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Question: "Gospel of Matthew"

**Answer:** This book is known as the Gospel of Matthew because it was written by the apostle of the same name. The style of the book is exactly what would be expected of a man who was once a tax collector. Matthew has a keen interest in accounting (18:23-24; 25:14-15). The Gospel of Matthew is very orderly and concise. Rather than write in chronological order, Matthew arranges this Gospel through six discussions.

As a tax collector, Matthew possessed a skill that makes his writing all the more exciting for Christians. Tax collectors were expected to be able to write in a form of shorthand, which essentially meant that Matthew could record a person's words as they spoke, word for word. This ability means that the words of Matthew are not only inspired by the Holy Spirit, but should represent an actual transcript of some of Christ's sermons. For example, the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in chapters 5-7, is almost certainly a perfect recording of that great message.

**Date of Writing:** As an apostle, Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew in the early period of the church, probably in A.D. 55-65. This was a time when most Christians were Jewish converts, so Matthew's focus on Jewish perspective in this Gospel is understandable.

**Purpose of Writing:** Matthew intends to prove to the Jews that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. More than any other Gospel, the Gospel of Matthew quotes the Old Testament to show how Jesus fulfilled the words of the Jewish prophets. Matthew describes in detail the lineage of Jesus from David, and uses many forms of speech that Jews would have been comfortable with. Matthew's love and concern for his people is apparent through his meticulous approach to telling the gospel story.

**Key Verses:** Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

Matthew 5:43-44: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Matthew 6:9-13: "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"

Matthew 16:26: "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two.'"

Matthew 27:31: “After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”

Matthew 28:5-6: “The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.'”

Matthew 28:19-20: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Brief Summary:** The Gospel of Matthew discusses the lineage, birth, and early life of Christ in the first two chapters. From there, the book discusses the ministry of Jesus. The descriptions of Christ's teachings are arranged around “discourses” such as the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5 through 7. Chapter 10 involves the mission and purpose of the disciples; chapter 13 is a collection of parables; chapter 18 discusses the church; chapter 23 begins a discourse about hypocrisy and the future. Chapters 21 through 27 discuss the arrest, torture, and execution of Jesus. The final chapter describes the Resurrection and the Great Commission.

**Connections:** Because Matthew's purpose is to present Jesus Christ as the King and Messiah of Israel, he quotes from the Old Testament more than any of the other three Gospel writers. Matthew quotes more than 60 times from prophetic passages of the Old Testament, demonstrating how Jesus fulfilled them. He begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus, tracing Him back to Abraham, the progenitor of the Jews. From there, Matthew quotes extensively from the prophets, frequently using the phrase “as was spoken through the prophet(s)” (Matthew 1:22-23, 2:5-6, 2:15, 4:13-16, 8:16-17, 13:35, 21:4-5). These verses refer to the Old Testament prophecies of His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), His return from Egypt after the death of Herod (Hosea 11:1), His ministry to the Gentiles (Isaiah 9:1-2; 60:1-3), His miraculous healings of both body and soul (Isaiah 53:4), His speaking in parables (Psalm 78:2), and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9).

**Practical Application:** The Gospel of Matthew is an excellent introduction to the core teachings of Christianity. The logical outline style makes it easy to locate discussions of various topics. Matthew is especially useful for understanding how the life of Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Matthew's intended audience was his fellow Jews, many of whom—especially the Pharisees and Sadducees—stubbornly refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah. In spite of centuries of reading and studying the Old Testament, their eyes were blinded to the truth of who Jesus was. Jesus rebuked them for their hard hearts and their refusal to recognize the One they had supposedly been waiting for (John 5:38-40). They wanted a Messiah on their own terms, one who would fulfill their own desires and do what they wanted Him to do. How often do we seek God on our own terms? Don't we reject Him by ascribing to Him only those attributes we find acceptable, the ones that make us feel good—His love, mercy, grace—while rejecting those we find objectionable—His wrath, justice, and holy anger? We dare not make the mistake of the Pharisees, creating God in our own image and then expecting Him to live up to our standards. Such a god is nothing more than an idol. The Bible gives us more than enough information about the true nature and identity of God and Jesus Christ to warrant our worship and our obedience.

Question: "Gospel of Mark"

**Answer: Author:** Although the Gospel of Mark does not name its author, it is the unanimous testimony of early church fathers that Mark was the author. "He was an associate of the Apostle Peter, and evidently his spiritual son (1 Peter 5:13). From Peter he received first-hand information of the events and teachings of the Lord, and preserved the information in written form.

