

## **Organizing the Gospel of Matthew**

The Gospel of Matthew is a highly organized book. Many scholars have noticed that Matthew used five lectures (or sermons, or discourses) to provide the structure for the gospel itself. In each of these discourses, Jesus taught something different about the kingdom of heaven which has become a reality in and through his own ministry. The “kingdom of heaven” is a prominent theme in Matthew and, in a simplified way, refers to the government of God that has now taken hold of the hearts and minds of those who turn to Jesus in faith. This thinking is not unlike the thinking of the Israelites who live within the government of God as described in the five books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.) Notice a similarity? Five books of the law of God for the People of God? Five discourses on the law of God realized in Jesus for the People of God?

Studying the five discourses is a fruitful (and manageable) way to get to know the Gospel of Matthew and the word that the Spirit has for us therein. Read each one. Take as much time as needed. Get to know each discourse well enough that you can reflect on it as you go about your day. Always asking what is the will of our Lord; always seeking to know Christ and to make him known; always knocking on the door of heaven in prayer.

**Matthew 5:1-7:29 ..... The path/ethics of the Kingdom**  
**Matthew 9:35 – 10:42; 11:1 ..... The mission and ministry of the Kingdom**  
**Matthew 13:1-53 ..... The secrets of Kingdom growth**  
**Matthew 18:1-35; 19:1 ..... The applications of the Kingdom for the church**  
**Matthew 24:1-51; 25:1-46; 26:1a ..... The implications of the Kingdom for the last days**