

# OpenTheo

## Matthew Overview (Part 1)



### **Bible Book Overviews** - Steve Gregg

In this overview, Steve Gregg delves into the Gospel of Matthew, which he states is often considered the most important gospel and is often recommended to new Christians. Matthew contains a genealogy of Jesus that connects his teachings to the Old Testament and emphasizes the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus, as well as his heritage as the Messiah. The book of Matthew also emphasizes the importance of both Jewish law and Gentile inclusion in the Kingdom of God.

### **Transcript**

Right, we're going to have an introduction and an overview of the Gospel of Matthew today. Those of you who've been coming for some years here know that we started, I don't know, four or five years ago in Genesis, and each month we've taken a different book of the Bible. And just last month, we finished the Old Testament, and now we come to the New, which might be a relief for many, especially since the last, what, 12 months have been in the minor prophets.

There's 12 minor prophets, so that's a long time to be in that kind of material. That kind of material is a little harder for most modern people to relate to because of the kind of language used, the poetry, and even just the historical setting being so remote from our own. So now we come to the Gospels, the New Testament.

Most Christians are automatically more optimistic about understanding the New Testament than the Old Testament prophets, and I think there's every reason to be. Now, it's not so much that we're studying the contents of the Gospel of Matthew, though we'll certainly have plenty to refer to, but we're looking at the book itself. My intention is that these notes that I'm giving you, the things I will say tonight, will put you in a position where you'll want to read the book of Matthew afresh, and it'll be more accessible to you, more something you can appreciate more easily.

And so that's what these are for. These are introductions and outlines. They're not verse-by-verse studies of the material in the book of Matthew, but I think that these are the kinds of things that when I'm teaching through Matthew verse-by-verse, I go through this

material first to prepare students for that study.

Since we're not doing that kind of study, you'll have to do that on your own, but I think that it'll be worthwhile to you. I certainly know that when I learned the things that I'm sharing today, it was very helpful to me. All right, so obviously, the Gospel of Matthew is the first book in our New Testament, and we will, in the following months, look at the other books as well.

I want to talk first of all about the value of Matthew because Matthew has a special value that, I mean, every Bible book does have a special value, but Matthew is quite unusual in its special value. Some people have asked me if I could only have one book of the New Testament on a deserted island, which would it be? And I actually think it would be Matthew. I don't think it'd be...I mean, the other Gospels and Epistles are great too, but Matthew is my favorite Gospel.

And it's apparently the favorite Gospel of a lot of people in church history. It's placed first in the collection of Gospels in all the ancient lists. Now, of course, before the Bible was put together, each of the documents in the Bible circulated as an individual document.

They were written in different times and places by different people, circulated in the churches, and eventually gathered together. And they weren't all immediately...it wasn't standardized how the collection would look. That took some time.

And in the earliest lists of the New Testament books, the four Gospels are always included. And Matthew is always the first one, although the other ones in the list are not always in the same order. Sometimes Mark is before Luke, sometimes Luke before Mark, and so forth.

But even though there is a difference in order of arrangement of the Gospels in different lists of them, Matthew was always first and was regarded to be the first one written. Now, modern scholarship is going to suggest that Mark was the first one written, and we'll talk more about that at the appropriate time. But the early church believed Matthew was the first one written, and so they placed it first in all the collections of the Gospels.

It is also the most quoted gospel in the writings of the second-century fathers. So the century after the apostles, the church fathers who quoted from the Bible, as they did continuously, they quoted from Matthew more than from any other of the Gospels. Now, some people might think John would be more important.

I know that sometimes people say, you know, if I just led someone to the Lord and could just give them one book of the Bible, I'd give them the Gospel of John. I've always thought I'd give them the Gospel of Matthew. Not that John isn't great, but John is more theological, more philosophically.

It goes into mysterious things more. Matthew just tells the straightforward story of Jesus, what he taught, what he did. And that's pretty much what I'd want to acquaint somebody with.

For example, John's Gospel doesn't have very many, not anywhere near as many stories about Jesus as long discourses between him and the Pharisees and so forth. But Matthew is a pretty broad-spectrum portrayal of Christ, quite a lot of his teachings, quite a lot of his actions. And it is for the person who's reading through the whole Bible, Matthew is the logical first Gospel because it connects the New Testament with the old.

In the very first verses, Matthew begins with a genealogy of Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, the husband of Mary. And it goes, it starts with Abraham, and it goes through the lineage from Abraham up to Joseph. So you've got the Old Testament history summarized at the beginning right up until the very time that the story is going to begin.

And there's no other Gospel that quite does it like that. Luke does have a genealogy of Christ. It doesn't start with it, and it's not specifically, it doesn't function quite the same way.

Matthew is a great starting place for the New Testament after you've been through the Old Testament because it picks up familiar names from the Old Testament. It goes through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and it goes through Joseph. And then you've got the other Judah and others on through David and the kings that we read about in the books of 1 and 2 Kings.

And they're all in the genealogy of Joseph, and it starts by linking those things up. Now, in a sense, when you leave the Old Testament and come to the New, you're coming into a different world. Because in the Old Testament, when it closes, when the historical books of the Old Testament close, the people of Israel are a vassal state under the Persian Empire.

Now, Daniel's prophecies predicted that there'd be some more empires after the Persian Empire, but they didn't occur in the period of time that the Bible records. Daniel's prophecies look forward to the Persians being conquered by the Greeks and the Greeks by the Romans. But those don't happen in Old Testament times.

So the history of the Old Testament closes with Israel pretty much under Persian control. When the New Testament opens, they're under Roman control. The whole period of the Grecian Empire has gone by unmentioned in the Bible.

