



The Gospel according to Matthew

DESCRIPTIVE SHEET

Author

The gospel according to Matthew is named after the one who wrote it. Church fathers like Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, Papias, Bishop of Asia Minor and Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin testified that Matthew, one of the disciples of Jesus also known as Levi (Mt. 9: 9; 10: 3, Mk. 2:14) was the author. One of the evidences that Matthew is indeed the author is the mastery of the economic and financial language found in the book (Mt. 22:19). A second evidence is his mastery of the Aramaic and Greek language that was important during the Roman period for a tax collector working under the Roman dominion.

Date

Regarding the date, two views must be emphasized: The Orthodox view and the Liberal view. From the orthodox perspective, this book was written between the years 60 and 80. Based on the internal evidence, it is likely that this text was written before the year 70, if we stick to the fact that the text teaches about Jesus' speech on the Mount of Olives (chapter 24), in which he prophesied on the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, which was fulfilled in the year 70.

Core theme and target audience

In his Gospel, Matthew presented Jesus as the King to whom the prophecies of the Old Testament converged. Thus, Jesus is the messianic son of David who was to come to reign on his throne. In reading the beginning of the genealogy (Mt.1: 1), Matthew presents Jesus first as the son of David and then as Abraham's son. Matthew begins his text this way because he wanted to emphasize the royal dimension of Jesus who will have to reign on the throne of David forever (Ps. 89: 4-5; 28-29; 36-37; Is.11: 1; Je. 23: 5-6.). Matthew wrote this gospel because his audience was Jewish. Obviously, these people knew well that, in the midst of their difficulties, God had promised to send a King to deliver them.

Outline of the book

1. Genealogy of the King emphasizing his origin, his birth, and his entry into public ministry. (Chap. 1 – 4)
2. First Discourse of the King on the Kingdom of God. (Chap. 5 - 7)
3. Miracles of authentication of the message of Jesus Christ. (Chap. 8 - 9)
4. Jesus' second discourse on his mission and the sending of the twelve disciples on mission. (Chap. 10 - 12)
5. Jesus' third discourse on the parables, the miracles' stories, and his opponents. (Chap. 13 - 17)
6. Jesus' fourth discourse on the attitude of believers, his response to some suggestions made by different categories of people of the crowd, and the account of some miracles. (Chap. 18 - 23)
7. Fifth discourse on the Mount of Olives concerning certain upcoming events, the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, and the mission entrusted to the disciples. (Chap. 24 - 28)