It is generally agreed that Mark is the John Mark of the New Testament (Acts 12:12). His mother was a wealthy and prominent Christian in the Jerusalem church, and probably the church met in her home. "Mark joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but not on the second because of a strong disagreement between the two men (Acts 15:37-38). However, near the end of Paul's life he called for Mark to be with him (2 Timothy 4:11).

**Date of Writing:** The Gospel of Mark was likely one of the first books written in the New Testament, probably in A.D. 55-59.

**Purpose of Writing:** Whereas Matthew is written primarily to his fellow Jews, Mark's gospel appears to be targeted to the Roman believers, particularly Gentiles. Mark wrote as a pastor to Christians who previously had heard and believed the Gospel (Romans 1:8). He desired that they have a biographical story of Jesus Christ as Servant of the Lord and Savior of the world in order to strengthen their faith in the face of severe persecution and to teach them what it meant to be His disciples.

**Key Verses:** Mark 1:11: "And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.""

Mark 1:17: ""Come, follow Me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men.""

Mark 10:14-15: "He said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.""

Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Mark 12:33: "To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Mark 16:6: ""Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.""

Mark 16:15: "He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.""

**Brief Summary:** This gospel is unique because it emphasizes Jesus' actions more than His teaching. It is simply written, moving quickly from one episode in the life of Christ to another. It does not begin with a genealogy as in Matthew, because Gentiles would not be interested in His lineage. After the introduction of Jesus at His baptism, Jesus began His public ministry in Galilee and called the first four of His twelve disciples. What follows is the record of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Mark's account is not just a collection of stories, but a narrative written to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah, not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well. In a dynamic profession, the disciples, led by Peter, acknowledged their faith in Him (Mark 8:29-30), even though they failed to understand fully His Messiahship until after His resurrection.

As we follow His journeys through Galilee, the surrounding areas, and then to Judea, we realize what a rapid pace He set. He touched the lives of many people, but He left an indelible mark on His disciples. At the transfiguration (Mark 9:1-9), He gave three of them a preview of His future return in power and glory, and again it was revealed to them who He was.

However, in the days leading to His final trip to Jerusalem, we see them bewildered, fearful and doubting. At Jesus' arrest, He stood alone after they fled. In the following hours of the mock trials, Jesus boldly proclaimed that He is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, and that He would be triumphant at His return (Mark 14:61-62). The climactic events surrounding the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection were not witnessed by most of His disciples. But several faithful women did witness His passion. After the Sabbath, early in the morning of the first day of the week, they went to the tomb with burial spices. When they saw the stone had been rolled away, they entered the tomb. It was not the body of Jesus they saw, but an angel robed in white. The joyful message they received was, "He is risen!" Women were the first evangelists, as they spread the good news of His resurrection. This same message has been broadcast throughout the world in the following centuries down to us today.

**Connections:** Because Mark's intended audience was the Gentiles, he does not quote as frequently from the Old Testament as Matthew, who was writing primarily to the Jews. He does not begin with a genealogy to link Jesus with the Jewish patriarchs, but begins instead with His baptism, the beginning of His earthly ministry. But even there, Mark quotes from an Old Testament prophecy regarding the messenger "John the Baptist" who would exhort the people to "prepare the way for the Lord" (Mark 1:3; Isaiah 40:3) as they awaited the coming of their Messiah.

Jesus does refer to the Old Testament in several passages in Mark. In Mark 7:6, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their superficial worship of God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him and refers to their own prophet, Isaiah, to convict them of their hardheartedness (Isaiah 29:13). Jesus referred to another Old Testament prophecy which was to be fulfilled that very night as the disciples would be scattered like sheep without a shepherd when Jesus was arrested and put to death (Mark 14:27; Zechariah 13:7). He referred again to Isaiah when He cleansed the Temple of the moneychangers (Mark 11:15-17; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11) and to the Psalms when He explained that He was the chief Cornerstone of our faith and of the Church (Mark 12:10-11; Psalm 118:22-23).

**Practical Application:** Mark presents Jesus as the suffering Servant of God (Mark 10:45) and as the One who came to serve and sacrifice for us, in part to inspire us to do the same. We are to minister as He did, with the same greatness of humility and devotion to the service of others. Jesus exhorted us to remember that to be great in God's kingdom, we must be the servant of all (Mark 10:44). Self-sacrifice

should transcend our need for recognition or reward, just as Jesus was willing to be abased as He lay down His life for the sheep.

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<https://www.gotquestions.net/Printer/Gospel-of-Mark-PF.html>

Question: "Gospel of Luke"

**Answer: Author:** The Gospel of Luke does not identify its author. From Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3, it is clear that the same author wrote both Luke and Acts, addressing both to “most excellent Theophilus,” possibly a Roman dignitary. The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that Luke, a physician and a close companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote both Luke and Acts (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11). This would make Luke the only Gentile to pen any books of Scripture.