And things are very different. For one thing, there's Pharisees, there's Sadducees, there's scribes, there's synagogues everywhere. None of those things are found in the Old Testament.

These things were established during what we call the intertestamental period, after the

Old Testament history closes and before the New Testament starts. So it's a Jewish world, to be sure, in both the Old and the New Testaments, but it's a different Jewish world. The Jews are in a very different state.

And it leaps over a period of 400 years from Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, to Matthew. But Matthew chapter 1, through the genealogies, at least makes a connection between those stories in the Old Testament all the way through an unbroken genealogy up to the time of Joseph. One reason Matthew is so important is it contains the Sermon on the Mount.

Now, the Sermon on the Mount is not the only important thing in the ministry of Jesus, but it's the highest concentration of the ethical teachings of Jesus in the whole Bible. And it has been more influential on world history and on Western civilization than any other passage of similar length. It's three chapters, Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Now, Luke has a Sermon on the Mount kind of a passage, too, in Luke 6, but it's only half a chapter.

Where the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew is three chapters long, and as I say, you won't find any passage in any literature so brief that has had the impact on Western civilization and the world as that Sermon on the Mount has. So Matthew is very significant. William Barclay, in his book, *The First Three Gospels*, said, Matthew may well be called the most important single document of the Christian faith, for in it we have the fullest and most systematic account of the life and teachings of Jesus.

That makes it pretty important insofar as Jesus is the most important person in his life, the most important life ever lived, that we have the most thorough and systematic record of his life. And Matthew makes it uniquely important. Ellen Peterson in *Zondervan Bible Encyclopedia*, writing about Matthew, said it's perhaps the most powerful document ever written.

And this would be not hyperbole. Insofar as the gospel of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, have impacted culture and civilization more than that of any other human being. And Matthew is the one who conveys perhaps the most broad spectrum of the teachings in the life of Christ.

It is the case that it's a very powerful document. Now, how did Matthew come to be included? I mentioned that these documents in the New Testament were floating around as individual documents written by different people in different places. How did they come to be included in the New Testament? Now, the reason it's important for us to ask this is because there's been a lot of popular culture.

The *Da Vinci Code* being a movie and bestselling book that made false claims about this. And there's a lot of Internet nonsense, too, that suggests that the four gospels that we have were selected because they taught something that Constantine the emperor in 325 or later decided that he wanted. You know, to portray Jesus in these terms.

And the claim is made there were hundreds of other gospels that got axed, that they were other gospels that told like gave a different picture of Jesus than the ones in the Bible. But that it was Constantine who kind of got rid of those because they didn't portray Christ the way he really wanted him portrayed. Well, this is a complete nonsense because Constantine was in the fourth century.

And before the second century was over, these four gospels were already recognized by the church around the world as the only four legitimate gospels. So the decision about Matthew and Mark and Luke and John being included was made at least 150 years before Constantine was even born. He had nothing to say about it, nor did anyone else in secular power.

The people who collected these works initially were not in power at all. They were persecuted Christians in the Roman Empire being fed to the lions and things like that. They didn't have any political aspirations in their choice of gospels.

It is true there were some other gospels, certainly not hundreds. There were maybe a dozen other gospels around. I'm not sure if that's the right number, but it's in the range.

You know, there's the gospel of Philip, the gospel of Thomas, the gospel of Judas, the gospel according to Peter. There is a gospel of Mary Magdalene and so forth. None of those are real gospels.

They were written in the second or third century, long after the people who are their alleged writers were dead. These are Gnostic gospels. They were written under a false name by Gnostic teachers.

Gnosticism was recognized in the early church as a heresy. But like all heresies, they wanted to adopt Jesus and make him an advocate of their own views. You'll find this true of almost all religions.

The New Age wants to turn Jesus into a New Ager. The Mormons want him to be a Mormon. JWs want him to be a JW.

Even the Muslims, you know, they speak well of Jesus. They just don't speak the same as the truth of Jesus. But it's like interesting how no religion really speaks badly of Jesus, except maybe one.

And that's the Jewish religion. Orthodox Judaism and the Talmud actually say some bad things, blasphemous things about Jesus. But Judaism is of the world religions the only one that really has bad things to say about Jesus.

But it's one thing to say good things about Jesus and another thing to say true things about Jesus. And a lot of religions that say good things about Jesus are simply trying to recruit him as an advocate of their own views. And that's what the Gnostic heresy was

doing in the second and third century.

This was a teaching that the apostles rejected. Jesus never taught it. But they fabricated books where Jesus allegedly said and things did that supported the Gnostic ideas.

And so just like the Mormons have the Book of Mormon and they've got Jesus in there saying things that support their ideas. These are not authentic. And the early Christians knew they weren't authentic.

But the early Christians knew these four gospels were authentic because they knew the people who wrote them. There was a tradition already in the second century that Matthew had written this gospel in Aramaic in Palestine for Jews. And that it had later been translated into Greek.

Now we don't have the Aramaic version of Matthew. We do have Greek ancient manuscripts of Greek in Matthew. But according to many church fathers Matthew originally wrote this in more like the Hebrew dialect Aramaic the language Jesus and the apostles probably spoke.

And then later it was translated into Greek and the Greek is what we have now. We don't have the Aramaic. But we have Barnabas which is one of the early church documents from the second century.

In 130 AD he quotes Matthew 22 14 and begins he introduces it with the formula it is written which is a very standard way of quoting scripture. So already by 130 AD just half a generation after the last of the apostles was dead. There's people quoting Matthew's gospel as if it is scripture even though no no New Testament documents have been collected into a group of scripture yet.

That's how the early church was already viewing it. They all knew that the gospel was written by an apostle of Christ which is why a book is included in the New Testament. And Justin Martyr in 165 AD.

