

many claim, Matthew depended on Mark's Gospel (for its date see our later notes on Mark), Matthew must have been written between AD 65 and 100 to allow time for recognition of its canonical status and spread of copies to western Asia Minor. Since some scholars believe that Matthew was the first Gospel written, and did not depend on Mark, the first (earlier) date could, of course, be set back.

For whom was it written? In Matthew, Jewish customs are not explained as they are in Mark: Matthew contains several passages seemingly intended to answer Jewish accusations (the Virgin Birth, birth in Bethlehem but childhood in Nazareth, bribing of the soldiers); Matthew was written in Greek, not translated from Hebrew or Aramaic; Matthew constantly appeals to the Old Testament. These characteristics seem to indicate that the author was a Jew writing for Jews, careful to answer Jewish objections and to refer to their own Scriptures for proof of the truth of his statements. It may, therefore, have been intended for Jewish converts to use as a learning tool preparatory to evangelizing their brethren.

In summary the Gospel of Matthew is an unsigned work assigned by tradition to one of Jesus' apostles, probably written in the second half of the first century. There is no intrinsic reason to deny this tradition. Matthew contains a genealogy (1:1-17), narrative prose, and speeches or sermons.

Outline:

Matthew shows a careful and methodical pattern, alternating passages of Jesus' words and works.

- I. Jesus preparation 1-4
- II. Sermon on the Mount 5-7
- III. Jesus' Acts of power 8:1-9:34
- IV. Mission of the Twelve 9:35-10:42
- V. Meetings with Others 11-12
- VI. Parables of the Kingdom 13:1-52
- VII. Jesus rejected 13:53-17:27
- VIII. Kingdom community 18
- IX. Jesus in Jerusalem 19-22
- X. Warnings and Prophecies 23-25
- XI. Jesus Death/Resurrection 26-28

(further outlines occur on our chart of Matthew following page 15.)

go to chart

History of Redemption:

Matthew begins with the subtitle "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham" (NIV). Jesus is portrayed from the outset as the heir of the