

Bible Survey of the Book of Matthew

WHY THE GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN. Matthew has a number of clear reasons for writing his Gospel.

1. To show the connection between Jesus and the Old Testament
2. To record the extensive teaching Christ gave to his disciples.
3. To set out how Christ expected his disciples to behave.
4. To answer questions raised by members of the church, eg. About the early life of Jesus or his coming again.
5. To speak about the way the church should be run.

THE AUTHOR. The Gospel does not claim to have been written by Matthew, but early tradition firmly states that he was its author. We know little of him, since he is only mentioned in 9:9 and 10:3, except that he was a tax collector who was personally called by Jesus. His name means 'gift of God'. Elsewhere he is called Lei (Mark 2:14)

THE READERS. The issues which concern Matthew most suggest that the majority of his readers would have been Jews. Most would already be Christians, but he may be writing to persuade others that Jesus was the Messiah the Jews had expected for so long.

Yet he does not ignore the Gentiles altogether and he may be writing with a view to answering some of their questions about the Jewish origin of their faith.

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN? We cannot say when it was written. It must have been written after Mark wrote his Gospel since Matthew is familiar with Mark., But it cannot be too late because the problems of the Jewish Christians with which he deals gradually became less important. Many dates between AD 50 AND 90 HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED.

SPECIAL FEATURES.

1. Matthew is a very orderly Gospel. It sandwiches section of Jesus' teaching between sections describing his activities.
2. In his desire to show that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah he frequently quotes for the Old Testament. There are 65 references in all to the Old Testament.
3. Matthew speaks about the kingdom of heaven (33 times), which is appropriate for the Jewish background he is writing from whereas other Gospels speak about the kingdom of God.
4. Alone among the Gospels Matthew speaks of the church He writes as a pastor dealing with questions and problems

For more on the book of Matthew get the following book "Opening up God's word the compact survey of the bible" by John Balchin on Amazon for as low as 10 cents.