

The Gospel According to Matthew – An Introduction by G.T. Emery

INTRODUCTION

“Concerning the four Gospels which alone are uncontroverted in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the Gospel according to Matthew, who was at one time a publican and afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was written first; and that he composed it in the Hebrew tongue and published it for the converts from Judaism.” So wrote Origen, one of the Fathers of the Church, around 246-248. And what Origen, and his predecessors, believed remained unchallenged until Christian Hermann Weisse in 1838 considered that the rough and primitive Greek of Mark's Gospel indicated that it, not Matthew, was the first to be written. This idea was taken up by German scholars but it led to problems for them – from where did the 'sayings' of Jesus recorded in the other Synoptics come? They solved this problem by inventing a 'source' (in German Quelle) which was given the code 'Q'. It is a source no-one has ever seen, no-one had been aware of its existence, Q was invented as a 'sayings' source but has been elaborated to include narrative, in fact the hypothesis has had to be changed continually to accommodate obvious failings, Q requires that Luke and Matthew wrote their Gospels quite independently ie. not aware of what the other was writing – not very likely.

Matthew.

So the author of the first Gospel was Matthew the Publican; his call by our Lord is mentioned in his own Gospel [9:9], by Mark [2:14] and by Luke [5:27] and these two latter add the name 'Levi'. His position as tax-gatherer at Capernaum meant that he had to be fluent in Greek, in order to deal with his Roman masters, and also in Aramaic to converse with his clients. He must also have been numerate and so it is not unreasonable to presume that he was an educated man – probably the only disciple to be so. His occupation and education therefore prepared him to write his Gospel in both languages. Sitting outside his toll booth, as was the eastern custom, Matthew must often have heard Jesus as he taught by the lake-side. And Capernaum was a good place for Jesus to be teaching since it was a town on the route from Damascus and the east to the port cities of the west also a landing place for ships trading on the lake so many people of all sorts would be passing through. Matthew was one of the worst sort of publican. There were two classes, both regarded as sinners by the Rabbis, one a general tax gatherer – Gabbai, who collected poll tax etc whose level was fixed, and – the Mokhes who levied duty on all imports and exports and was able to invent taxes such as axle tax, wheel tax, etc. The Mokhes also had supreme authority over people and goods on the move and so could order the unloading of vehicles and read private papers (this would have been part of Matthew's espionage job for his Roman commanders). Since Matthew was a direct official of a hated heathen power he would have been extremely unpopular.

After his call to follow Matthew gave a great feast, and invited many of his own sort to meet Jesus; it seems to have been his desire to bring many of those hated ones in his own situation into the understanding of the grace that had met him.

The Church Fathers such as Clement, Tertullian and Origen believed that Matthew died a Natural death, certainly the Church of the 2nd century no knowledge of his martyrdom.

External Evidence.

There are numerous quotations in the works of the Church Fathers that indicate that they had the Greek version of Matthew from which to abstract.

1. The earliest are sentences in the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians in which Mt.11:29, 13:3 are quoted and also in Clement 13:2 there are sentences from Luke. This Epistle can be dated with some certainty to 95-98.
2. The Didache (The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles) contains sixty-six verses from Matthew including the combined Mt./Lk. Lord's prayer and is the the third instance of 'ἐπιούσιος' in the

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ancient literature. From the primitive nature of the liturgies described the Didache has been dated to the third quarter of the 1st century, possibly as early as the 70s AD.

3. The Epistles of St. Ignatius have no literal quotations from Mt. but the saint appears to have used expressions originating in the Gospel – Mt. 10:16, 12:33. St Ignatius was martyred c. 110-117 AD.
4. The Epistle of PolyCarp (c. 117) has a number of literal quotations from Mt. - Mt. 5:44, 26:41.
5. The writer of the Epistle of Barnabas (117-130) contains Mt. 22:14.
6. St. Justin (165) quotes almost verbatim Jesus's prayer in Mt. 26:39,40 and also there are many quotations from Mt. in Justin's writings.
7. Athenagoras (117) quotes almost exactly sentences taken from the Sermon on the Mount – Mt.5 44.
8. Theophilus of Antioch (180) wrote a commentary on Matthew and elsewhere quotes Mt. 5:28,32.
9. Tatian (2nd C) amalgamated the Gospel into his “Diatesseron” and this is an important early source of the Gospel.
10. Clement of Alexandria (215) quotes three hundred passages from Mt.
11. **Papias, c. 125.** Papias was a bishop of Hierapolis and wrote a five volume treatise called “The Explanation of the Lord's Reports” . Κυριακῶν Λογίων Ἐξηγήσις .

