

1. Matthew

Trying to identify who *wrote* a gospel, whom it was written *to*, and *why* it was written can be challenging as these are not clearly stated. We can find satisfactory answers to these questions from information outside the Bible (called *external* evidence) and inside the Bible (called *internal* evidence).

A. Is Matthew the author?

1) External evidence

- a. All existing and known Greek manuscripts of Matthew have the title, “*According to Matthew.*” Titles were added early in the history of the transmission of the text. They tell us who the author was and distinguishes it from other gospels. These were probably added in the second century AD.
- b. A number of church fathers (early Christian teachers) say that Matthew the apostle was the author of the first gospel— Papias (c. A.D. 70-150), Irenaeus (c. A.D. 185), Origen (c. A.D. 185-254), and Eusebius (c. A.D. 325)

2) Internal evidence

- a. Matthew is the **only** gospel writer who refers to himself as a *tax collector* (10:3).
- b. Only this gospel uses the name **Matthew** when Jesus called him to follow Him (Matt 9:9). Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27-28 call him Levi.
- c. After Jesus’ call of Matthew he gave a feast at *his* house. Mark 2:15 and Luke 5:29 call it “his house” but Matthew 9:10 calls it “*the* house.” Which would you probably say if you were referring to *your* house?
- d. Matthew’s gospel uses technical financial terms (22:19), mentions Peter’s questioning by temple-tax collectors (17:24-27), and relays the large figures of the story of the unforgiving debtor (18:23-25). We would expect this from an author who was a tax-collector!

B. To *whom* did Matthew write?

- 1) Church history unanimously says that Matthew wrote to **Jews** who lived in Palestine.
- 2) Matthew’s gospel (the *internal* evidence) definitely points to a Jewish readership—
 - a. Matthew 5:17-19 emphasizes Jesus’ positive attitude toward the Mosaic Law
 - b. Only Matthew records the refutation of Jewish slander in 27:62-66; 28:11-15
 - c. Matthew has the most OT quotes of all the Gospels
 - d. Aramaic terms are not translated and Jewish customs are not explained (15:2; 23:5)
 - e. The genealogy begins with Abraham, the father of the Jews (1:1-2)

- f. Matthew uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God”
- g. Only Matthew says that Jesus’ ministry was to the lost sheep of Israel (10:5-6; 15:24)

C. *Why did Matthew write? What was his purpose?*

- 1) Matthew’s purpose is nowhere clearly stated. By studying the content of his gospel we can learn what his purpose was. What are the basic themes of Matthew’s gospel?
 - a. Jesus’ qualifications as the Messiah
 - Origin and birth
 - Teaching
 - Works
 - Fulfillment of OT prophecies
 - b. Israel’s **rejection** of Jesus as the Messiah (12:24; 21:15)
 - c. Israel’s **future** in relation to Jesus the Messiah, 24-25
 - d. Jesus’ establishing the **church** as the body through whom He would work in-between Israel’s judgment and reestablishment (only Matthew mentions the church)
 - e. The death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah

Matthew demonstrates that—

- a. Jesus was the promised Messiah (11:2-6, 23)
 - b. Salvation is only through Jesus the Messiah (11:28-30)
 - c. Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah (12:23-24)
 - d. Jesus established the church (16:18; 18:15-17; 28:19-20)
 - e. Jesus will return to be Israel’s Messiah and establish the kingdom (25:31)
 - f. Jesus died for sinners and rose from the dead (26-28)
- 2) Matthew’s ultimate objective in writing was to prove that **Jesus is the Christ, the King of the Jews**. By proving this Matthew sought to see his fellow Jews believe in Jesus as the Messiah and ground them in the faith.

