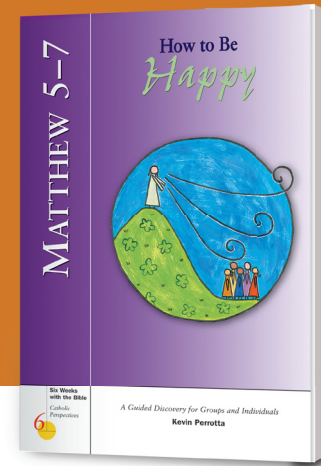


Welcome to **SIX WEEKS WITH THE BIBLE**

An Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew



In this segment we'll explore the Gospel of Matthew.

Although the Gospel of Matthew comes first in the New Testament, Matthew's Gospel was not the first one written. Matthew used Mark, another source widely known as "Q," and other oral traditions to compose a gospel which responded to the situation faced by his community in Antioch, Syria.

This Gospel was written in the 80s A.D. by and for a generation of Christians who had not met Jesus in person but who embraced Christianity without abandoning Judaism. Their faith in Jesus as Messiah, however, led them to serious conflicts with their fellow Jews.

The Pharisees, a fundamentalist group which systematically studied and cited the Law of Moses, were especially upset with the Jewish Christians. This conflict is seen throughout Matthew's Gospel in the confrontations Jesus has with the Pharisees over the Mosaic Law and worship practices.

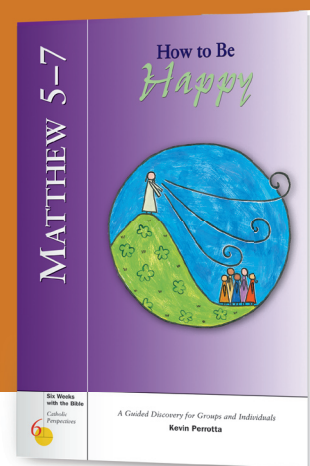
In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is the true Master who has a comprehensive knowledge of the Hebrew law and Scripture. He offers a new interpretation that reaffirms the values expressed in the Old Testament and brings them to their fullness.

Unlike Mark's Gospel, Matthew introduces Jesus to us as a humble Teacher who incarnates the fullness of everything that was proclaimed in the Old Testament. In fact, Jesus exceeds all that was prophesized about him. Mark boldly proclaims Jesus as the Son of God to his audience, but Matthew introduces Jesus in a more traditional Jewish manner, with a three-stage genealogy symbolizing the three most important stages of Israel's history. In naming 14 generations in each one of the stages, Matthew shows Jesus as an Israelite and as a descendant of Abraham and David, highlighting the royal heritage of Jesus.

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After Jesus' genealogy and birth, Matthew's Gospel centers around five major discourses which propose a new Pentateuch for the new Israel. Matthew's constant references to the Old Testament or to "the Scripture" shows his desire to teach his community that Jesus is the fullness of the Law.

The Gospel of Matthew is known as the "ecclesial Gospel," not only because it is the only Synoptic Gospel to explicitly mention "Church," but also because it was written to be proclaimed in the liturgical assembly. Indeed, this Gospel was written to be proclaimed to the end of the earth.

Thank you so much for allowing us to be part of your Bible-study experience. We hope you find the next six weeks enriching and fulfilling. If you have any questions, or would like additional information on the Gospel of Matthew, feel free to e-mail us anytime at sixweeks@loyolapress.com. Our experts are available Monday–Friday to answer your questions.

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