Ματθαῖς μὲν οὖν Ἑβραΐδι διαλέτω τὰ λόγια συνετράξατο, ἡρμήνευσεν δ' αὐτὰ ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος.

Now Matthew compiled the reports in a Hebrew manner of speech, but each interpreted them as he could.

Much discussion has been generated by the possible meanings of διαλέτω and λόγια but, perhaps, the important point here is that Papias writes in the past tense - “each interpreted them as he could” suggesting that by his time the Gospel was in the common language of Greek and that the problems of understanding the Hebrew (Aramaic) text were historical.

12. **Irenaeus c. 185.**

ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραΐσις τῆ ἰδία αὐτῶν διαλέκτω καὶ γραφῆς ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν

Ita Mattheus in Hebraeis ipsorum lingua scripturum edidit Evangelii cum Petrus et Paulus Romae evangelizarent et fundarent Ecclesiam.

So Matthew, among the Jews in their own dialect, brought forth a gospel writing when Peter and Paul were evangelizing and founding the Church.

13. **Origen (c. 182-251 this commentary c 246-248)**

ὡς ἐν παραδόσει μαθὼν περὶ τῶν τεσσαρῶν εὐαγγελίων, ἃ καὶ μόνᾳ ἀναντίρρητᾷ ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν γεγραπται τὸ κατὰ τὸν ποτε τελώνην, ὕστερον δὲ ἀπόστολον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Ματθαῖον, ἐδεδικότα αὐτὸ τοῖς ἀπὸ Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ οἰστεύσασιν, γράμμασιν Ἑβραϊκοῖς συντεταγμένον

as learned by tradition about the four gospels, which alone are incontestable in the Church of God under heaven, that, first, written was Matthew, once publican but later apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it for believers from Judaism, composed in Hebrew letters.

14. **Philippus Sidetes (5th C)**

Παπίας Ἱεραπόλεως ἐπίσκοπος ἀκουστὴ τοῦ Θεολόου Ἰωάννου γενόμενος, Πολυκάρπου

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δὲ ἑτάϊρος, πεντε λόγους κυριακῶν λογίων ἔγραφεν.

Papias, who was bishop of Hierapolis, hearer of John the Theologian, and colleague of Polycarp, wrote five volumes on the Lord's reports.

ἐν οἷς ἀπαρίθμησιν ἀποστόλων ποιούμενος μετὰ Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην, Φίλιππον καὶ Θωμᾶν καὶ Ματθαῖον εἰς μαθητὰς τοῦ Κυρίου ἀνέγραψεν Ἀριστίωνα καὶ Ἰωάννην, ἕτερον, ὃν καὶ πρεσβύτερον ἐκάλεσεν

Within which, making an enumeration of the apostles, after Peter and John, Philip and Thomas and Matthew to the disciples of the Lord he listed Aristion and another John, whom he called a presbyter.

15. **Jerome (c. 347-420)** A Doctor of the Latin Church, a renowned biblical scholar who flourished at the beginning of the 5th century. Writer of the 'Vulgate'.

De Viris Illustribus 3

Matthaeus qui et Levi, ex publicano apostolus, primus in Judæa, propter eos qui ex circumcissione crediderunt, Evangelium Christi Hebræis litteris verbisque composuit; quod quis postea in Graecum transtulerit, non satis certum est. Porro ipsum Hebraicum habetur usque hodie in Cæsariensi bibliotheca, quom Pamphilus martyr studiosissime confecit.

Matthew which is also Levi, ex-publican, composed the Gospel of Christ in Hebrew letters and words first in Judea, on account of those from the circumcision who believed; who later translated it in Greek is not quite certain. Further, the Hebrew itself is still kept today in the Cæsarean library, which Pamphilus the martyr diligently assembled.