**Date of Writing:** The Gospel of Luke was likely written between A.D. 58 and 65.

**Purpose of Writing:** As with the other two synoptic gospels—Matthew and Mark—this book’s purpose is to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ and all He “began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven” (Acts 1:1-2). The Gospel of Luke is unique in that it is a meticulous history—an “orderly account” (Luke 1:3) consistent with the Luke’s medical mind—often giving details the other accounts omit. Luke’s history of the life of the Great Physician emphasizes His ministry to—and compassion for—Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax collectors, sinners, and others regarded as outcasts in Israel.

**Key Verses:** Luke 2:4-7: “So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 3:16, "John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'"

Luke 4:18-19, 21: “‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 18:31-32: “Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.’”

Luke 23:33-34: "When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”

Luke 24:1-3: "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus."

**Brief Summary:** Called the most beautiful book ever written, the Gospel of Luke begins by telling us about Jesus' parents; the birth of His cousin, John the Baptist; Mary and Joseph's journey to

Bethlehem, where Jesus is born in a manger; and the genealogy of Christ through Mary. Jesus' public ministry reveals His perfect compassion and forgiveness through the stories of the prodigal son, the rich man and Lazarus, and the Good Samaritan. While many believe in this unprejudiced love that surpasses all human limits, many others—especially the religious leaders—challenge and oppose the claims of Jesus. Christ's followers are encouraged to count the cost of discipleship, while His enemies seek His death on the cross. Finally, Jesus is betrayed, tried, sentenced and crucified. But the grave cannot hold Him! His Resurrection assures the continuation of His ministry of seeking and saving the lost.

**Connections:** Since Luke was a Gentile, his references to the Old Testament are relatively few compared to those in Matthew's gospel, and most of the OT references are in the words spoken by Jesus rather than in Luke's narration. Jesus used the Old Testament to defend against Satan's attacks, answering him with "It is written" (Luke 4:1-13); to identify Himself as the promised Messiah (Luke 4:17-21); to remind the Pharisees of their inability to keep the Law and their need of a Savior (Luke 10:25-28, 18:18-27); and to confound their learning when they tried to trap and trick Him (Luke 20).

**Practical Application:** The Gospel of Luke gives us a beautiful portrait of our compassionate Savior. Jesus was not "turned off" by the poor and the needy; in fact, they were a primary focus of His ministry. Israel at the time of Jesus was a very class-conscious society. The weak and downtrodden were literally powerless to improve their lot in life and were especially open to the message that "the kingdom of God is near you" (Luke 10:9). This is a message we must carry to those around us who desperately need to hear it. Even in comparatively wealthy countries—perhaps especially so—the spiritual need is dire. Christians must follow the example of Jesus and bring the good news of salvation to the spiritually poor and needy. The kingdom of God is near and the time grows shorter every day.

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Question: "Gospel of John"

**Author:** [John 21:20-24](#) describes the author of the gospel of John as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and for both historical and internal reasons this is understood to be [John the Apostle](#), one of the sons of Zebedee ([Luke 5:10](#)).

**Date of Writing:** Discovery of certain papyrus fragments dated around AD 135 require the gospel of John to have been written, copied, and circulated before then. And, while some think it was written before Jerusalem was destroyed (AD 70), AD 85–90 is a more accepted time for the writing of the gospel of John.

**Purpose of Writing:** The author cites the purpose of the gospel of John as follows: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” ([John 20:31](#)). Unlike the three [Synoptic Gospels](#), John’s purpose is not to present a chronological narrative of the life of Christ but to display His deity. John sought to strengthen the faith of second-generation believers and bring about faith in others, but he also sought to correct a false teaching that was spreading in the first century. John emphasized Jesus Christ as “the Son of God,” fully God and fully man, contrary to a false doctrine that taught the “Christ-spirit” came upon the human Jesus at His baptism and left Him at the crucifixion.

**Key Verses:** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” ([John 1:1, 14](#)).

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” ([John 1:29](#)).

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” ([John 3:16](#)).

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent’” ([John 6:29](#)).

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” ([John 10:10](#)).

“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” ([John 10:28](#)).

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” ([John 11:25-26](#)).

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” ([John 13:35](#)).

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” ([John 14:6](#)).

“Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father?”’” ([John 14:9](#)).

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” ([John 17:17](#)).

“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit” ([John 19:30](#)).

“Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’” ([John 20:29](#)).

