

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)**Lesson Plan:** Introduction to Matthew**Learning Goals:** Students should understand the audience, provenance, circumstances, and basic features of the Gospel of Matthew.**Question:** Why is it important that Jesus fulfills OT prophecy?

Prayer.

Ask question on board and discuss (5 minutes)

Authorship:

Strictly speaking, the book of Matthew is anonymous. The book never clearly states who is writing it. However, Matthew is the one and only name associated with the book.

Here is what we can determine about the author from the context:

1. The author was a Jewish Christian with extensive knowledge of the Hebrew Bible. (He quotes from the O.T. 45 times!)
2. The author is familiar with the scribal traditions. He emphasizes Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees.
3. The author is capable of writing in very sophisticated Greek even though his cultural background seems to be Jewish.

Here is what we know about Matthew, the disciple of Jesus (and the likelihood that he wrote the gospel that bears his name):

1. He had to be fluent in Greek, since he was a tax collector (see Matthew 9:9)
2. He had to be a very literate and skilled record keeper
3. He would likely have written in a very organized and structured way. (The gospel of Matthew is very organized and structured.)
4. He most likely would have included in his gospel the detail about Jesus paying the temple tax
5. Matthew is the only gospel to use a financial term for sin ("debts"). This would have likely been characteristic of a tax collector like Matthew.
6. Mark and Luke call him Levi. Matthew called himself Matthew Levi, which is a Jewish name meaning "gift of the Lord."

Characteristics and Themes:

1. Written from a Jewish perspective
 - a. This may be why it was placed as the first book of the NT
 - b. It concerns itself with the fulfillment of the OT
 - c. It traces the descent of Jesus from Abraham rather than Adam
 - d. The book fails to provide an explanation of the Jewish customs
 - e. It uses Jewish terms
 - f. It emphasizes Jesus as the Son of David
2. Provides a universal outlook
 - a. The Magi from the East worship Jesus
 - b. The Great Commission
3. Places an emphasis on the church
 - a. Matthew is the only gospel to use the word "church"
4. Gives a strong eschatological emphasis (focus on the End Times)

Provenance and Audience:

There are two possibilities for provenance and audience:

1. Written for Jewish Christians in and around Palestine in confrontation with traditional Judaism
2. Written for Greek speaking folks in Antioch-Syria with a significant number of Jews among them.

Purpose:

1. To prove that Jesus is the Messiah (the one they had been waiting for)
 2. To demonstrate that the life and ministry of Jesus fulfilled the OT scriptures and prophecy
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Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Levi
- Know distinctive features