

MATTHEW

Vocabulary

- Messiah: The anticipated deliverer and king of the Jews. “Anointed One.”
- Messianic: Relating to the Messiah, as in a messianic prophecy.
- Pericope: a short passage in a gospel, a story unit.

Background

- Author: Matthew
- Date: most likely before the fall of Jerusalem, probably in the 60s
- Intended readership: primarily Jewish

Purpose

Among other things, Matthew wanted to demonstrate that:

1. Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of God, the Son of Man, Immanuel, the one to whom the OT points.
2. Many Jews, especially Jewish leaders, sinfully failed to recognize Jesus during his ministry (and, by implication, are in great danger if they continue in that stance after his resurrection).
3. The promised coming kingdom has already dawned, inaugurated by the life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.
4. This messianic reign is continuing in the world, as believers, both Jews and Gentiles, submit to Jesus’ authority, overcome temptation, endure persecution, wholeheartedly embrace Jesus’ teaching, and thus demonstrate that they constitute the true people of God and are the true witnesses to the world of the “gospel of the kingdom.”
5. This messianic reign is not only the fulfillment of the OT hopes but also the foretaste of the consummated kingdom that will dawn when Jesus the Messiah personally returns.

Major Theological Themes

1. Christology: Jesus is the Son of David, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. He is also the Lord and Messiah.

2. Prophecy and fulfillment: The OT points to Jesus and is fulfilled in him.

3. Law: Like OT prophesy, the Law also pointed to Jesus and is fulfilled in him.

4. Church: Jesus foresaw a community of faith that would consist of his followers. He promised that the gates of hell would not defeat the church, and gave it specific instructions about godly living and discipline.

5. Eschatology: The Kingdom of Heaven is a consistent theme in Jesus' teachings. There is a sense in which it is already here, but not yet. The future promises eternal rewards for those who accept Jesus and his teachings, but condemnation for those who reject.

7. Mission: The great commission at the conclusion is the climax toward which the entire gospel moves. The Good News of the Kingdom is for all, both Jew and Gentile.

Major Sections on Moral Teaching

Three of the five great sermons of Jesus in Matthew deal specifically with ethical behavior:

1. The Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7) is a handbook on how to live as a member of God's kingdom. It is "the standard" by which we can evaluate our personal lives. Every Christian should know this sermon inside out.

2. In chapter 10 Jesus exhorts his 12 disciples before he sends them out. He addresses personal sacrifice, the cost of discipleship, the expectation of persecution, and putting Christ above all else, even family. The challenges are both gripping and inspiring.

3. In chapter 18, Jesus provides instruction on matters of interpersonal relationships: pride, forgiveness, church discipline, and showing mercy. The parable of the unmerciful servant is unique to Matthew's gospel and is worth remembering.

PURPOSES OF THE 8 PARABLES IN MATTHEW 13

1. To show a distinction between those who reject Jesus and his message, and those who accept.

Those who reject

Are a wicked generation	12:45-46
Are bad soil	13:19-22
Are bad seed	38
Are the weeds	29
Are bad fish	48
Are sons of the evil one	38
Are wicked	49
Are not given the secrets	11
Have no ears to hear	13, 15
Have no understanding	13-15

Those who accept

Do the will of my Father	12:49
Are good soil	13:23
Are good seed	38
Are wheat	29
Are good fish	48
Are sons of the Kingdom	38
Are Righteous	49
Are Given secrets	11
Have ears to hear	9
Have Understanding	23, 51
Are the treasure	44
Are the pearl of great price	45
Are the householder	49
Have abundance	12
Produce a crop	23
Have new and old things	52

2. To show the final destiny of each group.

Those who reject

Will be burned	30
Throw away	48
Thrown into fiery furnace	42, 50

Those who accept

Gathered into the barn	30
Gathered into baskets	48
Shine like the sun	43

3. To show that God seeks after man.

- Parable of the sower
- Parable of the treasure in a field
- Parable of the pearl of great price

4. To show that the Kingdom is perceived on two levels.

- Crowds are on the outside, looking in, seeing what the Kingdom appears to be:
 - inhabited by evil (yeast)
 - often unproductive (sower, mustard seed)
 - that there is no distinction between righteous and wicked (weeds, net)
 - unkept and untrimmed (mustard seed)
- Disciples are on the inside and see the kingdom from God's future perspective:
 - gathered into the barn (weeds)
 - righteous removed from the wicked (weeds, net)
 - inhabited by evil, but only temporarily (weeds, net)

5. To explain the inward and outward working of the Kingdom while it is being established on earth.

- Sower – Rejection of God’s Word
- Weeds – Opposition to God’s Work
- Mustard – Perversion of God’s Design
- Yeast – Corruption of God’s Agency

- Treasure – Righteous viewed individually
- Pearl – Righteous viewed collectively
- Net – Righteous viewed ultimately
- Householder – Righteous viewed as abundant and productive

6. To hide the truth of God’s kingdom from those with hardened hearts, determined to reject it. To reveal the truth of God’s kingdom to those with open hearts, willing to accept the good news. 13:10-15

COMPARISON CHART

PARABLE	PERSPECTIVE	AUDIENCE	LOCATION	INTRODUCTORY FORMULA
Sower	Anticipative	Crowds	Outside	<i>None</i>
Weeds	Separation	Crowds	Outside	...another parable, the KOH is like...
Mustard S	Outward	Crowds	Outside	...another parable, the KOH is like...
Yeast	Inward	Crowds	Outside	...another parable, the KOH is like...
Treasure	Inward	Disciples	Inside	...again, the KOH is like...
Pearl	Outward	Disciples	Inside	...again, the KOH is like...
Net	Separation	Disciples	Inside	...again, the KOH is like...
Household	Reflective	Disciples	Inside	<i>None</i>