

>>>>>> Matthew – Introduction <<<<<<<

Author

- 1) The book does not specifically name the author, however, despite much scholarly debate, in my opinion, the author of this Gospel is Matthew the tax collector.
- 2) He is also known as Levi son of Alphesus.
 - a) Introduced as Levi in Mark and Luke but listed as Matthew in both as part of the list of disciples.
- 3) The early church (2nd and 3rd centuries and beyond) was virtually unanimous in their acceptance of this authorship.
 - a) *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and the writings of **Ignatius** (bishop of Antioch), **Papias** (the second-century bishop of Hierapolis), **Irenaeus** (the bishop of Lyons), **Origen** (third century), and **Eusebius** (fourth century) all attest to Matthew as the author of this Gospel that bears his name.¹
 - b) Manuscripts began to contain the *Κατὰ Μαθθαίου* Greek phrase as early as 125CE.
- 4) The early church was equally unanimous in its acceptance of Matthew being the first Gospel written.
- 5) It is only in the last few centuries that scholars have tried to cast doubt on Matthew as the author and on it being the first gospel written.
 - a) The reasoning behind this is to some degree tied up in the Synoptic Problem which we have discussed before.
 - b) I have to be honest; I still have moments when this really becomes a problem for my little pea brain to handle.
 - c) For now, I think we will just let this rest as is unless someone has a major objection.

Original Language

- a) The overwhelming scholarly opinion today is that the New Testament was written in Greek – specifically, in Koiné Greek.
- 6) However, there is some evidence that the book of Matthew was originally written in either Hebrew or Aramaic – most likely Aramaic.
 - a) The main source of this evidence is again, the early church fathers. Specifically, we have:
 - **Papias of Hierapolis (c. 125–150 AD):** Papias is often cited as the earliest source, stating, "So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able" (as recorded by Eusebius in *Church History* 3:39)¹³⁴⁵⁶.
 - **Irenaeus (c. 130–202 AD):** Irenaeus wrote that "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect" (*Against Heresies* 3:1)¹³⁴⁵⁶.
 - **Origen (c. 185–254 AD):** Origen affirmed that Matthew "published it for the Jewish believers, wrote it in Hebrew" (as cited by Eusebius)¹³⁴⁵⁶.

¹ Bruce B. Barton, [Matthew](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), x–xii.

Matthew – Teachings, Messiahship, and Ministry of Jesus Christ – NOTES

- **Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–340 AD):** Eusebius reported that Matthew "committed [the Gospel] to writing in his native tongue" after proclaiming it in Hebrew⁴⁵⁶.
- **Jerome (c. 347–420 AD):** Jerome claimed that Matthew "composed a Gospel of Christ in Judaea in the Hebrew language and characters for the benefit of those of the circumcision who had believed" (*De viris illustribus*, ch. III)⁴⁵.
- **Epiphanius (c. 310–403 AD):** Epiphanius noted that the Nazarenes had the Gospel of Matthew "quite complete in Hebrew, for this Gospel is certainly still preserved among them as it was first written, in Hebrew letters"⁵.

These testimonies reflect a consistent tradition among early church fathers that Matthew's Gospel was first composed in a Semitic language—referred to as "Hebrew," though this term may have included Aramaic, the common spoken language in first-century Judea¹²⁴⁵⁶.

- 7) Modern scholarship debates the implications and accuracy of these claims, but the historical record is clear that these early Christian writers believed in a Semitic original for Matthew's Gospel.
 - a) Some of these scholars point to the fact that Matthew explains some Greek terms as proof that he wrote in Greek.
 - i) Though he may have written in Aramaic, it is reasonable to believe that he was quoting from the LXX in the text and this would explain the explanation of Immanuel as an example.
 - ii) He also explained some Greek terms like Golgotha – these are names that when defined have a significance beyond just the name.
- 8) Citations:
 1. <https://hebrewgospel.com/matthewtwogospelsmain.php>
 2. <https://www.neverthirsty.org/bible-qa/qa-archives/question/was-the-gospel-of-matthew-originally-written-in-aramaic/>
 3. <https://appleeye.org/2014/01/04/the-gospel-of-matthew-was-first-written-in-hebrew/>
 4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Gospel_hypothesis
 5. <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/semitic-origins/semitic-origins-of-the-book-of-matthew.htm>
 6. <https://hebrewgospel.com/matthewtwogospelsmore.php>
 7. <https://www.catholic.com/qa/was-matthews-gospel-first-written-in-aramaic-or-hebrew>
 8. <https://www.bible.ca/jw-YHWH-hebrew-matthew.htm>
 9. <https://jesusmemoirs.wordpress.com/2019/06/27/matthews-hebrew-style/>
 10. <https://www.jerusalemerspective.com/4147/>

Date of Writing and Location of Writing

- 9) Written around 60CE.
- 10) The two most likely places that Matthew would have been when he wrote his gospel were Palestine or Syrian Antioch.