He's his chief source of information about the life and sayings of Jesus was Matthew. He quoted Matthew more than any other gospel for his source. And.

Tatian in 173 AD Tatian was a church father who wrote a book called the Diatessaron. Now the Diatessaron was actually just a harmony of the gospels. Some of you may have seen in English books that harmonize the four gospels in four columns and they they go through the different stories of Jesus and show how each of the gospels record them and they harmonize them and put them in order and things like that.

That's something that modern scholars do with the English Bible but Tatian back in 175 AD did the same thing with the Greek gospels and he used Matthew Mark Luke and John as his gospel. So already before the second century is over Matthew Mark Luke and John

were already recognized by all the church as the only authoritative gospels. Matthew usually being considered to be the first of them.

As far as the origin of the book is concerned the author is from the earliest days believed to have been Matthew. Although as I said the early church father said he first wrote something in in Aramaic and then it was added translated into Greek. Papias is one of the earliest church fathers that we have anything from.

He wrote several books but they're all they're all lost. But a historian named Eusebius in the early fourth century had Tation's works excuse me Papias's works and Papias you know his writings were lost except for the fragments of it that are quoted by Eusebius who still had the books of Papias available. And Papias said as cited by Eusebius and Papias wrote around 100 AD.

He said Matthew composed the Logia in Hebrew time which he's referring to Aramaic. The Hebrews spoke Aramaic and everyone interpreted them as he was able which just means translated them into Greek. There are translations of Matthew's work into Greek by a number of authors.

Now it says what he wrote was the Logia. The word Logia means the oracles or the sayings. Now Matthew has a lot of sayings of Jesus more than say Mark has.

And some have thought that what Matthew wrote first in Aramaic was simply sayings of Jesus. He was there when Jesus was teaching these things and he might have been right. He was a he was a guy who kept records.

He was a tax collector and he may have been keeping records of what Jesus said to us. He heard him in any case. He put out apparently the first document recording things that Jesus had said.

Now obviously the Gospel of Matthew as we have it now has more in it than just the sayings of Jesus. And so there's different theories about whether information from the Gospel of Mark or from some other gospel was combined with what Matthew wrote. There's different theories about that we'll talk about at some point.

But nonetheless it's clear that Matthew was recognized as early as 100 A.D. when the apostles were hardly cold in the grave. The church recognized him as the author. Irenaeus writing around 180 A.D. said Matthew also published a book of the gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there.

So they would say that Peter and Paul were in Rome and Matthew is still back in Palestine among the Hebrews and he is writing a gospel for them in their own dialect initially. Origen who wrote about 285 A.D. and he cited by Eusebius he says as I have understood from tradition respecting the four gospels which are the only undisputed

ones in the whole church of God throughout the world. The first was written according to Matthew who was once a toll collector but later an apostle of Jesus Christ.

He published it for those who became believers from Judaism since it was composed in the Hebrew language. So you can see a lot of different early church fathers confirming the same thing written in Hebrew or technically Aramaic. By the way in the New Testament when it sometimes says he said in Hebrew Eli, Eli, Lama, Sabach, and here's something like that.

It's actually Aramaic but because the Hebrew people the Hebrew language had become sort of a dead language by the time of Christ and was largely had evolved into the Aramaic language. So that's why they're using the word Hebrew to speak of it. Now when was it written.

Well we don't know for sure. As I said the early church fathers believe that Matthew is the first gospel written. I'm inclined to believe them at least in its original form in Aramaic.

Now the Greek version of it might have been translated into its present form sometime after afterward. I would certainly be afterwards but in its original form it's very probable that it was the first one written. That's why the church fathers always thought it was the first one written.

Now modern scholars as I mentioned often believe most all of them believe that Mark was the first gospel written. I'm more inclined to go with the church fathers. They were closer to the time.

They they actually were not very far removed from the apostles themselves. So I'm I'm thinking they know more than modern scholars do. Modern scholars say that Mark was the first one written because they're trying to account for material that is found in both Matthew and Luke which might have its origin in Mark.

But I won't get into that now. I believe their assumptions are unnecessary to follow and it's not really in our purview to consider what's called the Markan priority which means Mark being the first gospel. Suffice it to say that I'm out of step with most scholarship in this respect because scholars do almost all say Mark was first but the church fathers all say Matthew is first.

And I'm thinking that Matthew and Mark wrote in different parts of the world. Mark certainly wrote in Rome and Matthew in Israel and there's a good chance they never saw each other's work and that whichever one was first we don't know. But we'll go with the church fathers in the absence of any better testimony than that.

One thing that suggests that the gospels were all written pretty early at least the synoptic gospels Matthew Mark and Luke is that they all record Jesus prediction of the



destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. Jesus said this as he was leaving the temple in Matthew 24. It's also recorded Mark 13 and Luke 21. He's walking out of the temple.

His disciples are marveling at the architecture the huge stones that it was built from. And Jesus said you see these stones. I tell you not one stone is going to be left standing on another.

They'll all be thrown down. He predicted the destruction of the temple which did occur 40 years later in 70. They asked him on the hillside well when will these things be.

And he had he gave them a discourse we call the Olivet discourse. And he said this generation will not pass before all these things are fulfilled which again was true. Now the interesting thing is that Matthew Mark and Luke all record this conversation but not one of them says and this was fulfilled when the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem.

Now the gospel writers are very fond of pointing out when prophecy is fulfilled. Matthew especially. When Matt when Jesus does something if there's something in the Old Testament that predict that Matthew and that was because the prophet said this fulfilled what the prophet said and that it might be fulfilled which was written in the prophet.