B. What are the “keys” to Matthew?

- 1) Theme: Jesus is the Christ, the King of the Jews
- 2) Word: “**Kingdom**”
- 3) Verses: 1:1, 21; 2:2
- 4) Pivotal Verse: 12:24

C. What did Matthew write? How did Matthew seek to accomplish his purpose?

Here's a basic outline of the Gospel according to Matthew—

- 1) Jesus' ministry **proving** He is the Messiah, 1:1-12:24
- 2) Jesus' ministry **after His rejection** as the Messiah, 12:24-28:20

Here's a more detailed outline of Matthew's Gospel—

- 1) The origin and birth of Jesus the Christ, 1:1-2:23
 - a. Genealogy, 1:1-17
 - b. Birth, 1:18-25
 - c. Visit of Magi, 2:1-12
 - d. Flight to and return from Egypt, 2:13-23
- 2) The gospel of the Messiah's Kingdom, 3:1-7:29
 - a. John the Baptist's ministry, 3:1-12
 - b. Jesus' baptism and testing by Satan, 3:13-4:1
 - c. Jesus' early ministry in Galilee, 4:12-25
 - d. The sermon on the mount, 5:1-7:29
- 3) Jesus' miracles proved He was the Messiah, 8:1-11:1
 - a. Miracles showing Jesus authority over disease, 8:1-22
 - b. Miracles showing Jesus' authority over nature and demons, 8:23-9:17
 - c. Miracles showing Jesus' authority over death and the grave, 9:18-34
 - d. The 12 sent throughout Israel to preach, 9:35-11:1
- 4) Israel's Opposition to Jesus, 11:2-13:52
 - a. Jesus and John the Baptist, 11:2-19
 - b. Jesus condemns unrepentant cities, 11:20-30
 - c. Jesus' activity on the Sabbath, 12:1-21
 - d. Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees, 12:22-50
 - e. Parables of the Kingdom, 13:1-52
- 5) Increasing divisions because of Jesus the Messiah, 13:53-18:35
 - a. Jesus' response to spiritual blindness and rejection, 13:53-14:12
 - b. Series of miracles, 14:13-36
 - c. Confrontation with elders over Jewish traditions, 15:1-20
 - d. Series of miracles, 15:21-39
 - e. Confrontation with elders over Jesus as Messiah, 16:1-28
 - f. Jesus' transfiguration, 17:1-13
 - g. Series of miracles, 17:14-27
 - h. Sermon, 18:1-35
- 6) Climax of opposition to Jesus as the Messiah, 19:1-23:39
 - a. Jesus' correction of Pharisees regarding marriage and divorce, 19:1-12
 - b. Blessing of children, 19:13-15
 - c. Instruction concerning wealth and position, 19:16-20:16
 - d. Jesus' prediction of His death, 20:17-19
 - e. A mother's request, 20:20-28
 - f. Jesus heals blind men, 20:29-34

- g. Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and beginning of the week of His suffering (Passion week), 21:1-23:39
 - Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, 21:1-11
 - Confrontation with religious leaders, 21:12-22:46
 - Denunciation of religious leaders, 23:1-39
- 7) The last message of the Messiah, 24:1-26:5
 - a. Jesus' conversation with disciples, 24:1-3
 - b. Description of the first half of the Tribulation, 24:4-14
 - c. Description of the second half of the Tribulation, 24:15-28
 - d. Prophecy of Christ's Second Coming, 24:39-31
 - e. Illustrations of and exhortations to watchfulness, 24:32-25:13
 - f. Instruction concerning judgments after the Tribulation, 25:14-46
 - g. Concluding words to disciples and conspiracy of His enemies, 26:1-5
- 8) The death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, 26:6-28:20
 - a. Anointed for burial, 26:6-13
 - b. Judas' bargain to betray Jesus, 26:14-16
 - c. Last Passover, 26:17-35
 - d. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, 26:36-46
 - e. Jesus betrayed and arrested, 26:47-56
 - f. Trials and denials, 26:57-27:26
 - g. Crucifixion and burial of Jesus the Messiah, 27:27-66
 - h. Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, 28:1-20
 - Empty tomb, 28:1-7
 - Appearance to disciples, 28:8-10
 - Religious leaders' cover-up, 28:11-15
 - Jesus the Messiah's instructions to disciples until His return, 28:18-20

2. Mark

A. Is Mark the author?

- 1) External evidence
 - a. All existing and known Greek manuscripts of Mark have the title, “*According to Mark.*” Titles were added early in the history of the transmission of the text. They tell us who the author was and distinguishes it from other gospels. These were probably added in the second century AD.
 - b. A number of church fathers (early Christian teachers) say that Mark the apostle was the author of the first gospel (see sources under “Matthew” above), closely connected with the apostle Peter.

