Distinctive Characteristics of Matthew’s Gospel

A. Matthew likes to organize.
   - 3 sets of 14 generations in the genealogy (1:17)
   - 5 great speeches (see “B” below)
   - 12 fulfillment citations (see “F” below)
   - 10 miracles all in chapters 8–9
   - 7 parables all in chapter 13
   - 7 woes against the scribes and Pharisees (chap. 23)

B. There are five great speeches given by Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel.
   - Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5–7)
   - Missionary Discourse (chap. 10)
   - Parable Discourse (chap. 13)
   - Community Discourse (chap. 18)
   - Eschatological Discourse (chaps. 24–25)

C. Matthew likes pairs.
   
   **Double characters**
   - two demoniacs (8:28–33; cf. Mark 5:1–14)
   - two blind men (20:29–34; cf. Mark 10:46–52)
   - two donkeys (21:1–11; cf. Mark 11:1–11)

   **Double stories**
   - two requests for a sign (12:38–42; 16:1–4)
   - two healings of two blind men (9:27–31; 20:29–34)

D. Matthew’s Gospel has a strong Jewish character.
   - “Go nowhere among the Gentiles” (10:5).
   - “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” (15:24).
   - Jesus pays the temple tax (17:24–27).
   - “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat” (23:2).
   - “Pray that your flight not be on the sabbath” (24:20).

E. Matthew’s Gospel also displays anti-Jewish polemic.
Castigation of Israel’s religious leaders:
   - “evil” (9:4; 12:34; 16:4)
   - “brood of vipers” (12:34; 23:33)
   - “plants that the heavenly Father did not plant” (15:13; cf. 13:24–25)

Statements favoring Gentiles at the expense of Israel:
• “Heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness” (8:12).
• “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you” (21:43).

Responsibility for Jesus’ blood:
• “Upon you will come all the righteous blood ever shed” (23:35).
• “Let his blood be on us and our children forever” (27:25).

F. The fulfillment of prophecy is important.
Twelve “fulfillment citations” that state, “This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet”:

Numerous other prophecies fulfilled in Jesus:
• offered vinegar to drink (27:48; cf. Ps. 69:21)
• tomb of a rich man (27:57–60; cf. Isa. 53:9)

Predictions by Jesus:
• destruction of the temple (24:1–2)
• worldwide mission (24:14; 28:18–19)
• end of the age (24:3–28)
• parousia (16:27–28; 24:29–31)
• final judgment (7:21–23; 25:1–13, 31–46)

G. The law is important: questions about Jesus’ relationship to the law and the interpretation of the law recur.
• Jesus fulfills the law (5:17–20)
• antitheses (5:21–48)
• tradition of the elders (15:1–20)
• binding and loosing (18:18; cf. 16:19)
• Jesus versus Moses on divorce (19:3–9)
• Pharisees preach but don’t practice (23:1–3)

H. Matthew’s Gospel presents an apocalyptic vision of the world.
• The world contains “children of God” and “children of the devil” (13:24–30, 36–43).
• People may be classed as “good” or “evil,” “just” or “unjust” (5:45).

I. Matthew is the only Gospel in which Jesus talks explicitly about the church.
• “On this rock I will build my church” (16:18).
• “Tell it to the church” (18:17).
J. Peter is important: there are several references to Peter and stories about him found nowhere else.

- walks on the water (14:28–31)
- blessed by Jesus (16:17–19)
- finds the coin for the temple tax (17:24–27)
- asks about forgiveness (18:21–22)

K. The abiding presence of God/Jesus is important.

- Jesus is Emmanuel, “God with us” (1:23).
- “Whoever receives you receives me, and . . . him who sent me” (10:40).
- “Where two or three are gathered, there am I!” (18:20).
- “What you did to one of the least of my siblings, you did to me” (25:40).
- “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (28:20).