These guys liked to point out fulfilled prophecy and there's nothing more remarkable as far as a prophecy that came true. Then Jesus saying that Jerusalem would be destroyed in that generation. There is no way of knowing that would happen.

But if Jerusalem had been standing for you know well at that time about 600 years since it had been rebuilt. And and the Romans they've been in charge of things for about 100 years at that time. Who could have predicted that the Romans would destroy Jerusalem within that generation.

It happened just 40 years later. You'd think that if the gospel writers were writing after the destruction of Jerusalem they'd want to include that. He predicted it.

We recorded his prediction and it actually happened as anyone can tell who knows the history. Now we can say that because we live after 70 AD. But the writers of the gospels apparently didn't write after 70 AD or there's no accounting for why they'd leave that that point out.

Which means that Matthew Mark and Luke almost certainly all wrote before a D 70. Which is we don't know. You know N.T. Wright was asked you know about the date of the writing of the gospels.

He said very correctly. We really don't know. We really don't know the exact dates of the writing of any of the gospels.

Technically they could have been written at any time from 50 AD to 150 AD as far as our manuscript evidence is concerned. Now of course they couldn't have been written as late as 150 AD or even 100 AD. If they're written by their traditional authors and there's good reason they were.

But he's just saying that as far as scholars can prove they can't prove the exact time they were written. And if you go on the Internet and look up you know the date of writing of different New Testament books it's always on you know the liberals always write these things. They've got some of these gospels being written in the second century and things like that which means they don't believe that Matthew Mark and Luke wrote them.

That's not unusual for liberal scholars. They'll do anything they can to undermine the Bible. But the truth is the early Christians who actually lived close to the time said they were written by Matthew Mark Luke and John.

And therefore in the first century and I would say from the internal evidence Matthew Mark and Luke which do record the prediction but not the fulfillment about the destruction of Jerusalem. They're a very big important indicator that all those gospels written before 80 70 which means in the lifetime of many many people who had seen Jesus. So you know in other words these books were circulating back when there's a lot of people around who could have said wait a minute.

I don't remember anyone going around healing people and preaching to thousands on the hillsides. I don't remember that if it wasn't true. Or say yeah I do remember him and he didn't say what you said.

You know he didn't do that. In other words these stories were circulating at a time when there could be plenty of people who could have falsified them if they weren't true. But no one did because they were true.

Anyway I think the before 70 AD date is we can say with certainty of all three gospels including Matthew. OK. And the purpose of Matthew running seems to be to convince his Jewish countrymen that Jesus was in fact the Messiah fulfilling prophecy.

Now Matthew has characteristics that are unique to Matthew that you won't find in the other gospels. That's true of each gospel. Each gospel writer was his own man and wrote as he chose selected the material arranged the material.

They all knew the material but they some left things out and others included. I mean that's what you'd expect if you read the story of the Revolutionary War or the Civil War. Different historians are going to include details that others leave out.

Nobody can record everything that happened. And like John said at the end of his gospel if everything Jesus said and did was recorded the earth itself couldn't contain the books. So none of the gospel writers are claiming to write everything that Jesus said and did.

They're each selecting as all historians must. Which things do I think are important to my purpose to include and what things can I pass over. Well there's about 39 days of Jesus life that are recorded.

Now they actually cover a period of three and a half years. There's a three and a half year period but not every day is recorded about 39 different days. And the activities of those days are recorded and each gospel writer selects which of those things they're going to include.

Now the characteristics of Matthew which make it unique as far as the other gospels are concerned is Matthew gives more attention than the other gospels do to fulfilled prophecy. And that's because he wants the Jewish people to recognize that Jesus fulfilled messianic prophecy that he is the Messiah. He's not just somebody remarkable that came along and did amazing and unique things.

He is somebody that was predicted that Jews have been anticipating him for hundreds of years. Lots of remarkable people show up and do things and make their mark on history. And Jesus certainly did.

But nobody except Jesus who came and made such a mark could reasonably claim that for hundreds of years prophets had been describing what he would be like and what he would do. And so Matthew likes to point out how often that is so. There are over 50 actually 57 quotations in Matthew from the Old Testament.

Twelve of those about about a fifth about 20 percent of those are from Isaiah alone. So Isaiah is the one Old Testament book from which Matthew seems to want to quote most although all in all the New Testament over Psalms is quoted more often than Isaiah. But Isaiah is second for the whole Bible whole New Testament quoting.

But Matthew quotes Isaiah about a fifth of the time. And you know he's only got 28 chapters and for there to be 57 quotations from the Old Testament on average that's like two per chapter. So it's it's pretty thick with references to fulfill prophecies.

Most of them are from the Septuagint. Now the Septuagint is not the Hebrew Bible but the Greek Bible. About three centuries before Christ Jews in Alexandria Egypt decided to translate their Hebrew Bible into Greek and they did so in that that translation into Greek is called the Septuagint.

Now the writers of the New Testament could have quoted from the Hebrew Bible but the New Testament in Greek. I mean the Old Testament in Greek was more in circulation that partly because they're in a Greek speaking time. And therefore if they're going to quote from the Hebrew Bible they're going to translate themselves.

Why reinvent the wheel it already had been done three centuries earlier and if they're writing in Greek why not just quote from the Greek Bible. And so most of them are

although there are a few that are quoted from the Hebrew Bible. And when he quotes from the Hebrew Bible he introduces those quotes with the phrase that it might be fulfilled which is interesting that it might be fulfilled.

He says before he quotes something from the Hebrew Bible the rest of the quotes in the Greek Bible. Now that's interesting but what it's significant is I can't tell you I can't tell you why that would be significant but it's a notable observation. Obviously he quote he he reads the Old Testament as if it's a book about Christ even though the Old Testament was written hundreds of years before Christ.

