; blessings (curses are present in Luke's account); instructions to "disciples; same 4/6 pattern (4 commands regarding one's relationship to God & 6 commands regarding one's relationship to his fellow man).

In this sermon, Jesus provides instruction regarding the three cardinal ordinances in Judaism: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving.

Jesus, in keeping with Jewish thought, places emphasis upon on the *doing* & not simply *knowing* the will of God..

"and when Jesus had finished all these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes" (7:28).

c) BOOK TWO: DISCIPLESHIP (Chapters 8-10)

1. Narrative (chapters 8-9)

In Book two, Matthew returns to Mark's sequence. The narrative of chapters 8-9 is actually preparing the stage for chapter 10. **In Book One, Jesus is powerful in WORD. In Book Two, Jesus is powerful in WORKS.**

In the first part of the narrative on Discipleship, stress is placed upon the "cost" of discipleship.

In the second part of the narrative, stress is placed upon 10 miracles, which mirrors the 10 plagues in Exodus. ***All these signs are proof that the Kingdom of Heaven is here, it is being presently realized on earth!*** The 10 miracles are as follows: Leper cleansed, centurion's servant made well, Peter's mother-in-law healed, summary of many other healings (8:16-17), calming of the storm, Gadaranene demoniacs set free, paralytic healed, Jairus' daughter raised from the dead, 2 blind men receive their sight, and a dumb demoniac is set free.

In this section Matthew provides several references to the prophet Isaiah, wherein Isaiah describes such works as *signs of the day of the Lord*: Isa 35:4-6; 29:18-19; 26:29.

This narrative section closes with Jesus' empowerment, commissioning, and sending out of the disciples (9:36-10:4).

2. Second "Sermon / Discourse" (chapter 10)

The theme of this second "sermon" is that Jesus has transmitted his authority to preach (5-7) and to act (8-9) to the disciples & their successors.

Matt 10:5-15 refers to the time of Jesus' life on earth. He has come to the lost sheep of Israel. He has then prepared & sent out his disciples to do the same.

Matt 10: 16ff speaks of the days following Jesus' resurrection. The early church will suffer, face trial in the synagogues, and be betrayed by family & friends.

"And when Jesus had finished. . ." (11:1)

d) BOOK THREE (Chapters 11-13), Kingdom in Mystery

1. Narrative (chapters 11-12)

In Matt 11:2-12, we find Matthew following Mark's sequence (2:23-3:35).

The theme of this narrative section is as follows: Jesus is the Wisdom of God, hidden from the proud but revealed to the humble (little ones).

The following Mysteries are set forth in this section:

A. The Question of John the Baptist (11:3), "Are you the One or should we expect another?"

B. The Crowds are perplexed (11:16-19) regarding Jesus' associations with "sinners, tax collectors."

C. The villages where his mightiest miracles are performed fail to genuinely repent (11:20-24).

Matthew 11:28-30 reveals a deliberate patterning after the Jewish Wisdom Literature (Proverbs 9:4-5; Sirach (written in 200 B.C.) 24:19-20; and Sirach 51:23, 26-27). Here Jesus is presented as the Wisdom of God, who has come to reveal the Father.

In Chapter 12, we find Jesus in debate with the Pharisees regarding *halakah*, which were the *practical matters* of the Law.

- A. 12:1-8: plucking grain on the Sabbath.
- B. 12:9-14: Man with a withered hand who is healed on Shabbat.
- C. 12:18-21: After healing the man with the withered hand, Matthew refers to Isaiah Isa 42:1-4 in order to identify Jesus as the true Servant of the LORD.
- D. 12:22-24: Jesus heals one who is blind and dumb (deaf & unable to speak). This results in the man's confession that Jesus is "the Son of David." Certain of the Pharisees, understanding the significance of such a title, attribute his works to Beelzebub, prince of the demons. This is an act of blasphemy, as the miracles, according to 12:28, are intended to demonstrate that "the kingdom of God has come among you."

In 12:38-41, some Pharisees ask for a further sign from Jesus. He says none will be given except the sign of Jonah. He goes on to rebuke them saying that the Ninivites (v.41), the pagan Queen of Sheba (v.42) were more receptive than they. For, One greater than Solomon (chpt 12) had come.

The final portion of this narrative section centers around His family (12:46-50). Those who do the will of God are his spiritual family.

Third Sermon / Discourse: Kingdom in Mystery, the Parables (Chapter 13)

Matthew Provides the following 7 Parables in this chapter: (1) Sower and the Seed; (2) Good Seed (3) the Weeds (4) Mustard Seed (5) Treasure (6) Pearl (7) Catch of fish.