Mihi quoque a Nazaræis qui in Borea, urbe Syriæ, hoc volumine utuntur, describendi facultas fuit. In quo animadvertendum quo ubicumque evangelista, siva ex persona sua sive ex Domini Salvatoris veteris scripturæ testimoniis abutitur, non sequatur Septuagint translatorum auctoritatem, sed Hebraicum. E quibus illa dua sunt: *Ex Aegypto vocavi Filium meum* [2:15] et, *Quoniam Nazaræus vocbitur*. [2:23]

also got the opportunity from the Nazareans to copy this volume, which they use in Borea, a city in Syria. In it, it is noted that whenever the evangelist, either of his person or of the Lord Saviour, made use of testimonies of the old scriptures, he did not follow the authority of the Seventy translators, but the Hebrew. From which these are two: *Out of Egypt I have called my Son* [2:15], and *For he shall be called a Nazarean*. [2:23]

Prologus Quattuor Evangeliorum

Primus omnium Mattæus est publicanus cognomento Levi, qui evangelium in Judæa hebreo sermone edidit, ob eorum vel maxime causam qui in Jesum crediderunt ex Judæis et nequaquam legis umbra succedente evangelii veritatem servabat.

First of all is Matthew, a publican with the name of Levi, who published a gospel in Judea in the Hebrew speech, especially on account of those of the Jews who believed in Jesus, and he kept the truth of the gospel with the shadow of the Law in no way coming back.

To summarize :- It was the tradition of the Church from the earliest times that Matthew was the first to write a Gospel in 'Hebrew' (it would in fact have been a form of Aramaic – a Syriac dialect)

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at some time from the middle of the 1st C onwards it appeared in Greek. The Fathers of the Church towards the end of the 1st C. and beginning of the 2nd C. quote mainly from Matthew in its Greek form but with lesser inclusions from Luke. There are no quotes during this period from Mark! Since I am arguing that the quotations from Matthew indicate its existence in Greek from at least the last quarter of the 1st C., the converse that the absence of quotations from Mark indicates that Mark's Gospel was not available to the Fathers of the early Church need not be valid. The early Church leaders were natural Greek speakers and Mark's peasant Greek would not have been thought worthy by them to reproduce. At one time it was the opinion of the Tübingen School that Mark's Gospel was a *pré-sis* of Matthew and Luke's Gospels but that is no longer held, however, Mark does seem to be a summary of Matthew and his explanation of certain Jewish practices with which Matthew assumed his readers would be familiar adds to that possibility. Erasmus doubted that Matthew's Gospel had ever appeared in Hebrew but this was not correct since Jerome used the Hebrew version on a number of occasions to solve problems of interpretation also Pantænus had a copy which he brought back to Alexandria with the information that it was the Gospel used in India and Ethiopia. The Greek version of Matthew is not a translation it is an original Greek work. Matthew was perfectly capable of re-writing his Gospel in Greek and it would have been the sensible thing to do (Josephus re-wrote his works in Greek after first producing them in the vernacular) – most Jews of the Eastern Empire spoke Greek and used the LXX as their OT text and in Greek Matthew had a language considerably more elegant and incomparably more powerful than a Syriac dialect in which to report the sayings of our Lord. From 'The History of the Christian Church' by Philip Schaff :- *Greece gave the apostles the most copious and beautiful language to express the divine truth of the Gospel, and Providence had long before so ordered political movements as to spread that language over the world and to make it the organ of civilization and international intercourse, as the Latin was in the Middle Ages, as the French was in the 18th century and as the English is coming to be in the 19th. Under the protection of Roman Law the apostles could travel everywhere and make themselves understood through the Greek language in every city of the Roman Domain.*

Comparison with Mark.

