

The Gospels

Matthew

Author: The title was associated with the Gospel as early as 125 AD.

Date: Options range from AD 40-100.

Destination: It appears the main aim of Matthew was to declare the Gospel so that it would appeal to Jews. Early tradition suggests it was written in Palestine. The use of OT and Jewish emphasis would indicate a Jew writing for Jews. It aims to prove the Messiahship of Jesus. It's possible that it was intended to be used as a teaching manual.

Characteristics:

Messianic Emphasis – there are frequent references from the OT pointing to Jesus as the Messiah.

Jewish Interest –

- Teaching on the law (5:18-48; 19:17-20; 23:23)
- Jewish traditions (6:16-18; 24:20; 5:23,24)
- Authority of Scribes and Pharisees to be respected (23:23)
- Temple Tax (17:24-27)
- Lost sheep of Israel (15:24)
- Jewish customs, referred to without explanation (15:2; 23:5, 27)
- The genealogies in ch 1 reflect Rabbinic style genealogy. The links with prominent OT characters are meant to show the intimate connection in a scheme of promise and fulfilment revealed in Jesus, Israel's true king and fulfiller of the Covenant.

Fulfilled Prophecy – the OT is quoted 41 times. Out of the 41 texts, 37 carry the introductory formula "that it might be fulfilled."

A Universal Element – a missionary motif is evident in the worship of the Gentile Magi, the faith of the Gentile Centurion, the vineyard given to others and the great commission.

Ecclesiastical Element – the book of Matthew alone records the teaching on the church and uses the term 'ecclesia', Peter's confession and authority, church discipline and authority, Christ in the midst of the gathered church and believers baptising and instructing under Christ's authority.

Eschatology – there is more Eschatological discourse in Matthew than in Mark and Luke, and Matthew records unique parables with an eschatological element.

Mark

Author: Early Christian tradition strongly affirms Mark's authorship and his connection with Peter.

Date: An early date is suggested; it is generally believed that Mark was the earliest Gospel.

Destination: Gentile readership is assumed based on – OT refs are less frequent, Jewish touches are lacking, if Jewish customs are referred to they are explained, interpretation of Aramaic words/phrases. A Roman audience is likely.

Characteristics:

- Emphasis on narrative
- Peter's Influence – testimony of Peter included
- Realistic Description – weaknesses of disciples, blindness of Jesus' own family, unbelief of disciples is reported, human reactions of Jesus are portrayed showing the humanity of Christ.
- Description of Jesus – Son of God, Son of Man, Teacher and Redeemer