Matthew reads the Old Testament as a Christian book not a Jewish book primarily. Although it is Jewish but he sees it as teaching Christian truths and sometimes he applies the prophecies in a way that might seem strange to us because he is making a Christian application of them. Now I said this is the most Jewish gospel.

Well one of the features of that is that he quotes the Jewish Bible more than other gospels do. But it's also that there's features in Matthew that show his sensitivity to the Jews and what kinds of things might offend them and so forth. What kind of things would intrigue them what kind of things would be important to them.

He for example in the genealogy of Joseph he points out in the very first verse of Matthew the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David the son of Abraham. Well son of David is a very important messianic feature. The Messiah had to be descended from David.

This is the son of Abraham and he starts with Abraham and he goes up through the generations to Joseph. Now Abraham of course is the ancestor of the Jews. When Luke who's not writing to Jews gives his genealogy in Luke chapter 3 he takes it all the way back to Adam.

In Luke 3 23 to the end of the chapter he connects the genealogy all the way back to Adam because he's not writing to Jews but Gentiles and Adam is the ancestor of all of us. But when he's writing to Jews Matthew only takes it back to Abraham because that's all they cared about. You know he's the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and David.

So this the way he frames his genealogy is very clearly directed toward Jewish concerns. He emphasizes David's the relation of Jesus to David as I said one of the most important features of the Messiah is he had to be descended from David. And in Matthew Jesus is referred to nine times as the son of David.

In contrast the fact that Mark and Luke each refer to Jesus as the son of David three times three times each. So Mark and Luke refer to him as the son of David but not with the emphasis that Matthew has. Matthew does nine times rather than three.

And that's obviously again to focus on the promises made to David which the Jews would consider extremely significant. Jesus in Matthew affirms the Torah that is the Jewish law in the Sermon on the Mount. Chapter five of Matthew verses 17 18 or 18 19 he says do not think that I came to destroy the law and the prophets.

I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them. Later on in chapter 19 when the Pharisees ask him about divorce and can you divorce your wife for any reason he says well don't you remember the remember what it says you know back in the Torah that God made them male and female and said for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The two should be one flesh.

He affirms the Torah as something they should be already familiar with and should be following in in chapter 23 and verse 23. He says woe to you scribes and Pharisees because you keep you pay your tithes of mint and ash and cumin but you neglect the weightier matters of the Torah which are justice and mercy and faithfulness. So here he's affirming the Torah.

You want to know what the Bible what God wants you to think about marriage and divorce. Go back to the Torah. You know you don't know what God's complaint is against you.

You're neglecting the weightier matters of the Torah justice mercy and faithfulness. I didn't come to destroy the target to fulfill it. Now of course fulfilling it means there is a change in the relationship God's people have to it because it's fulfilled now.

But he did not come to do harm to it or to diss it. He didn't come to somehow criticize the Torah. And that's of course important to a Jewish readership because if the Messiah seems to be coming against the Torah.

Well the Jews already have a loyalty to the Torah and he better not. He's going to have to pass muster. He's going to have to have a respect for that.

And Matthew points out that he did. In fact in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says to his disciples when you bring your gift to the altar if you remember your brother has something against you. Go leave your gift at the altar go make peace then come offer it.

He's assuming that is that his disciples are going to be offering animal sacrifices as they did because they were Jews. Matthew includes that the other gospels do not because of course their readers who are Gentiles didn't go to the altar didn't go to the temple in the first mission of the 12 when he sent them out on a short term outreach in Chapter 10. He said to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And later when a Gentile woman was seeking his help for her demon possessed daughter says I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In other words it's pointing out that by the time Matthew wrote this of course the gospel had gone out to the

Gentiles to the math. You know Paul had taken the gospel of the Gentiles.

It was quite controversial actually among the Jews that Paul was including Gentiles and Matthew wasn't against the inclusion of Gentiles either. But in case the Jews didn't like Christianity because it seemed to be not distinctively Jewish enough. Matthew twice points out that Jesus said that he's going to the lost sheep of the house of Israel first.

And so that would that would perhaps palliate some some Jewish ruffle. Here Matthew in writing also assumes that certain Jewish customs are known to his readers. Mark doesn't.

For example in Matthew 15 he mentions that Matthew mentions that Jesus was criticized because his disciples didn't wash their hands properly. Well every Jew knew what that meant. The rabbis had all these rules about washing your hands which Gentiles didn't have.

Now when Mark tells the same story in Mark 7 he says the Pharisees criticized Jesus for the disciples not washing their hands properly. Then Mark says because the Jews they wash all the time. They all they wash their cups their bowls their couches their tables and whenever they come in from outside they wash their hands.

In other words Mark is writing to a Gentile who might not know these Jewish customs. So he has got to explain the criticism came because the Jews do these kinds of things. Matthew when he tells the same story he doesn't have to explain that the Jews do these things.

He just says Jesus was criticized for this and every Jew would know. I get it. I know what these customs are.

Why weren't they keeping them. You know I mean you can see that he assumes his reader knows these kinds of things. Likewise in Matthew 17 24 people approach Peter about whether they pay the temple tax or not.

A Gentile wouldn't know what the temple tax is. But Matthew assumes that his readers know. He doesn't have to explain it.

Also phylacteries in Matthew 23 5. Jesus mocked the Pharisees because they made their phylacteries large. A phylactery was a item that the Jews the devout Jews would wear. It's like a little pouch or a box that contained scriptural passages and they would actually strap it to their forehead or to their head.

You'll still find this done in Israel today among the Hasidic Jews. They they wear these phylacteries. Now the average Gentile would be unfamiliar with that.

That's only really probably done in Israel. But Jesus makes reference to phylacteries and Matthew records it and doesn't explain what those are. Mark and Luke don't.

