



MATTHEW'S PORTRAIT OF JESUS

PRESENTED BY **BOB NEWMAN**



TODAY'S AGENDA:

Introduction to the Course

Authorship of the Gospel

Date of the Gospel

Characteristics of the Gospel

*Matthew is the Gospel that
over the years has shaped the
life and thought of the
church.*

Robert H. Mounce

... the Gospel of Matthew was the manifesto of the mother church of Jerusalem and is therefore the fundamental document of the Christian faith.

David Alan Black

In grandness of conception and in the power with which a mass of material is subordinated to great ideas, no writing in either Testament, dealing with a historical theme, is to be compared with Matthew. In this respect the present writer would be at a loss to find its equal also in the other literature of antiquity.

Theodor Zahn

*AUTHORSHIP OF
MATTHEW*



AUTHORSHIP

In its text, the Gospel is anonymous.

All the manuscripts with titles have Matthew.

All the early testimonies agree.

Only this Gospel calls Matthew “the tax collector” in its apostle list.

*Ancient
Testimony*



Then Matthew wrote the oracles (τ ᾶ
λ ό γ ι α) in the Hebrew dialect
(δ ι α λ έ κ τ ω), but everyone interpreted
them as he was able.

Papias, *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*,
about 130 AD

Eusebius 3.39.16

Now Matthew published also a book of the Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the Church.

*Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.1.2,
about 180.*

Eusebius 5.8.2

OTHER TESTIMONIES

Pantaenus (c180 AD)

Clement of Alexandria (c200 AD)

Origen (c240)

Eusebius of Caesarea (c325)

Jerome (c400)

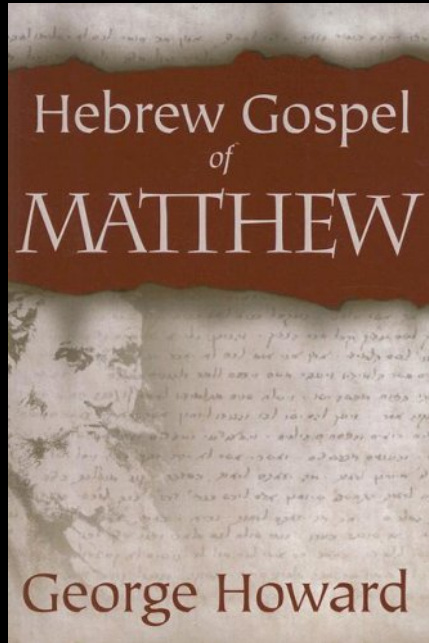
SUMMARY ON AUTHOR

Matthew is the unanimous opinion of ancient witnesses, including all manuscripts titles.

That Matthew is earliest is given several times in the tradition.

That Matthew was written in Hebrew is also a regular feature.

MATTHEW IN HEBREW?



Recently, George Howard at the University of Georgia has argued that a rather poorly preserved text of the original Hebrew of Matthew has come down to us in a medieval Jewish polemical (anti-Christian) text, *Even Bohan*, by Shem-Tov.

DATE OF MATTHEW

A decorative graphic of stylized, overlapping leaves in a dark grey color, positioned on the right side of the image.

DATE

Internal evidence is of very little help.

Two remarks suggest it was not written right away (in the 30s):

27:8 “called the Field of Blood to this day.”

28:15 “This story was widely spread among the Jews to this day.”

DATE

Liberals date Matthew after 70, to avoid fulfilled prophecy:

21:41 - Parable of the tenant farmers who kill the son.

22:7 - Wedding Banquet: king “destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.”

Chapter 24 - Olivet Discourse describes fall of Jerusalem, so written after-wards.

DATE

Obviously this is no problem to believers; all of these are in prediction contexts, and Jesus, if he is who we believe he is, can predict the future.

DATE

External evidence:

Matthew was written before earliest surviving manuscripts.

We have two manuscripts from about 200 AD.

It was written before the earliest quotation, c132 AD.

If written by Matthew, surely before 100 AD.

Irenaeus' tradition would give 61-68 AD.

If Matthew first written, maybe even earlier.

VARIOUS PROPOSALS

These range from 37 AD to 125.

I propose a date in the 40s or 50s, before Matthew left Jerusalem.

This fits testimony that Matthew was first, and that there was some period of time when it alone was available.

There is strong evidence that Luke was written in the late 50s.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MATTHEW



MATTHEW THE MAN

Matthew the author is mentioned by name 7 times in 4 NT books.

But these involve only two items:

His conversion

Apostle lists

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE

His emphasis is more appropriate for Jews:

15:2 – “tradition of the elders” about washing hands.

23:5 – “they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels (of their garments).”

23:27 - Scribes and Pharisees “are like whitewashed tombs.”

AIM & STRUCTURE

Aim - no direct statement in the Gospel.

Contents suggest Matthew's purpose is to show Jesus as the Messiah, who fulfilled OT prophecies. Matthew cites more prophecies, and a wider variety of them, than any other Gospel writer.

Matthew appears to draw a subtle parallel between the ministry of Jesus and the history of Israel.

STRUCTURE

Transition passages: “after that, Jesus began...”

4:17 “to preach”: preparation → public ministry

16:21 “to show His disciples”: public ministry → private ministry

STRUCTURE

Discourses: Usually 5 discourses are seen (Godet, Introduction to the NT), ending with the for-mula: “And it came to pass when Jesus had finished ...”

Actually there are two more, without this formula:

ch 3: John the Baptist’s speech;

ch 23: Jesus’ woes to Pharisees.

FIVE DISCOURSES

Chs 5-7: Sermon on Mount

Ch 10: Instructions to Twelve

Ch 13: Kingdom Parables

Ch 18: Church Discipline

Chs 24-25: Olivet Discourse

DISTINCTIVE PHRASES

“That it might be fulfilled”:

Jesus’ post-resurrection explanation?

Book of testimonies?

“Kingdom of heaven”:

Unique to Matthew, over 30x

Synonymous with “kingdom of God”

OTHER DISTINCT MATERIAL

*Birth materials: wise men, Herod, flight to Egypt;
Joseph's perspective?*

The Church: Peter & church; church discipline

*The Great Commission: "Go to all nations"; "be with
you to end of age"; Trinitarian formula.*

A SYMMETRIC OUTLINE

N: Birth & beginnings (1-4)

S: Blessing, entering the kingdom (5-7)

N: Authority & invitation (8-9)

S: Mission discourse (10)

N: Rejection by this generation (11-12)

S: Parables of the kingdom (13)

N: Acknowledgement by disciples (14-17)

S: Community discourse (18)

N: Authority & invitation (19-22)

S: Woes, coming of kingdom (23-25)

N: Death & Resurrection (26-28)

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