

The Five Books of Jesus

Name: _____

Saint Matthew stated plainly how figures in the Old Testament like Isaac, the son of Abraham, or Solomon, the son of David, foreshadowed Jesus. But Matthew preferred to show his readers that Moses was a type of Jesus. One of the ways he did this was through the very structure of his Gospel.

It was common to speak of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, which is the first five books of the Bible. For this reason, these five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—were collectively known as the books of Moses. Saint Luke includes this custom in his account of Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Saint Luke wrote, “Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (24:27).

Matthew, as a true author inspired by the Holy Spirit, seems to have arranged his Gospel in a very particular way so that even the structure of his Gospel communicates to us that Jesus is a New Moses who brings a New Law—the law of the Gospel. Consider the following outline of Matthew’s Gospel, at the heart of which are five “books,” each containing sections that focus on Jesus’ deeds (his actions) followed by an account of Jesus’ words (his teaching):

Prologue	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5	Epilogue
(Mt 1–2) Infancy Narratives <i>Emmanuel, “God with us”</i>	(Mt 3–4) <i>Deeds:</i> Jesus’ baptism and temptations; start of his public ministry	(Mt 8–9) <i>Deeds:</i> Ten deeds of power	(Mt 11–12) <i>Deeds:</i> Jesus is rejected in Galilee	(Mt 14–17) <i>Deeds:</i> Revelation of Jesus’ identity to his disciples	(Mt 19–22) <i>Deeds:</i> Jesus’ teaching in Judea and Jerusalem	(Mt 26–28) The Paschal Mystery <i>“I Am with You Always”</i>
	(Mt 5–7) <i>Words:</i> Sermon on the Mount	(Mt 10) <i>Words:</i> Missionary teaching	(Mt 13) <i>Words:</i> Kingdom parables	(Mt 18) <i>Words:</i> Teaching on the Church	(Mt 23–25) <i>Words:</i> Sermon on the Mount of Olives	

We should remember that the chapter and verse numbers were added to the Bible many centuries after the Scriptures were written. The authors of the books in the Bible would often use repeated words or phrases to help those who read or listened to follow along. Each of the five main books of the New Law of the Gospel above conclude with a repeated phrase.

1. Turn to each of the verses in the Gospel of Matthew listed below and copy them in the space given.

Matthew 7:28 **When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.**

Matthew 11:1 **When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples,
he left there to teach and to preach in their cities.**

Matthew 13:53 **When Jesus had finished these parables, he went away
from there.**

Matthew 19:1 **When Jesus had finished these words, he departed from
Galilee and came into the regions of Judea beyond the Jordan.**

Matthew 26:1 **When Jesus had finished all these words, he said to
his disciples . . .**

2. What repeated phrase did Matthew use in the verses above to help attentive readers of his Gospel recognize that he wrote his account of Jesus' life and ministry with a five-part structure?

When Jesus had finished . . .

3. What does Matthew's decision to structure his Gospel around five "books" of Jesus reveal about what he thought most important about who Jesus is?

**Answers may include Jesus is the lawgiver of the New Law;
Jesus is a New Moses who is even greater than Moses; and the
law of the Gospel fulfilled the Old Law.**

4. How has your study of the Old Testament so far this year impacted your understanding of who Jesus is?

Answers may vary.