- Almost the whole of Mark's Gospel is to be found in Matthew, however, there are numerous short passages in Mark that are not in Matthew, in fact, around 30 verses of Mark are omitted. Since so little of Mark is peculiar to Mark one can understand why there are no certain quotes from Mark's Gospel prior to the middle of the 2nd C.
- With the exception that in chapters 5-13, where Mt. brackets together ideas, the order is the same.
- Mark's narrative is full of details of movements, times, places whereas Mt. reduces these particular details.
- Matthew, on the other hand is much more detailed when Christ's speaking is reported eg. Christ's apocalyptic discourse.
- Many of the Greek modes of expression favoured by Mk. are avoided by Mt. So Mt. does not use a combination of 'to be' with a participle so characteristic of Mk. Mt. also tends to use the Aorist rather than the Imperfect, not to use double negatives, and his Greek is much more correct than the harsh and colloquial language of Mk.
- Matthew's narrative is much more precise than Mk.'s. One has to suppose that Mk.'s command of Greek was simply not strong enough to transmit the finer detail of actions and sayings.
- Matthew omits any sayings of Jesus which might be understood in a deprecatory sense with regard to our Lord or his disciples or which might be inferred to be shocking to the readers of the Gospel. So Mt. rejects any concept of Jesus being angry and suppresses 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

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Comparison with Luke

Genealogy of Christ

	Matthew	Luke	Locale	Date
	1:1-17	3:23-38		
Birth, Infancy and Adolescence of Jesus				
The birth of Baptist an.		1:5-25	Temple	c 7 BC
The Annunciation		1:26-38	Nazareth	c 6 BC
Visit to Elizabeth		1:39-45	Hills of Judea	c 5 BC
Magnificat		1:46-56		c 5BC
Birth of the Baptist etc		1:57-80	Judea	c 5 BC
Joseph told of Jesus	1:18-25		Nazareth	c 5 BC
Jesus' birth	1:24, 25	2:1-7	Bethlehem	c c5BC,Dec,4BC,Jn.
Proc. by angels		2:8-14	Nr. Bethlehem	c. Jan. 4 BC
Shepherds' visit		2:15-20	Bethlehem	-do-
Jesus' circumcision		2:21	Bethlehem	-do-
Temple visit		2:22-38	Jerusalem	c. 4 BC
Wise men visit	2:1-12		Jerusalem + Bethlehem	c.4 BC *the star of the east c. 7 BC
To Egypt	2:13-18		Jerusalem + Egypt	c. 4 BC
Egypt – Nazareth	2:19-23	2:39		
Jesus' childhood		2:40-50	Nazareth	after 4 BC
Adolescence		2:51, 52	Nazareth	
John the Baptist				
Ministry begins	3:1	3:1, 2	Judean desert	c. 25 – 27 AD
The man	3:2-12	3:3-14		
His Jesus	3:11, 12	3:15-18		
His courage	14:4-12	3:19, 20		
The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry				
Jesus Baptized	3:13-17	3:21-23	Jordan	c. 27 AD
Jesus Tempted	4:1-11	4:1-13	Judean Desert	-do-
To Galilee	4:12	4:14	Judea	27 AD
Returns to Galilee		4:15	from Samaria	27 AD
Galilean Ministry				
Rejected at Nazareth		4:16-30	Nazareth	27 AD
To Capernaum	4:13-17		Capernaum	-do-
4 called	4:18-22	5:1-11	Sea of Galilee	- do-
Healed demoniac		4:31-37	Capernaum	-do-
Petrs Moth. in Law	8:14-17	4:38-41	Capernaum	-do-
1 st preaching Gal	4:23-25	4:42-44	Galilee	-do-
Leper healed	8:1-4	5:12-16	Galilee	-do-
Paralytic healed	9:1-8	5:17-26	Capernaum	-do-
Levi called	9:9-13	5:27-32	Capernaum	-do-
Disciples defended	9:14-17	5:33-39	Capernaum	-do-
Picked grains	12:1-8	6:1-5	En route – Galilee	28 AD
Withered hand crd.	12:9-14	6:6-11	Galilee	-do-
Crowds healed	12:15-21	6:17-19	Sea of Galilee	-do-
12 selected		6:12-16	Nr. Capernaum	-do-

