

# The Gospel According to Matthew

Introduction

# An Introduction

The position of the Gospel according to Matthew as the first of the four gospels in the New Testament reflects the view that it was the first to be written, a view that goes back to the late second century A.D.

– New American Bible (Revised Edition, 2011)

# Highly Esteemed Gospel

Also its place indicates that it was very important; no other was so frequently quoted in the noncanonical literature of earliest Christianity

— New American Bible. (Revised Edition, 2011)

It was not the first Gospel

Although the majority of scholars now reject the opinion about the time of its composition, the high estimation of this work remains.

— New American Bible. (Revised Edition, 2001).

# Evidence of a later Date

- Matthew extensively quotes Mark
- Matthew mentions the destruction of the temple (21:41-42; 22:7; 24:1-2)
- Probably dates to 85 AD

# Sources of the Gospel

Matthew drew not only upon the Gospel according to Mark but upon a large body of material (principally, sayings of Jesus) not found in Mark that corresponds, sometimes exactly, to material found also in the Gospel according to Luke. This material is called “Q”.

# The Q Document

- Q (probably from the German word “quelle,” meaning “source”)
- Supposedly a list of the sayings of Jesus
- Hypothetical
- Lost
- Used by both Matthew and Luke
- Controversial

# The Q Document

- Scholars have spent over 20 years trying to reconstruct the Q source based upon verses from Matthew and Luke which do not seem to have any other source



## And more...

- In addition to what Matthew drew from Mark and Q, his gospel contains material that is found only there. This is often designated “M,” written or oral tradition that was available to the author

# Was Matthew Matthew?

The ancient tradition that the author was the disciple and apostle of Jesus named Matthew (see Mt 10:3) is untenable because the gospel is based, in large part, on the Gospel according to Mark (almost all the verses of that gospel have been utilized in this),...

New American Bible. (Revised Edition, 2011)

# Was Matthew Matthew?

...and it is hardly likely that a companion of Jesus would have followed so extensively an account that came from one who admittedly never had such an association rather than rely on his own memories.


New American Bible. (Revised Edition, 2011)

**St Matthew's Gospel is one of the most precious of all the many gifts God has given us in Scripture; we should thank God for it, in the first instance; but we should also be grateful to the man who, with the help of divine inspiration, took pains to write it.**

Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre

**MATTHEW IS THE GOSPEL of the church. Not only is it the only Gospel to use the term "church," ekklēsia (16:18\*; 18:17\*), but both its contents and structure indicate an interest in providing clear and coherent guidance to a community of believers.**

**Luke Timothy Johnson; Todd C. Penner**



Matthew provides instructions for missionaries, discipline in the community, and forms of piety in a way that anticipates later church writings called church orders, the earliest of which is the Didache (usually dated ca. 90).



Luke Timothy Johnson; Todd C. Penner

# Five “Books”

There are five great discourses of Jesus, each concluding with the formula “When Jesus finished these words” or one closely similar. These are an important structure of the gospel. In every case the discourse is preceded by a narrative section, each narrative and discourse together constituting a “book” of the gospel.

## And the Discourses are...

- “Sermon on the Mount”
- The missionary discourse
- the parable discourse
- the “church order” discourse
- the eschatological discourse



# Audience and Setting

- Mt is the most Semitic of the gospels, constantly touching on Jewish and rabbinic customs and ways of thought and argument
- Probably addressed to Christian Jews in a modern city (Antioch?)