So you can see that Matthew thinks they'll be familiar with these things. Jesus said the Pharisees were like whitewashed sepulchers. Now someone in a Gentile land wouldn't know what that's referring to.

But to the Jews a grave a sepulcher is a grave. A grave and dead bodies and dead bones are unclean. If you touch them you're made unclean and you can't for example fellowship in the in the temple for a week until you're clean again.

Now when Jews were coming from all over the world to their pilgrimages to Jerusalem they wouldn't necessarily know. All around the region which caves had bones in them and which did not. And therefore the Jews of the region before the festivals would go around and whitewash the the caves that were actually tombs.

That way somebody who didn't know would say oh don't go to the bathroom in there man. There's bones in there you'll be unclean you won't be able to worship at the festival. So whitewashed tombs were familiar to Jewish people probably not to Gentile people.

In Matthew 24 Jesus talks about how they're going to need to flee from Jerusalem. He says pray that your flight will not be on the Sabbath. Now the same sermon is given in Mark and Luke but there's no mention of the Sabbath there.

Sabbath concerns would be Jewish concerns and therefore his audience would be interested in that. Perhaps the most important thing is that Matthew alone uses a term which the Jews would understand and Gentiles would not. And that's the term kingdom of heaven.

Even modern Christians don't understand the term. Because they don't know the use of Jewish euphemisms for the word God. The Jews used many words to substitute for the word God.

Because they felt like if you use the word God too frequently it'll become too ordinary. And you want to keep that kind of a sacred word not that you can't use it. You can but it's maybe wise to substitute other words for it so you don't cheapen it by making it too ordinary a word.

And so the Jews would substitute the word God with things like the most high or the Ancient of Days or other terms like that. But one of the things they would use is the word heaven. When Jesus said to the Pharisees the baptism of John where do you think it was from was it from heaven or from men from heaven means from God or from men.

From God or men but they use the word heaven instead of God. Likewise when the prodigal son came home he said father I've sinned against heaven. He means of course I've sinned against God.

So the word heaven was used by Jews to substitute for the word God. Now in all the gospels Jesus speaks about the kingdom of God. Only in Matthew do you read the term kingdom of heaven.

And what's interesting is if you take the places where Matthew has Jesus talk about the kingdom of heaven and look at the parallel passages in Mark and Luke which tell the same record the same sayings they have the term kingdom of God. Because Mark and Luke were not writing to Jews who would recognize that the word heaven really is a reference to God. It's just a Jewish scruple not to use the word God so much that it's substitute heaven.

Jesus no doubt as a Jew among Jews and Matthew writing to Jews retains the Jewish idiom kingdom of heaven which Jesus no doubt used. But Matthew excuse me Mark and Luke and even John when they record what Jesus said about the kingdom they clarify it for a non Jew who wouldn't understand what that means. And they use the term kingdom of God.

It's like making it plain. He's not talking about heaven. The word heaven simply is a substitute for the word God.

And only Matthew uses the term kingdom of heaven. The others do not. And that makes it very clear that Matthew is writing for Jewish people.

There's another feature of Matthew that some people think was directed toward Jewish interests and that is that the Jews Torah was made up of five books of Moses. And he received them on the mountain Mount Sinai. He received these five but he received the law.

And Matthew has taken the teachings of Jesus on from many occasions and he's gathered them into groups into discourses larger discourses five of them like the Sermon on the Mount. Some people think that when Jesus sat on the mountain began to give the sermon not that he was sort of evoking sort of like Moses giving the law from Mount Sinai. Now this is questionable.

I mean most scholars believe this is so they could be wrong but it's just something I'll mention because it's out there. And that is that you will find in Matthew that the teachings of Jesus are collected into topical groups. Now how do we know this.

Well because for example it the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew is three chapters long. In Luke it's only half a chapter long. But a lot of the material that Matthew includes that Luke doesn't in the sermon.

Luke includes those same statements in other parts of his story of the life of Jesus and Mark too. A lot of times things that Jesus said on an isolated occasion are brought in by Matthew into this collection of sayings on a topical subject. Nothing is more clear than



this when you come to Matthew 10 which is the sermon that he's given out to his disciples as he sends them out on their short term outreach.

There's a parallel to this in Luke and Jesus specifically says don't go among the Gentiles. We don't have time. If they kick you out of one city go to the next because you won't have reached all the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes before their work is interrupted.

But Matthew goes on from there which Luke does not and gives instructions about being a witness before kings and Gentiles the world over. You'll be hated by all nations for one name's sake. But Jesus didn't say that to them when he sent them on this local outreach.

Those things come from the Olivet discourse which have to do with a much later period of time. So Matthew has gathered these kinds of things up into topical collectives. These five discourses in Matthew are A the Sermon on the Mount which is chapters 5 through 7. Then there's the sending discourse in Matthew 10 that I just mentioned.

Then there is chapter 13 which is a collection of parables. By the way there's parallel chapters to this in Mark 4 and in Luke 8. But Luke 8 and Mark 4 only have a few two or three parables in them. Matthew has eight and so he's probably again gathering parables that Jesus told on other occasions on the same subject and brought them to be a collection of Jesus parables.

Likewise chapter 18 is a fourth one where he gathers things Jesus said about relationships and forgiveness and things like that. More interesting to most would be the Olivet discourse about the destruction of Jerusalem. This is in Matthew 24 through 25 and it's at least four times longer than the same discourse in Mark and Luke.

