

Matthew's Five Blocks of Narrative and Discourse

Matthew's gospel follows an easily identifiable structure. The gospel contains five blocks of teaching each of which ends with a similar concluding statement.

Discourse	Structural Markers
Sermon on the Mount (5—7)	Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. (5:1) And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching (7:28)
Sending Out the Twelve (10)	When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there (11:1)
Parables of the Kingdom (13)	² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables (13:2-3) And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there (13:53)
Teaching for the Church (18)	Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee (19:1)
Olivet Discourse (24—25)	³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him ... ⁴ And Jesus answered them (24:3a, 4a) When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples (26:1)

It is therefore possible to divide the gospel into blocks before and after each of these five discourses. This is great news for someone trying to “figure out” the book of Matthew. It invites you to examine each block as an independent unit (much shorter than the whole!) and try to learn the purpose of that smaller unit.

I.	Matthew 1—2	<u>PROLOGUE</u> : Jesus Is Israel's King
II.	Matthew 3—7	<u>BLOCK 1</u> : The Kingdom Proclaimed
	A.	Narrative: Early Ministry (Matt. 3—4)
	B.	Discourse: Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5—7)
III.	Matthew 8—10	<u>BLOCK 2</u> : Arrival of the Kingdom Enacted
	A.	Narrative: Healings (Matt. 8—9)
	B.	Discourse: Sends Out the Twelve (Matt. 10)
IV.	Matthew 11—13	<u>BLOCK 3</u> : Kingdom Rejected by Israel
	A.	Narrative: Israel's Leaders Challenge Jesus (Matt. 11—12)
	B.	Discourse: Parables of the Kingdom (Matt. 13)
V.	Matthew 14—18	<u>BLOCK 4</u> : Paradoxical Present Before Arrival of Kingdom
	A.	Narrative: The King Withdraws and Predicts His Death (Matt. 14—17)
	B.	Discourse: Life in the Upside-down Kingdom (Matt. 18)
VI.	Matthew 19—25	<u>BLOCK 5</u> : King in Conflict with Israel
	A.	Narrative: King Asserts Authority in Jerusalem (Matt. 19—23)
	B.	Discourse: Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24—25)
VII.	Matthew 26—28	<u>EPILOGUE</u> : Death and Resurrection of the King