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Sermon on Mt	5:1-7:29	6:20-49	Nr. Capernaum	28 AD
Centurion's servant hld	8:5-13	7:1-10	Capernaum	-do-
John B's doubts	11:2-19	7:18-35	Galilee	-do-
Woes for privileged	11:20-30			-do-
Sinful woman anoints		7:36-50	Simon's Hs. Capernaum	-do-
Another tour of Gal.		8:1-3	Galilee	-do-
Jesus accused of blasphemy	12:22-37	11:14-23	Capernaum	-do-
Demand for sign	12:38-45	11:24-26, 29-36	Capernaum	-do-
Mother & brothers	12:46-50	8:19-21	Capernaum	-do-
Parables of Sower Seed, Tares, Leaven, Treasure, Pearl, Net & Lamp told	13:1-52	8:4-18	By Sea of Galilee	-do-
Sea made calm	8:23-27	8:22-25	Sea of Galilee	-do-
Gadarene demoniac	8:28-34	8:26-39	E. shore of Galilee	-do-
Healing of Jairus' daughter & woman with haemorrhage	9:18-26	8:40-56		-do-
2 sights restored	9:27-31			-do-
Mute demoniac hld	9:32-34			-do-
Jesus rejected again	13:53-58		Nazareth	-do-
12 sent forth	9:35-11:1	9:1-6		-do-
John beheaded	14:1-12	9:7-9	Galilee	-do-
12 return, Jesus withdraws, 5000 fed	14:13-21	9:10-17	Nr. Bethsaida	Spring 29 AD
Walks on water	14:22-33		Sea of Galilee	-do-
Sick at Gennesaret healed	14:34-36		Gennesaret	29 AD
Traditions attacked	15:1-20			-do-
Syro-Phoenician healed	15:21-28		Phoenicia	-do-
Healings	15:29-31		Decapolis	-do-
4000 fed	15:32-39		Decapolis	-do-
Pharisees attack	16:1-4		Magdala	-do-
Blind mn hld	16:5-12			-do-
Peter confesses Jesus the Christ	16:13-20	9:18-21	Nr. Caesarea Philippi	-do-
Jesus foretells his death	16:21-26	9:22-25	Caesarea Philippi	-do-
Kingdom promised		9:26:27		-do-
Transfiguration	17:1-13	9:28-36	? Mt. Hermon	-do-
Epileptic cured	17:14-21	9:37-42	? Mt. Hermon	-do-
Jesus again tells of death & resurrection	17:22-23	9:43-45	Galilee	-do-
Taxes	17:24-27		Capernaum	-do-
Who is greatest? etc	18:1-35	9:46-62	Capernaum	-do-
Depart Galilee	19:1	9:51-56	Through Samaria	Autumn 29 AD

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Jesus' Last Judean and Perea Ministry

Service of 70	10:1-24	Prob. Judea	Late 29 AD
Good Samaritan	10:25-37	? Judea	-do-
Martha & Mary	10:38-42	Bethany	-do-
Lesson on prayer	11:1-13	? Judea	-do-
Jesus accused of being in league with Beelzebub	11:14-36		-do-
Against Scribes & Phars.	11:37-54		-do-
Teaching on hypocrisy etc	12:1-59		-do-
Repent or perish	13:6-9		-do-
Bent wmn healed	13:10-17		-do-
Mustard seed parable	13:18-21	Prob. Perea	-do-
Prepares to return to Jerusalem	13:22-35	Perea	Winter 29 AD
Man with dropsy	14:1-24		-do-
Demands of discipleship	14:25-35		-do-
Parables of 3 lost	15:1-32		-do-
Unjust steward etc	16:1-31		-do-
Service, Faith, Influence	17:1-10		
Begins last journey to Jerusalem	17:11	Samaria, Galilee	30 AD
Heals ten lepers	17:12-19		-do-
The coming kingdom	17:20-37		-do-
Parables – persistent woman etc	18:1-14		-do-
Divorce	19:1-12		-do-
Blesses children	19:13-15	18:15-17	Perea
Rich ruler	19:16-30	18:18-30	Perea
11 th hr. labourers	20:1-16		-do-
Foretells death & resurrection	20:17-19	18:31-34	Near Jordan
Ambition of Jas. & Jn.	20:20-28		-do-
Blind Bartimaeus	18:35-43	Jericho	-do-
Zacchaeus	19:1-10	Jericho	-do-
Minas	19:11-27	Jericho	-do-

