

The Gospel according to Matthew

parallel passages in **Mark**

1:1-2:23	Genealogy and the infancy narratives	
3:1-4:25	<i>A new beginning</i> : Jesus' baptism and temptation Jesus' message and the call of first disciples	1:1-13 + 1:14-20 +
5:1-7:29	<u>Discourse 1</u> : a new teaching - the Sermon on the Mount	
8:1-9:34	<i>Jesus' ministry towards Israel</i> the healing of a leper, the centurion's servant , Peter's mother-in-law the stilling of the storm; the Gadarene demoniac; the paralytic the call of Levi; Jairus' daughter and the bleeding woman two blind men; a mute	1:40-45, 29-34 4:35-4, 5:1-20; 2:1-12 2:13-17; 5:21-43 8:22-26/10:46-52
9:35-10:42	<u>Discourse 2</u> : mission extended - the sending of the twelve disciples mission instructions and warnings	6:6-11; 3:13-19 cf. 13:9-13; 8:34f; 9:37
11:1-12:50	<i>Growing opposition to Jesus</i> Who is John? unrepentant cities; Jesus thanks to the Father; dispute over eating/healing on Sabbath; "My Servant" controversy about Beelzebul; request for a sign; true family of Jesus	2:23-28; 3:1-6 3:19-35; cf. 8:11-13
13:1-53	<u>Discourse 3</u> : opposition explained - parables of the kingdom the Sower and interpretation, the secret seed, the mustard seed the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, the drag-net	4:1-32
13:54-17:21	Founding of a <i>new community</i> Rejection at Nazareth; death of John; feeding of 5000 walking on water, healings, the question of cleanness the Syrophenician woman, a deaf-mute, feeding of 4000 a sign refused; the leaven of the Pharisees; Peter's confession 1st Passion prediction & teaching; Transfiguration; the epileptic boy	6:1-6; 6:14-29, 30-44 6:45-56, 7:1-23 7:24-37; 8:1-10 8:11-21; 8:27-30 8:31-9:1; 9:2-13; 14-29
17:22-18:35	<u>Discourse 4</u> : instructions for the new community - on discipleship 2nd Passion prediction & teaching; the temple tax ; Who is greatest? forgiveness in the Church, parable of the two debtors	9:30-32; 9:33-50
19:1-22:46	Controversies <i>towards and in Jerusalem</i> on divorce; blessing of children; the great commandments, a rich man the parable of the labourers ; 3rd Passion prediction & teaching two blind men; Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and cleansing of temple dispute about Jesus' authority, parable of the two sons parables of the vineyard, the wedding banquet ; paying tax to Caesar questions about the resurrection, the great commandment, David's son	10:2-12; 13-16; 17-31 10:32-45 cf. 10:46-52; 11:1-25 11:27-33 12:1-12; 12:13-17 12:18-27, 28-34, 35-37
23:1-24:36	Woes against the Pharisees, Jerusalem and the temple	cf. 12:37-40; 13:1-37
24:45-25:46	<u>Discourse 5</u> : <i>the end things</i> - on judgement and salvation the coming of the Son of Man; parables of the faithful steward, the wise and foolish virgins, the talents, the sheep and the goats	
26:1-27:66	The passion and death of Jesus the conspiracy and anointing at Bethany, Last Supper, Gethsemane Jesus' arrest, trail by Caiaphas, Peter's denial, taken to Pilate death of Judas ; trail by Pilate, crucifixion, burial, guarding the tomb	14:1-11, 12-31, 32-42 14:43-52, 53-72, 15:1 15:2-15, 16-41, 42-47
28:1-20	The resurrection and appearance of Jesus the empty tomb; bribing of soldiers; Jesus' appearance on a mountain	16:1-10

Structure. Matthew recycles some 90% of Mark's gospel and broadly follows his order, but carefully gathering material of a common type or similar theme together. Jesus' initial ministry of teaching and healing (Chs. 4-10) meets with mixed results. As opposition grows (Chs. 11-13), attention falls increasingly on a new community formed around the disciples and, after Peter's confession (16:13-20), on the prospect of the cross and the demands of being a follower of Jesus (Chs. 14-18). The controversies in Jerusalem, with the religious leaders and Jesus' cleansing of the temple, lead into a section concerned with the end-time events of salvation and judgement (Chs. 23-25). Distinctively, Matthew follows sections of narrative action with five blocks of teaching on a specific theme (discourses) that relate to what has gone before. Each ends with the formula "when Jesus had finished these sayings" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1) and include a quantity of material not in Mark.

