



**Lecture # 4 Part 2**

# INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

**Theme:**

*Since none of the gospel writers identify themselves in their writings, it is necessary to rely on the early church fathers as well as on evidence that is within the gospels themselves.*

4. In the early twentieth century **H. J. Holtzmann** theorized that Mark was the first written Gospel and that both Matthew and Luke used his Gospel structure plus a separation document containing the sayings of Jesus called Q (German *quelle* or “source”). This was labeled the “two source” theory (also endorsed by **Fredrick Schleiermacher in 1832**).
5. Later **B. H. Streeter** theorized a modified “two source” theory called “the four source” theory which posited a “proto Luke” plus Mark plus Q.
6. The above theories of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels are only speculation. There is no historical nor actual manuscript evidence of either a “Q” source or a “proto Luke.”

Modern scholarship simply does not know how the Gospels developed nor who wrote them (the same is true of the OT Law and former Prophets). However, this lack of information does not affect the Church’s view of their inspiration or trustworthiness as historical as well as faith documents.

7. There are obvious similarities in structure and wording between the Synoptics, but there are also many arresting differences. Differences are common in eye witness accounts. The early church was not bothered by the divergence of these three eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ life.

It may be that the target audience, the style of the author and the different languages involved (Aramaic and Greek) account for the seeming discrepancies. It must be stated that these inspired writers, editors or compilers had the freedom to select, arrange, adapt and summarize the events and teachings of Jesus’ life (cf. *How To Read The Bible For All It Is Worth* by Fee and Stuart, pp. 113–148).



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- E. There is a tradition of the early church from **Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis ( A.D. 130)** which was recorded in **Eusebius' *Historical Ecclesiasticus* 3:39:16** that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic. However, modern scholarship has rejected this tradition because
1. the Greek of Matthew does not have the characteristics of a translation from Aramaic,
  2. there are Greek word plays (cf. [Matthew 6:16](#); [Matthew 21:41](#); [Matthew 24:30](#)),
  3. most of the OT quotes are from the Septuagint (LXX) not the Masoretic Hebrew Texts. It is possible that [Matthew 10:3](#) is a hint at Matthew's authorship. It adds "tax-gatherer" after his name. This self deprecating comment is not found in Mark. Matthew also was not a well known person in the NT or early church. Why would so much tradition have developed around his name and this first apostolic Gospel?

### III. DATE

- A. In many ways the date of the Gospel is linked to the Synoptic problem. Which Gospel was written first and who borrowed from whom?
1. Eusebius, in *Historical Ecclesiasticus*, **3:39:15** said Matthew used Mark as a structural guide,
  2. Augustine, however, called Mark "a camp follower" and an abbreviator of Matthew.
- B. The best approach would be to try to set the limits of possible dates
1. It must have been written before **A.D. 96** or **115**
    - a. **Clement of Rome (A.D. 96)** made an allusion to Matthew's Gospel in his letter to the Corinthians.
    - b. **Ignatius (A.D. 110–115)**, the Bishop of Antioch, quoted [Matthew 3:15](#) in his letter *To the Smyrneans*, **1:1**
  2. The more difficult question is how early could it have been written?
    - a. obviously after the events recorded which would be in the mid 30's,
    - b. some time would have had to pass for its need, composition, and circulation,
    - c. what is [chapter 24's](#) relationship to the destruction of **Jerusalem in A.D. 70**? Parts of Matthew imply the sacrificial system was still in place ([Matthew 5:23–24](#); [Matthew 12:5–7](#); [Matthew 17:24–27](#); [Matthew 26:60–61](#)). This means a date before **A.D. 70**,



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- d. if Matthew and Mark were written during the time of Paul's ministry (A.D. 48–68) why does he never refer to them? **Irenaeus** is quoted by Eusebius in *Historical Ecclesiasticus* 5:8:2, to say that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were in Rome. Peter and Paul were both killed during Nero's reign which ended in A.D. 68,
  - e. modern scholarship's earliest guess is A.D. 50.
- C. Many scholars believe that the four Gospels relate more to geographical centers of Christianity than to the traditional authors. Matthew may have been written from Antioch of Syria, because of its Jewish/Gentile church issues, possibly about A.D. 60 or at least before A.D. 70.