And here we have proof that Matthew has gathered material from different discourses of Jesus and put them all in place because the first part of Matthew 24 has its parallel in Luke 21. But the latter part of Matthew 24 has its parallel in a different discourse which recorded in Luke chapter 17 on a different subject. So we can see two discourses of Jesus in Luke one's in chapter 17 one's in chapter 21 and we see Matthew's put them together into a longer discourse in Matthew 24.

There's not a scholar alive that doubts that Matthew does this regularly. This is a recognized stylistic or you know arranging feature that Matthew has and he may have done it into five discourses to evoke the five books of the law. But maybe not.

Hard to say. Now even though the book is sensitive to Jews it has a lot to say about Gentiles being included. And of course writing to Jewish people about Jesus Matthew would need to include those things that let the Jews know that they're not alone.

They're not the only ones that get Jesus. They're not the only ones who get the benefit from the Messiah. The Gentiles have to be accepted in this deal too.

So we see for example that Matthew records the first visitors to Jesus at his birth are the Magi who are Gentiles probably from Persia. Now frankly Luke tells us that the first visitors were the shepherds. Matthew doesn't tell us that the Magi were the first ones to get there.

It's just the first ones he mentions. He skips over the shepherds and wants to focus on Gentiles who would come and worship the Messiah very early on. So this is in Chapter 2 of Matthew something that is focusing on the fact that Gentiles also are going to be in on this kingdom.

They're also worshippers of the Messiah. In Matthew 8 a Gentile centurion, a Roman officer over a hundred soldiers comes and wants Jesus to come heal his servant. Actually Jesus said I'll go heal him.

And the man said well I'm not really worthy to have you under my roof. Just give the command. I know he'll be better.

And Jesus marveled and said I've not found this kind of faith in all of Israel. You know this man is not an Israelite. This man's a Roman.

He's a pagan. And Jesus said this man has more faith than all the Jews I've met. That's ironic.

And then he says the next thing he says is and I say many will come from the east and the west mean Gentile lands. And they will sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In other words God's going to include Gentiles from all over the world in the kingdom.

Not just Jews. An important factor that many of the Jews did not take into consideration. He does say in Matthew 21 43 to the Jews the kingdom of God is going to be taken from you and given to a nation that brings forth the fruits of it.

Referring to the church of course which is multinational not Jewish particularly. In Matthew 22 he tells a parable that a king who invites his friends which represent the Jews to come to the wedding of his son the Messiah. They don't come.

So he sends his messengers to the highways and byways far out the Gentile world and brings them in in large numbers. So he talks about Gentiles coming in because the Jews are not responsive to the invitation to come to the Messiah. In Matthew 24 31 he says that the angels will come and gather the elect from the four winds meaning the four compass points all over the world.

Not just Jews but people from all over the world are going to be gathered into the kingdom. And then of course in Matthew 28 at the end when Jesus gives the Great Commission he says go and make disciples of all nations. The word nations is used in

contrast to Israel throughout the Bible.

There's Israel and then there's the nations the word nations is also translated Gentiles in many places. The Hebrew word going means it means nations or it means Gentiles. So go and make disciples of all the nations would suggest not just Jews.

So there's a lot of things in Matthew that that prepare the reader for the fact that the Gentiles are supposed to be in this too. But in addition to Jews and Gentiles the church is mentioned in Matthew and in no other gospel. The word church the Greek word is Ecclesia is not found in Mark Luke or John.

It's found a lot of times in the epistles of course in the book of Acts but and even the book of Revelation. But the gospels do not mention the church the Ecclesia except Matthew and he does twice. One of those times is in Matthew Chapter 16 when Jesus says upon this rock I will build my church.

By Ecclesia now the word Ecclesia was used in the Greek Old Testament to speak of Israel. In the Old Testament there is a word in the Hebrew that was translated the congregation meaning the gathering of the people of Israel the congregation of Israel. And in the Septuagint this was translated as Ecclesia.

So the word Ecclesia was already in use in the Jewish Bible and the Greek Bible for three centuries before Jesus came and the Jews were referred to as the Ecclesia. Now Jesus said I'm going to build my Ecclesia my Israel my people on this rock. That's in Matthew 16 18 and then in Matthew 18 17.

It talks about church discipline says if someone has sinned against you and he won't repent when you talk to him or when two people talk to him then take it before the Ecclesia. Now of course he says if they don't listen then then he's excommunicated. Now in Jesus time excommunications were done by the synagogue not by him and his disciples.

He didn't have an organization. He just had a bunch of ragtag fishermen and such that followed him around. But he says I'm going to build my church and they will be the authority that decides who's in and who's out.

Not that not these rabbis in the synagogue who might kick you up. John Chapter 9 talks about the synagogue kicking people out who believed in Jesus. In fact the blind man born blind that Jesus was kicked out.

But Jesus says no in the future it's my church. It's my Ecclesia that will be making those decisions who's in and who's out. Not not the synagogues.

So he also gives the church the authority to baptize and teach the nations in the Great Commission. Well the Gospel of Matthew is dominated by the subject of the kingdom the

kingdom of heaven as he often calls it. Though five times he uses the term kingdom of God.

Thirty three times the term kingdom of heaven is used. And five times the term kingdom of God is used but they're used interchangeably. For example when Jesus said about the rich young ruler who refused to come on Christ's terms he said to his disciples I tell you it's harder for a rich man.

He said how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. But he says again I said you it's easier for a camel to go through the avenue than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. So he says the same thing twice.

First time using the term kingdom of heaven. Second time using the term kingdom of God obviously interchangeably. But Matthew's preference and probably because it was Jesus preference and Matthew is simply recording him without paraphrase was to use the term kingdom of heaven in 33 of the occurrences and kingdom of God in five only.

Now he treats it as a present thing. He doesn't treat the kingdom of God as a future thing. Jesus first words recorded are the kingdom of God is at hand.