Jesus' Final Week of Ministry – Spring 30 AD

Triumphal Entry	21:1-9	19:28-44	Bethany, Jerus. Beth.	Sunday
Fig Tree Cursed & Temple cleansed	21:10-19	19:45-48	Bethany to Jerusalem	Monday
Withered Fig Tree	21:20-22		Bethany to Jerusalem	Tuesday
Sanhedrin Challenges	21:23-22:14	20:1-19	Jerusalem	Tuesday
Tribute to Caesar	22:15-22	20:20-26	Jerusalem	Tuesday
Sadducees question	22:23-33	20:27-40	Jerusalem	Tuesday
Pharisees question	22:34-40		Jerusalem	Tuesday
Jesus & David	22:41-46	20:41-44	Jerusalem	Tuesday
Jesus' last sermon	23:1-39	20:45-47	Jerusalem	Tuesday
Widow's mite	21:1-4		Jerusalem	Tuesday

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Jesus tells of future	24:1-54	21:5-36	Mt. of Olives	Tuesday
Ten virgins etc.	25:1-46		Mt of Olives	Tuesday
Jesus tells when crucifixion will be	26:1-5	22:1,2		Tuesday
Anointing by Mary	26:6-13		Bethany	Tuesday
Judas makes the contract	26:14-16	22:3-6		
Preparation for the Passover	26:17-19	22:7-13	Jerusalem	Thursday
Passover meal taken	26:20	22:14-16	Upper Room	Thursday P.M.
		22:24-30		
Judas revealed	26:21-25	22:21-23	Upper Room	Thursday P.M.
Protests of loyalty	26:31-35	22:31-38	Upper Room	Thursday P.M.
Institution of the Lord's Supper	26:26-29	22:17-20	Upper Room	Thursday P.M.
The Agony of Gethsemane	26:30	22:39-46	Mt of Olives	Thurs/Friday
	26:36-46			
Betrayal etc	26:47-56	22:47-53	Gethsemane	Friday
Trial by Caiaphas	26:57,59-68	22:54,63-65	Jerusalem	Friday
Peter's denial	26:58,69-75	22:54-62	Jerusalem	Friday
Condemned by Council	27:1	22:66-71	Jerusalem	Friday
Judas' death	27:3-10			
Jesus bef. Pilate 1	27:2,11-14	23:1-7	Jerusalem	Friday
Jesus bef. Herod		23:6-12	Jerusalem	Friday
Jesus bef. Pilate 2	27:15-26	23:13-25	Jerusalem	Friday
Jesus mocked	27:27-30		Jerusalem	Friday
To Golgotha	27:31-34	23:26-33	Jerusalem	Friday
1 st 3 hrs on the Cross	27:35-44	23:33-43	Calvary	Friday
Lst. 3 hrs on the Cross	27:45-50	23:33-46	Calvary	Friday
Events at Jesus' death	27:51-56	23:45,47-49		Friday
Jesus' burial	27:57-60	23:50-54	Jerusalem	Friday
Tomb sealed	27:61-66	23:55,56	Jerusalem	Fri/Saturday

The Resurrection to the Ascension

Women visit tomb	28:1-10	24:1-11	Nr. Jerusalem	Dawn of 1 st Day
Peter & John see tomb		24:12	Nr. Jerusalem	Sunday
Jesus appears to other women	28:9,10		Jerusalem	The Lord's Day
Emmaus road		24:13-35		Sun. afternoon
Jesus appears to disciples without Thomas		24:36-43	Jerusalem	Late Sunday
Great Commission	28:16-20	24:44-49		During 40 Days
The Ascension		24:50-53	Mt Olivet	Ascension Day.

Contents and Characteristics.

The principal subject of Matthew's Gospel is Jesus' teaching. The narrative is used as a vehicle for our Lord's discourses and for instruction given by Matthew himself very often it is obvious that the relationship between discourse and narrative is artificial – the Gospel is not a biography of Jesus.