Target Audience

- 11) Matthew does not mention a specific audience however, it appears to have been written to Jews who were believers in Jesus as the Messiah.
 - a) One indicator here is that he does not feel the need to explain any of the specific Jewish customs such as ceremonial cleansing.

Purpose and Message

12) Matthew really gives no clear purpose statement for his gospel.

13) However, content beginning with the very first statement truly does give the purpose – to show that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and that he had the proper pedigree and credentials.

Matthew 1:1 (NASB 2020)

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

¹ The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

- a) By this statement, he shows clearly that Jesus had fulfilled the promises made to Abraham and David.
- b) The other truly significant purpose was to show the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies.
- c) As we go through the study, this will be evident.

Outline

- A. Birth and Preparation of Jesus, the King (1:1–4:11)
- B. Message and Ministry of Jesus, the King (4:12–25:46)
 1. Jesus begins his ministry
 2. Jesus gives the Sermon on the Mount
 3. Jesus performs many miracles
 4. Jesus teaches about the kingdom
 5. encounters differing reactions to his ministry
 6. Jesus faces conflict with the religious leaders
 7. Jesus teaches on the Mount of Olives
- C. Death and Resurrection of Jesus, the King (26:1–28:20)²

Relationship to other Gospels

Although this is not an exhaustive list of all the events in the Gospels (see the Harmony of the Gospels), the following lists of miracles provide a good indication of what the Gospels have in common.

Miracles unique to Matthew:

- healing the two blind men—9:27–31
- casting the demon out of the mute man—9:32–33
- healing the sick in Jerusalem—14:14
- paying tribute with money found in a fish—17:24–27

Miracles common to Matthew and Mark:

- healing in Galilee—9:35; Mark 7:24–30
- healing the Syrophenician's daughter—15:21–28; Mark 6:5–6
- healing the multitudes in Galilee—15:29–31; Mark 7:31–37
- feeding the four thousand—15:32–39; Mark 8:1–9
- cursing the fig tree—21:18–21; Mark 11:13–14

Miracles common to Matthew and Luke:

- healing the centurion's servant—8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10
- healing the blind and dumb man—12:22; Luke 11:14

² Bruce B. Barton, [*Matthew*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), xx–xxi.

Miracles common to Matthew, Mark, and Luke:

- healing the leper—8:1–4; Mark 1:40–42; Luke 5:12–14
- healing Peter’s mother-in-law—8:14–15; Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38–39
- quieting the wind and waves—8:23–27; Mark 4:36–41; Luke 8:22–25
- curing the demon-possessed man—8:28–33; Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39
- healing the paralyzed man—9:1–2; Mark 2:3–5; Luke 5:18–25
- healing Jairus’s daughter—9:18–25; Mark 5:22–42; Luke 8:41–55
- healing the woman with the bleeding problem—9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–48
- healing the man with the shriveled hand—12:9–13; Mark 3:1–6; Luke 6:6–11
- being transfigured—17:1–8; Mark 9:2–9; Luke 9:28–36
- healing the demon-possessed boy—17:14–18; Mark 9:14–29; Luke 9:37–43
- healing the blind men—20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43

A miracle common to Matthew, Mark, and John:

- walking on water—14:22–27; Mark 6:48–51; John 6:19–21

A miracle common to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John:

- feeding the five thousand—14:15–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–14³

Our Approach in this Study

14) There are three main items that we want to emphasize in this study:

- a) Teachings of Jesus.
- b) Matthew’s presentation of Jesus as the Messiah.
- c) The purposes of and results of Jesus’ ministry.
 - i) What are the stated purposes of His ministry.
 - ii) Did He accomplish these purposes or did He fail.

15) We do not want to take two years to complete the study.

16) However, we do not want to skip like a rock on a pond through any of the parts of this gospel.

17) Therefore, we will try to concentrate our discussion on the three main goals as they arise.

- a) At the same time, we will try not to cut any corners or miss any parts of the writing that help us understand Jesus or his teachings.
- b) That is no small order but, that is the plan.

18) Also, from time to time, if there are points to be made which might be of interest but are not necessarily something we would like to take up our lesson time for I might put them in the notes so that if you have an interest, you can access them and read the information for yourself.

19) Having said all that, I want to make it clear that ***we will not*** short ourselves on our discussions either.

- a) As always if you have comments and questions, we will deal with them.
- b) The time that we take to cover the material is not as important as our understanding of God’s word and our applying it to our lives.

Questions / Comments / Thoughts on any of that introduction?

³ Bruce B. Barton, *Matthew*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), xvi–xvii.