That is near. And he continues to teach that through his ministry. But also the kingdom of God has a future fulfillment.

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. Jesus said it's a small thing that grows into a big thing. It's like leaven in a lump of dough.

Again a little bit of something inserted into an environment that affects the whole environment. The kingdom of God is the people of Christ the society that Christ is king over. They're his subjects the disciples and the collective of the disciples are the ecclesia.

They are in fact the ones that are following Christ and are his kingdom now. And it's a growing movement. That's why it's like a mustard seed grows into a great tree.

But it grows and grows until in the end. He says he will return in Matthew 25 31. He says the sun man will return and he'll come in the power and glory of his father and so forth.

And he'll gather all the nations and separate them as a man separates his sheep from his goats. And he says he'll say to those who are the sheep inherit the kingdom which is prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Now that's at the end.

The kingdom of God is present from the time Jesus begins preaching it but it's not fully universalized until Jesus returns. And that's how Matthew treats the subject. That's how Jesus.

There is an emphasis in Matthew on the coming destruction of Jerusalem which is

actually found in all the gospels. But of course to the Jews that'd be the most pertinent message. The Jews prior to 70 AD when he was writing and earlier still when Jesus was preaching were facing a Holocaust.

That was going to destroy their nation. Their temple is going to be destroyed. Their cities will be destroyed.

A million of them are going to be wiped out by Roman invaders and then the rest will be taken away and captive in the nation. Israel is going to cease to exist for 1900 years. I mean this is a big crisis they were facing and it's a big emphasis in Matthew.

And it's treated both with statements Jesus makes about it and with parables and actions. For example when he cursed the fig tree that was that was a picture of Israel shriveling up and having its end. When Jesus talked about the kingdom is taken from you and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruit of it.

That's talking about the destruction of Israel and because after he told this parable about the vineyard owner whose servants and his son were killed by the tenants of the vineyard. Jesus says well what do you think the owner is going to do to those tenants when he comes. And they say he's going to destroy them and lease out his vineyard to others who bring forth the fruits.

That's right. Therefore the kingdom of God is taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth fruits of that is destroying them and giving it to someone else. There's a reference to that in the story about the wedding feast where the king invited his friends first and they didn't come.

So he went out and invited the Gentiles. It says in Matthew 22 7 when they when they rejected the king's invitation it says he was angry and he sent out his armies and destroyed them and burned up their city. A very clear reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.

It's not the end of the parable. It's the end of the friends. You know it's then he goes out to the Gentiles and brings them in.

So there's a lot of things in Matthew especially Matthew 24 where Jesus predicts not one stone of the temple be left standing on another and it'll happen in that generation. There's strong emphasis on that which of course would be an important emphasis for the Jews to take to heart. I'm going to give you one more bit of information and we're going to take a break.

If you don't want to stay for the rest of it you can use that break as a time to escape. It'll only be a brief break five ten minutes and then we're going to take the rest. But one thing I want to cover first is that the use of the term father with reference to God is very prominent in Matthew.

It's also very prominent in John by the way. In fact John uses the word father to refer to God more often than any of the Gospels do. But the three synoptic Gospels Matthew Mark and Luke although they're very similar in their content to each other much more than any of them are similar to John.

These three are very similar to each other and yet there's a disproportionate emphasis on the word father in Matthew referring to God. The expression your father my father the father are found in all the Gospels. But for example the term your father is found only once in Mark four times in Luke and 10 times in Matthew.

So only once in Mark do we read about your father only four times in Luke but 10 times in Matthew which is roughly the same length as Luke. But disproportionate use of your father the term my father when Jesus spoke of God is found three times in Mark zero in Luke but 13 times in Matthew. Which is again you add up your father and my father that's 23 occurrences in Matthew in Mark only four and in Luke only for 23 verses four and those other two combined.

Then there's the expression the father which is found one time in Mark three times in Luke and three times in Matthew. So Matthew has the same number of the father as Luke does. But really when you add it all up the term father is being used 26 times in Matthew five times and Mark and seven times in Luke.

So you know it's very disproportionate. Now this is significant. Matthew writing to Jews because the Jews didn't usually call God father.

This was much too familiar language. They felt like it was not reverent. They didn't refer to God as father.

In the Old Testament there's a few places where God is likened to a father of Israel the nation but not a personal father. Remember when Jesus said my father works here too and I work. It says they took up stones to stone him.

And you know he said why do you stone me. What do you want to tell me. He says well because you are man you're making yourself equal with God.

You're calling yourself the son of God. People don't talk about themselves as the son of God. That's much too familiar.

He's the great king. We're the groveling slaves down here. He's the creator of the universe.

We're the little bugs that he created. And in a sense those things are true. But the emphasis of Jesus mystery was that great creator actually loves the little bugs that he created and actually welcomes them to relate to him as children with all the privileges of children.

This is something that is a radical emphasis in Jesus. Again Matthew brings out much more than Mark and Luke do although of course John does even more. John has over 80 times that the word father is used referring to God.

So John wins the prize for the most frequent references to God as father but of the synoptic gospels which in most respects are fairly similar to each other. Matthew is way ahead of the others in his usage of the term father. So these are some of the things that where Matthew is unique and differs from the other gospels.

Now as I said I'm going to give you a break and I'm going to go through rapidly the contents of the book of Matthew and point out which things he includes that no other gospels include. Might as well. I mean you're going to read if you read Matthew Mark and Luke you're going to read a lot of the same stories twice three times depending on which gospel you read.

Matthew and Mark will have some of the same Matthew Luke have some same Matthew Mark Luke will have some all three. But there are some things that are only in Matthew and therefore they make up the unique material in Matthew and so I'm going to go through and identify that.