One born king of the Jews. Matthew is generally recognised as the most “Jewish” of the gospels. In a Genesis style narrative, he gives the genealogy (1:1-17) and an account of the miraculous/divine origin (1:18-25, esp. vv. 18, 20) of the one who is introduced as “King of the Jews”/Messiah (1:1, 17, 18; 2:2, 4) and the fulfilment of prophecy (1:22f; 2:6; 15, 17, 23). This “Son of David” (cf. 1:1; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-1; 21:9, 15) is shown to be descended from King David (cf. 1:6, 20) and born in David’s city (2:1). He recapitulates Israel’s time in Egypt (2:13-15), yet his genealogy includes four women with Gentile connections (1:3, 5, 6), he is worshipped by foreign kings (2:1-12) and will ultimately be a light to all nations (28:19), fulfilling the heritage of Abraham (1:1). His name, Jesus, means “God saves” (2:21). As such the presence of God is very much disclosed in him (1:23, cf. 28:20) rather than being kept hidden as in Mark. In Matthew’s version he is publicly revealed at his baptism as God’s Son (3:17; cp. Mk 1:11), is explicitly tempted (4:3, 6) and acclaimed (16:16; cp. Mk 8:29) as such. Throughout the gospel he receives peoples’ worship (2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17).

More than another Moses. Like Moses, Jesus escapes from an evil king intent on slaughtering babies (2:16-18; cp. Exod 1:15-2:10). He faces forty day-years of testing in the wilderness (4:1-10; cp. Deut 8:2), answering the Devil with “Moses” words from Deuteronomy (4:4 = Deut 8:3; 4:7 = Deut 6:16; 4:10 = Deut 6:13). Like Moses, he teaches from a mountain (5:1; cp. Exod 19:20; See also 24:3 and 28:16-20) and gives five sermons (discourses) echoing the five books of the Pentateuch ascribed to Moses. But he goes to live in Capernaum (4:13) to fulfil the promise that the Gentiles will also come to the light in him (4:14-16; cf. 28:20). Matthew makes explicit the fact that this new Teacher is a fulfilment of the OT scriptures (1:22f; 2:15; 2:17f; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4f; 27:9f) and of “the law and the prophets” (5:17-20; cf. 7:12); he gives a new interpretation of the law (5:21-48). Oddly only Jesus’ opponents call him “teacher” (8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36). Those who call upon him use the title “Lord” – the designation used in the Bible for God (8:2, 6, 8, 21; 25; 9:28; 14:28, 30; 15:22, 25, 27; 16:22; 17:4, 15; 18:21; 20:30, 31, 33; 26:22). Matthew also removes Mark’s references to Jesus’ human feelings (Mk 1:41; 3:5; 8:12; 10:14, 21), his inability to do miracles in Nazareth (Mk 6:6, cp. Mt 13:58) and his questions which might imply his lack of knowledge (Mk 5:9, 30; 6:38; 9:12, 16, 21, 33; 10:3; 14:14).

The new teaching. Although the five discourses include some sayings of Jesus from Mark (and Luke), they represent distinctive Matthean constructions. The central discourse, the parables of the kingdom (Ch.13), concludes with the acceptance or rejection of Jesus (13:51-58) and becomes kind of turning point in the narrative. Addressed to the disciples, much of the teaching is relevant to the life of the Church. The Sermon on the Mount (chs.5-7) emphasises the new law of Jesus (5:1-48), the practice of prayer, fasting and alms-giving (6:1-18), and the importance of trusting God and obeying Jesus’ words (6:19-7:27). The Mission charge (Ch.10) instructs Jesus’ followers to continue his work and warns of the opposition and persecution they will meet on the way. The parables (Ch.13) speak of the hidden growth of God’s kingdom and the divisions it brings. Ch.18 offers guidance on the ethics of the community, which is to be marked by humility (18:1-5), care for others (18:6-14), discipline (18:15-20) and forgiveness (18:21-35). The final discourse sets down a sequence of woes against the Jewish leaders (Ch.23) and describes the events of the End, which bring judgement and salvation through the coming of the King (Chs.24-25).

