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The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: Two Views

Most scholars recognize that Matthew uses a variety of formulas and structural devices to organize his Gospel.

The Fivefold Formula

1. "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching" (7:28).
2. "Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities" (11:1).
3. "When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place" (13:53).
4. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee" (19:1).
5. "When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 'You know that after two days the Passover is coming'" (26:1–2).

The Twofold Formula

1. "From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near'" (4:17).

2. “From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering” (16:21).

Three Summary Passages

1. 4:23–25
2. 9:35
3. 11:1

Three Passion Predictions

1. 16:21
2. 17:22–23
3. 20:17–19

Bacon’s Outline for Matthew

Benjamin Bacon proposes an outline for Matthew’s Gospel based on the fivefold formula as shown above. His outline does not assign structural relevance to the twofold formula or to the summary passages or passion predictions.

Preamble: Infancy Narrative (chaps. 1–2)	
Book 1: Discipleship (chaps. 3–7)	
	A. Narrative (chaps. 3–4)
	B. Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5–7)
Book 2: Apostleship (chaps. 8–10)	
	A. Narrative (chaps. 8–9)
	B. Missionary Discourse (chap. 10)

Book 3: Hiding of the Revelation (chaps. 11–13)	
	A. Narrative (chaps. 11–12)
	B. Parable Discourse (chap. 13)
Book 4: Church Administration (chaps. 14–18)	
	A. Narrative (chaps. 14–17)
	B. Community Discourse (chap. 18)
Book 5: Judgment (chaps. 19–25)	
	A. Narrative (chaps. 19–23)
	B. Eschatological Discourse (chaps. 24–25)
Epilogue: Passion and Resurrection (chaps. 26–28)	

Kingsbury's Outline for Matthew

Jack Dean Kingsbury proposes an outline for Matthew's Gospel based on the twofold formula. His outline takes into account the "summary passages" and "passion predictions," but it does not assign structural significance to the fivefold formula.

Part 1: The Presentation of Jesus (1:1–4:16)

Part 2: Ministry of Jesus to Israel (4:17–11:1)—includes the three summary passages—and Israel's Repudiation of Jesus (11:2–16:20)

Part 3: Journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and His Suffering, Death, and Resurrection (16:21–28:20)—includes the three passion predictions