

Introduction to Matthew

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Welcome. I am Rabbi Pedro Aviles, and I want to talk to you about the Gospel of Matthew. This Gospel has unique purpose and characteristics that will help you to understand and to gain further knowledge of the Scriptures. I want to give you several purposes and characteristics.

First of all, one of the main purposes for Matthew's writing is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah—the Anointed One, the King. Another purpose in Matthew's writing was to present the Gospel to the Jewish people. He had them in mind as he wrote and penned, as led by the Spirit, the teachings and works of Christ.

A unique characteristic of Matthew is that he includes Aramaic language and ideas throughout—language the Jewish people would have understood, requiring no translation. When we look at the genealogy that Matthew includes, we find that he connects it starting with Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation.

Another purpose or characteristic of Matthew is that he arranges his data to demonstrate that Jesus, Yeshua, fulfills the Messianic promises found in the Old Testament. It's a wonderful book. Matthew presents Jesus—and this is what I want you to catch—Yeshua as the Messiah-King. We have many Old Testament prophecies that are fulfilled, or at least Matthew wants to point them out in his book. He will often say through his writing, “as it is written” or “in fulfillment of,” or something like that, regarding an Old Testament Scripture or prophecy.

I'll give you a few. The birth of Jesus is connected to David—the Davidic covenant—and that's seen right from the very beginning. Matthew 1:1, right off, Matthew is connecting Messiah Jesus, Yeshua, to David. It's a fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7:13. Even the virgin birth, that divine birth right at the very beginning—Matthew 1:23—connects it to Isaiah 7:14.

And through and through—I'll give you a few more—through and through Matthew, he repeatedly points out how Jesus fulfills those Messianic promises. Jesus' name, Emmanuel—God with us. Jesus was born in Bethlehem—that comes from a promissory prophecy in Micah 5:2. Like Abraham and the Israelites, here's another one: Jesus traveled in and out of Egypt—that's Hosea 11:1. Jesus was said to come out of Nazareth—Jesus was from there.

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, Jesus spent 40 days being tempted. Remember, the Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness. John the Baptist prepared the way, a type of Elijah from the Old Testament, preparing the way for Christ.

Jesus had authority to teach, like Moses who presented the Torah, the Scripture. Jesus also presented with authority. He would say, “It is written, but I say to you.” Jesus would say that. He was the teacher, the healer, the preacher.

Remember, the Torah has five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. You can take the book of Matthew and find that it has five major teaching units that describe Christ.

Jesus' suffering on the cross—his words, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”—is a direct quote from Psalm 22. Jesus fulfills God's plan from Genesis 3, and we see that over and over again. This is Matthew's wonderful insight on how Yeshua, Jesus, is the Messiah.

Now, Jesus the Messiah is not only the Messiah of the Israelites. He is the Messiah of the world. He's the Redeemer of the world. Jesus is to the Jews first—yes. That's what Paul said in Romans 1:16. But we see Jesus as a type of Moses, a type of David. We see the characteristics of the Aramaic language and these kinds of things.

An interesting note here—in the intertestamental period, the Maccabees entered Jerusalem. They were tired of the oppression of the Romans and came in riding on a donkey. There were palms and “Hosanna” was said, as they thought this was a deliverer for the Israelites during that period. We've seen Jesus also, in the same type, enter Jerusalem on a donkey, and “Hosanna” was sung and said for him.

Here are a couple more things. For Matthew, Jesus is seen as the King of the Jews. Matthew intentionally points that out because he wants everyone to understand that Jesus is the Messiah. But you know what? Jesus is more than the King of the Jews. He is the King of kings.

And this is just a little bit of the flavor that you can enjoy as you read through Matthew.