





## About the Author

This Gospel, like the other three, is anonymous. The name Matthew was only associated with it by later Christian tradition. This tradition identified Matthew as the tax collector of that name in this Gospel and maintained that he collected traditions in Hebrew about Jesus which were later translated into Greek.

Many modern scholars would argue that when writing the Gospel the author had Mark's Gospel (and/or a hypothetical document they call Q

containing the earliest traditions about Jesus) in front of him as well as a store of his own stories.

Frustratingly little, Gospel writers all seemed determined to keep their identities secret, probably to keep our focus on Jesus. The author writes excellent Greek but has a deep knowledge of the Scriptures, in both Hebrew and Greek. Many think it was written in Antioch to tell the story of Jesus there to a largely Jewish community.



### How is it structured?

Matthew's Gospel strikingly has five 'discourses' or major pieces of teaching in it. These may give us a clue to the structure of Matthew

- 1.1-2.23 Title and birth narratives
- 3.1-7.29 The baptism of Jesus and first discourse (Sermon on the Mount)
- 8.1-10.42 Miracles, calling of disciples and the second discourse (on mission and suffering)
- 11.1-13.52 Conflict with opponents and third discourse



## What could this mean for me?

As you read, ask yourself about the Jesus you meet in the story. What kind of person is he in Matthew? What more can you learn about him as you read?



## Look out for...

You will see from the structure above that some see five key 'discourses' in Matthew, each of which round off a section of narratives about Jesus' life. The number five, of course, reminds us strongly of the Torah. Look out for these so-called five teachings as you read. Are you convinced that Matthew was theming his narrative about five key teachings? Does this help you make sense of the Gospel at all?

Another key feature of Matthew is his conflict with the Jewish leaders of his day. Although Jesus clashes with the Jewish leaders in other gospels too, the clash seems more obvious in Matthew. Keep an eye open for this and see if you agree or not.

Matthew points back to the Old Testament a lot. Reflect on this as you read. Why is it such an important theme? Also notice the theme of fulfillment in the Gospel what does this tell us about what Matthew thinks about the significance of the story he is telling?



## Discussion group questions