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Our Lord is shown to be, by his relationship with both Jew and Gentile, the heir and securer of all the promises of the Old Testament. There are two central phrases 'son of David' and 'son of Abraham'. The whole book revolves around the development of these phrases with Jesus rejecting the former in favour of the latter. Rejecting the idea of kingship of the Jews in favour of that promise to Abraham which went to all people of the earth not just to the confines of his own Jewish descendants. However, there are some conflicts to be resolved here. Abraham was of the common stock of humanity and the size of his prophesied progeny must be metaphorical – but it was required of OT prophecy that Jesus should be of the kingly lineage of David! Perhaps we can see how that is accommodated as we study the Gospel. The Gospel is full of Old Testament allusions where Christ is predicted and foreshadowed and the Gospel aims to prove that Jesus is the one Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote of. There are 65 references to the OT, 43 of them direct verbal citations but generally translated into Matthew's own Greek from the Hebrew rather than quotes from the LXX.

Matthew's Greek

Our Apostle and Evangelist used in the region of 1475 words which amount to around a quarter of the various words used in the NT. There are 137 words used only by Matthew of which 76 are found in the Classical literature and 21 are to be found in the LXX. Certain words such as βαπτολογέω in 6:7 which here means the use of repeated idle words, βιάζω – suffer violence in 11:1, εὐνουχιζω - to make a eunuch as in 19:12, appear to be first used in our literature by Matthew. In our literature ἐκφύω (put forth) only appears in Mt. 24:32 and Mk. 13:28 but is known in other writings, on the other hand ἐπιούσιος is found only in Mt. 6:11, Lk. 11:3 and the Didache 8:2 and nowhere else in all Greek literature. Matthew has a number of characteristic phrases thus ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν he repeats 32 times (Mark and Luke replace 'heaven' with 'God' which occurs four times in Mt.). Similarly ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος, συντελεῖα τοῦ αἰῶνος, συνᾶραι λόγον, etc are highly characteristic of his style. Mt. uses the word τότε 89 times and it has been suggested that this is a sign of Matthew's natural language of Aramaic showing in his Greek using 'then' in Greek for the Aramaic 'KE' – 'according to' or 'after', 'as', 'when' 'like'. Matthew has a preference for ἀπό and uses it 106 times in situations where Mark and Luke would use ἐκ. The phrase υἱοῦ Δαυιδ he uses ten times and has a tendency to repeat certain phrases especially before introducing an OT quotation (in German NT jargonese – 'a formula quotation'). There are certain constructions such as the use of the Genitive Absolute and by the linking of of clauses with 'men. . .de' which indicate that the Gospel is not a translation since these either have no equivalent in Aramaic or ought not to be used in the context they are in Greek. The paradox is that all but one of the uses of 'men. . . de' occur in the discourses of Jesus, which would have been spoken in Aramaic, and the Genitive Absolutes used mainly in the narrative sections.

The Gospel's Structure

There appear to be some deliberate structural patterns based on numbers – the special number 'three' and the perfect number 'seven', and multiple thereof, so there are:-

1. Three groups of fourteen generations – 1:1-17
2. Three temptations with replies – 4:1-11
3. Eight beatitudes – 5:3-10, eight is the one number between six and nine which does not fit the pattern. Any answers?
4. Six new ways of looking at the old Law – 5:21-47
5. Three types of religious observances – 6:1-6, 16-18.
6. Three symbolic actions – 21:1-22.
7. Three parables to cause debate – 21:28-22:14.
8. Seven woes on scribes and Pharisees – 23:13-36

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9. Three prayers and three returns to sleeping disciples- 26:36-46.
10. Three denials by Peter – 26:69-75.

Repeated phrases often occur in groups of three.

The gospel can be divided into three sections :-

1. The Person of Jesus the Messiah – 1:1-4:16.
2. The Proclamation of Jesus the Messiah – 4:17-16:20.
3. The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah – 16:21-28:20.

Matthew's Gospel appears to be the most Jewish of the four, containing as it does unexplained Jewish customs, the insistence on the fulfilment of OT prophesies and the prominence given to topics that would be of vital interest to Jews. But it is also it can be seen as the Gospel in which, through our Lord, God calls on non-Jews to share in the privileges of Israel. It could be said to explain as St. Paul said how “ Jesus Christ, a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy” - Rom. 15:8,9.

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