The new community. A key theme in Matthew (referred to some 22 times) is the OT/rabbinical idea of “righteousness”, which is something to be sought, striven for and practised (e.g. 5:6, 10, 20; 6:33) and the heritage into which Jesus is born (1:19; 3:15). It involves love of neighbour (7:12; cf. 22:34-40), mercy (9:13; 12:7) and devotion to (5:16; 6:1-18) and trust in “the Father” (6:25-32; 7:7-11; 10:28-31). The destiny of those whose righteous “exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees” (5:20) is the “kingdom of heaven” (a phrase preferred to Mark’s “kingdom of God”). The kingdom is proclaimed by John the Baptist (3:2), by Jesus (4:17) and by the disciples (10:7). It is a reality to be prayed for and sought (6:10, 33; 13:44-46), which is present (12:28) and growing in the midst (13:24-33) where the Son of Man will reign in power (13:37-43; 25:31-46). Because of their reaction to Jesus the kingdom is being taken away from Israel (21:43) and handed over to the Church as the successor of the disciples and built upon Peter “the Rock” (16:18-19). (Note Matthew’s unique use of *ecclesia* to describe this new community: 16:18; 18:17). Despite their “little faith” (6:30; 8:26; 14:30f; 16:8; 17:20) and betrayals of Jesus at the end

(26:31, 56, 69-75), unlike in Mark, the disciples understand Jesus (13:51; 16:12; 17:13; cp. Mk 6:52; 8:21; 9:31), learn from him (11:25-7), worship (14:33) and obey him (21:6; 26:19; 28:16).

Replacement theology. Matthew portrays the growing conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel, but in a more systematic way than Mark. In Chs. 8-9 Matthew gathers the miracle stories together in three groups of three, concluding with the crowd's observation that "never has anything like this been seen in Israel", but the Pharisees dismiss it all as the work of the devil (9:33-34). Though Jesus sends his disciples to minister to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:5-6), "this generation" does not respond positively (11:16-19) or repent (11:20-24). A prophecy of salvation being opened up to the Gentiles (12:17-21) leads into further controversies with the Pharisees (12:22-30, 33-37, 38-42) and the parables (Ch.13), which are about the separation and judgement of those who receive the kingdom and those who do not. Further opposition comes from the Pharisees in 15:1-20 compared with the faith of the Gentile woman (15:21-28). Whereas they put Jesus to the test (16:1-4), the disciples understand (16:12) and Peter is commended for his perceptive confession of Jesus (16:13-17). Though sent to the "lost house of Israel" (15:24), Jesus' kingdom and his authority is now handed over to the Church (16:19; 18:17-19). The ecclesial discourse follows (Ch.18), building upon Mark's three passion predictions and their associated teaching (16:21-26; 17:22f; 20:17-28). The episodes on the way to Jerusalem (Ch.19) and the clashes there with the Pharisees (Chs.21-22) broadly follow Mark, but Matthew adds two parables (21:28-32; 22:1-10) to that of the tenants (21:33-44) which are related to their rejection of Jesus, a fact underlined in 21:45. The whole concludes with Jesus' unbridled condemnation of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees (Ch.23), the teaching about the apocalypse (24:1-29) and the (apparently delayed) coming of the Son of Man in power (24:30-51) and Matthew's three parables about the last judgement (Ch.25). The casting out of the unready, the unproductive and the unresponsive probably represents the separation of the Jesus movement from the synagogue Judaism that grew up after the destruction of the Temple in AD70 (note "your"/"their" synagogue: 4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34 compared with "my" church: 16:18 and the lament for Jerusalem, 23:37-39).

A destiny fulfilled. Just as the church will suffer rejection and persecution (cf. 10:16-22; 24:9-12), so did its Lord and Teacher. As in Mark, Jesus is the suffering Messiah, destined to die. Matthew mostly follows Mark's Passion account, but he softens the sense of Jesus' victim-hood. Jesus predicts his death a fourth time (26:1-2), identifies Judas as the betrayer (26:25) and embraces his destiny though he has power to resist (25:50-53) in order to fulfil the scriptures (25:54). Judas' story (esp. 26:15; 27:5) also fits with the pattern prophesied in Zechariah (11:12-13) and Jeremiah (32:6-15). Pilate's hand-washing in Matthew (27:24) shifts responsibility for Jesus' death on to the Jewish leaders, who willingly accept the role (27:25). Jesus is mocked as King (27:27-30) and as Son of God in an echo of the temptation narrative (27:40, 46). Though he dies in darkness and abandonment (27:45-46), supernatural events attend Jesus' death - an earthquake (27:51) and a resurrection of the saints (27:52) - and many join the centurion in confessing him to be the Son of God (27:54). A supernatural triumph for Jesus follows, with an earthquake rending his tomb (28:2) and two miraculous appearances of his risen form (28:9, 17). The women remain afraid, but now obey and tell others about Jesus (28:8): and this will be the role of the disciples and the new Church (28:19). Mark's enigmatic wonder-worker has become a Teacher-Messiah and present Lord, worshipped, obeyed and proclaimed to all the nations.