

6.9

## **Distinctive Characteristics of Matthew's Gospel**

### **A. Matthew likes to organize.**

- three sets of fourteen generations in the genealogy (1:17)
- five great speeches (see “B” below)
- twelve fulfillment citations (see “F” below)
- ten miracles (chaps. 8–9)
- seven parables (chap. 13)
- seven woes against the scribes and Pharisees (chap. 23)

### **B. There are five great speeches given by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel.**

- Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5–7)
- Missionary Discourse (chap. 10)
- Parable Discourse (chap. 13)
- Community Discourse (chap. 18)
- Eschatological Discourse (chaps. 24–25)

### **C. Matthew likes pairs.**

#### *Double characters:*

- two demoniacs (8:28–33; cf. Mark 5:1–14)
- two blind men (20:29–34; cf. Mark 10:46–52)

- two donkeys (21:1–11; cf. Mark 11:1–11)

*Double stories:*

- two requests for a sign (12:38–42; 16:1–4)
- two Beelzebul accusations (9:32–34; 12:22–24)
- two healings of two blind men (9:27–31; 20:29–34)

**D. Matthew's Gospel has a strong Jewish character.**

- “Go nowhere among the Gentiles” (10:5).
- “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (15:24).
- Jesus pays the temple tax (17:24–27).
- “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat” (23:2).
- “Pray that your flight not be . . . on a sabbath” (24:20).

**E. Matthew's Gospel also displays anti-Jewish Polemic.**

*Castigation of Israel's religious leaders:*

- “evil” (9:4; 12:34; 16:4)
- “brood of vipers” (12:34; 23:33)
- plants that the heavenly Father did not plant (15:13; cf. 13:24–25)

*Statements favoring gentiles at the expense of Israel:*

- “Heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness” (8:12).

- “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you” (21:43).

*Responsibility for Jesus’s blood:*

- “Upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth” (23:35).
- Let “his blood be on us and on our children forever” (27:25).

**F. The fulfillment of prophecy is important.**

Twelve “fulfillment citations” that state, “This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet”: 1:22–23; 2:5–6; 2:15; 2:17–18; 2:23; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:14–15; 13:35; 21:4–5; 27:9–10 (cf. 3:3–4; 11:10; 15:7–9; 26:54, 56)

*Numerous other prophecies fulfilled in Jesus:*

- offered vinegar to drink (27:48; cf. Ps. 69:21)
- tomb of a rich man (27:57–60; cf. Isa. 53:9)

*Predictions by Jesus:*

- destruction of the temple (24:1–2)
- worldwide mission (24:14; 28:18–19)
- end of the age (24:3–28)
- parousia (16:27–28; 24:29–31)
- final judgment (7:21–23; 25:1–13, 31–46)

**G. The law is important:**

Questions about Jesus's relationship to the law and the interpretation of the law recur.

- Jesus fulfills the law (5:17–20)
- antitheses (5:21–48)
- tradition of the elders (15:1–20)
- binding and loosing (18:18; cf. 16:19)
- Jesus versus Moses on divorce (19:3–9)
- Pharisees preach but don't practice (23:1–3)

**H. Matthew's Gospel presents an apocalyptic vision of the world.**

- The world contains "children of God" and "children of the devil" (13:24–30, 36–43).
- People may be classed as "good" or "evil," "righteous" or "unrighteous" (5:45).

**I. Matthew is the only Gospel in which Jesus talks explicitly about the church.**

- "On this rock I will build my church" (16:18).
- "Tell it to the church" (18:17).

**J. Peter is important.**

There are several references to Peter and stories about him found nowhere else.

- walks on the water (14:28–31)
- blessed by Jesus (16:17–19)
- finds the coin for the temple tax (17:24–27)
- asks about forgiveness (18:21–22)

**K. The abiding presence of God/Jesus is important.**

- Jesus is Emmanuel, “God with us” (1:23).
- “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and . . . the one who sent me” (10:40).
- “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there” (18:20).
- “Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did to me” (25:40).
- “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (28:20).