Thus, Matthew has reached back into the Jewish Wisdom Literature, having referred to Moses, the Temple, Jonah, and Solomon. He has clearly set forth Jesus as God's Wisdom.

"An it happened when Jesus had finished these parables. . ." (13:53)

e) BOOK FOUR, THE CHURCH (*EKKLESIA* OR *QAHAL*) (chapter 13:55 – 18:35)

1. Narrative (chapters 14-17)

This section reveals the highest level of dependence upon the Markan sequence (pericopes 108-136 in G.P.). In this "fourth book" the community of faith really takes on form and structure.

Here we find the first mention of the church, *ekklesia*. This is the only occurrence of the word in the gospels!

It is also in this section that faith & the loaves are emphasized.

FOURTH DISCOURSE / SERMON: THE CHURCH (chapter 18)

This discourse or sermon is devoted to instructions regarding proper relationships among disciples. Disciples (who are compared with children) are instructed to do the following:

1. Posses child-like humility (1-4)
2. Take care of the weak (5)
3. Be free of scandals (6-9)
4. Be aware of the lost sheep (10-14)
5. Properly resolve conflicts and receive correction (15-18)
6. Demonstrate prayer and unity among themselves (19-20)
7. Forgive one another (21-35)

"and it happened when Jesus had finished these sayings. . ."

f) BOOK FIVE, THE END TIME DISCOURSE(chapters 19-25)

1. Narrative and the Seven Woes (chapters 19-23)

As seen in the G.P., the material in these five chapters is almost identical to the material found in Mark 10-12. In chapter 19, Jesus leaves the Galilee and heads for Jerusalem, where he will suffer and willingly lay down his life in fulfillment of the scriptures.

The parable of the laborers, the two sons, the marriage feast, and the lament over Jerusalem ***all prepare for both the fifth sermon of chapters 24-25 and the Passion narratives.***

Several key threads tie this narrative section (chapters 19-23) into a cohesive unit: (1) The road to Jerusalem (19:1; 20:17; 20:29; 21:1; and 21:10). All this serves as a type of sacrificial pilgrimage to Jerusalem (2) A theme of crisis in chapters 19,20, and 21 (3) confrontations in Jerusalem with the leading sectarian groups in chapters 19,21,22, and 23 (4) Reversals in the Kingdom in chapters 19,20,21, and 22 (first will be last,etc.). (5) Jesus as the Son of David in chapters 20, 21, and 22 (6) The great importance of love in chapters 19 (love to neighbor) and 22.

THE FIFTH DISCOURSE / SERMON (chapters 24-25)

The concern for the future is prevalent in this final Discourse / Sermon. In Matthew, the question posed to Jesus by the disciples is changed (or at least expanded) from that of Mark. Mark's question was single pronged (as was Luke's). **It revolves around the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. In Matthew however, the questions do not necessarily pertain to the same event.** They ask: Tell us, when will this be (destruction of temple), and what will be the sign of your coming (Jesus' *parousia*, his second coming) and of the close of the age (the end of the present world system)?" **Therefore,** we find a three part answer: (1) verses 4-14 (2) verses 5-22 (3) verses 23-31. We will examine this very carefully in the fall semester.

The Discourse ends with 7 warning Parables, which are a combination of Markan and uniquely Matthean material:

- 1) Fig Tree – 24:32-33
- 2) Days of Noah – 24:37-41
- 3) Householder and Thief – 24:42-44
- 4) Faithful and Wise Servant – 24:45-51
- 5) Ten Maidens – 25:1-13
- 6) Servants and the Talents – 25:14-30
- 7) Final Judgment – 25:31-46

The Final bookend – "and it happened when Jesus had finished ***all*** these sayings. . ."
Matthew 26:1

g) CONCLUSION: PASSION, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND COMMISSION – (chapters 26-28)

Although Matthew and Mark have identical sequences throughout G.P pericopes 231-251 (often times sharing exact wording), ***there are a number of points which highlight Matthew's unique theological interests.*** **For instance:** his reference to Judas' death, special references to Caiaphas, special material on Pilate & his wife, information regarding the guards at the tomb & their being bribed, the earthquake at Jesus' death, the opening of the graves and resurrection of the many righteous people, etc.

A Significant addition is found in Matthew regarding the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20. ***It serves to complete Matthew's overall theological interest.*** In Daniel 7:14, the son of Man was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." Thus, Matthew's Commission identifies Jesus as the Son of Man, Son of David, Son of God, to whom has been given all authority in heaven and earth. Authority has been transferred to his disciples, who are to make disciples of all nations, wherever they go. Jesus is Immanuel, the God who is with us to the very end of the age.