**Brief Summary:** The gospel of John includes only seven miracles—John calls them “signs”—to demonstrate the deity of Christ and illustrate His ministry. Some of these miracles and stories, such as the raising of Lazarus, are found only in John. His is the most theological of the four Gospels, and he often gives the reason behind events mentioned in the other gospels. The gospel of John shares much about the approaching ministry of the Holy Spirit after Jesus’ ascension. There are certain words or phrases that create a recurring theme in the gospel of John: *believe, witness, Comforter, life - death, light - darkness, I am, and love.*

The gospel of John introduces Jesus Christ, not from His birth, but from “the beginning,” before creation. John calls Jesus “the Word” (*Logos*) who, as God Himself, was involved in every aspect of creation ([John 1:1-3](#)) and who later became flesh (verse 14) in order that He might take away our sins as the spotless Lamb of God (verse 29). The gospel of John includes several spiritual conversations, such as Jesus’ talk with the Samaritan woman that shows Him as the Messiah ([John 4:26](#)) and Jesus’ meeting with Nicodemus that explains salvation through His vicarious death on the cross ([John 3:14-16](#)). In the gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly angers the Jewish leaders by correcting them ([John 2:13-16](#)); healing on the Sabbath, and claiming traits belonging only to God ([John 5:18](#); [8:56-59](#); [9:6, 16](#); [10:33](#)).

The last nine chapters of the gospel of John deal with the final week of Jesus’ life. Jesus prepares His disciples for His coming death and for their ministry after His resurrection and ascension ([John 14-17](#)). He then willingly dies on the cross in our place ([John 10:15-18](#)), paying our sin debt in full ([John 19:30](#)) so that whoever trusts in Him will be saved ([John 3:14-16](#)). Jesus then rises from the dead, convincing even the most doubting of His disciples that He is God and Master ([John 20:24-29](#)).

**Connections:** The gospel of John’s portrayal of Jesus as the God of the Old Testament is seen most emphatically in the seven “I Am” statements of Jesus. He is the “Bread of life” ([John 6:35](#)), provided by God to feed the souls of His people, just as He provided manna from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness ([Exodus 16:11-36](#)). Jesus is the “Light of the world” ([John 8:12](#)), the same Light that God promised to His people in the Old Testament ([Isaiah 30:26](#); [60:19-22](#)) and which will find its culmination in the New Jerusalem when Christ the Lamb will be its Light ([Revelation 21:23](#)). Two of the “I Am” statements refer to Jesus as both the “Good Shepherd” and the “Door of the sheep.” Here

are clear references to Jesus as the God of the Old Testament, the Shepherd of Israel ([Psalm 23:1](#); [80:1](#); [Jeremiah 31:10](#); [Ezekiel 34:23](#)) and, as the only Door into the sheepfold, the only way of salvation.

The Jews believed in the resurrection and, in fact, used the doctrine to try to trick Jesus into making statements they could use against Him. But His statement at the tomb of Lazarus, “I am the resurrection and the life” ([John 11:25](#)), must have astounded them. He was claiming to be the cause of resurrection and in possession of the power of life and death. None other than God Himself could claim such a thing. Similarly, Jesus’ claim to be “the way, the truth and the life” ([John 14:6](#)) linked Him unmistakably to the Old Testament. His is the “Way of Holiness” prophesied in [Isaiah 35:8](#); He established the City of Truth of [Zechariah 8:3](#) when He was in Jerusalem and preached the truths of the gospel. As “the Life,” Jesus affirms His deity, the Creator of life, God incarnate ([John 1:1-3](#); [Genesis 2:7](#)). Finally, as the “true Vine” ([John 15:1, 5](#)), Jesus identifies Himself with the nation of Israel, who are called the vineyard of the Lord in many Old Testament passages. As the true Vine of the vineyard of Israel, He portrays Himself as the Lord of the “true Israel”—all those who would come to Him in faith (cf. [Romans 9:6](#)).

**Practical Application:** The gospel of John continues to fulfill its purpose of evangelizing the lost ([John 3:16](#) is likely the best-known Bible verse) and is often used in evangelistic Bible studies. In the recorded encounters between Jesus and Nicodemus and the woman at the well (chapters 3–4), we learn much from Jesus’ model of personal evangelism. His comforting words to His disciples before His death ([John 14:1-6](#), [16](#); [16:33](#)) are still of great comfort in sorrowful times. Jesus’ “high priestly prayer” for believers in chapter 17 is also a wonderful source of encouragement for believers. John’s teachings concerning the deity of Christ ([John 1:1-3](#), [14](#); [5:22-23](#); [8:58](#); [14:8-9](#); [20:28](#)) are helpful in apologetics and provide a clear revelation of who Jesus is: [fully God and fully man](#).