2) Internal evidence

Nothing in this gospel clearly says “Mark wrote this,” but it is fully consistent with what the NT says about Peter and Mark. Here are some examples:

- a. Aramaic expressions thought to be Peter’s exact phrases of Jesus’ words (5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36)
- b. The close details in this gospel reflect an eyewitness account
- c. This gospel has details about Peter’s life and ministry that are not found in the other gospels (see 1:36; 11:21; 13:3; 16:7)

B. To *whom* did Mark write?

The early church unanimously understood that Mark wrote to **Romans** while he was in Rome. We can see this from the following:

- 1) Mark has the fewest OT references of all the Gospels
- 2) He says little about the OT Law, explains Jewish customs (see 7:3-4; 12:42; 14:12), and interprets Aramaic phrases (see 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36)
- 3) Mark clarifies obvious geographical references in Palestine and Jerusalem (see 13:3)
- 4) He uses Latin words instead of Greek ones (4:21; 6:27; 12:14, 42; 15:16)
- 5) Alexander and Rufus are named as the sons of Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus’ cross (15:21; Rom 16:13)
- 6) Mark was linked with Rome and the ministries of both Peter and Paul during their time there (see Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24; 1 Pet 5:13)

C. *Why* did Mark write? What was his *purpose*?

- 1) Like Matthew, Mark does not tell why he wrote his account, so we must look at what he wrote. We can see these things from Mark’s Gospel:
 - a. It focuses more on what Jesus **did** than on what He *taught*

- b. It emphasizes the **suffering** of Jesus
 - c. The **first half** of the gospel (1:1-8:26) focuses on Jesus' **miracles** and leads up to Peter's confession as to the true nature of who Jesus is
 - d. The **second half** of the gospel (8:27-16:20) focuses on Jesus' **suffering and death**
- 2) Mark probably had two purposes in writing:
- a. **Evangelism**—as the Son of Man Jesus laid His life down to redeem sinners (10:45). This is the essence of the “good news.” Mark’s record of who Jesus is and what He did is an evangelistic tool, striving to convince readers of Christ’s deity and sacrificial death.
 - b. **Discipleship**—as Mark showed Jesus’ suffering, his readers would understand that suffering for Christ is an essential mark of being His follower (see 8:34). Mark wants to edify (build up) believers by teaching them about the good news of salvation, Christ’s person and ministry.

“Mark gives a summary, not exactly of the most important things about Jesus, but rather of the things which unbelievers or recent converts could most easily understand. Hence the omission of the mystery of the birth, of the profound teaching of the early Judean ministry, of the intimate instructions to the disciples. These things are of fundamental importance. But they can best be understood only after one has first acquired a thorough grasp of the public ministry, and of the death and resurrection of the Lord” (Machen, *The New Testament*, p. 204).

Mark wants his readers to understand **who Jesus is** and **what real discipleship involves**.

D. What are the “keys” to Mark?

- 1) Theme: Jesus is the **Son** of God and **Suffering** Servant

Mark’s gospel graphically demonstrates the truth Paul taught in Philippians 2:6-7 “*who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*”⁸ *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*”

- 2) Word: “**immediately**”
- 3) Verses: 1:1; 10:45
- 4) Pivotal Verse: 8:27

E. **What did Mark write? How did Mark seek to accomplish his purpose?**

Here's a basic outline of the Gospel according to Mark—

- 1) Jesus' **miracles**, 1:1-8:26
- 2) Jesus' **suffering and death**, 8:27-16:20

Here Mark connects Jesus' predictions of *His coming suffering* with teaching about *what it means to follow Him* (see 8:31-38; 9:30-37; 10:32-45).

Mark shows Jesus to be the Son of God by recording His *actions*, especially His miracles. When Jesus' teaching is recorded it is in the setting of His *works*. Jesus' teaching was part of His work as the servant of the Lord.

Here's a more detailed outline of Mark—

- 1) The Coming of God's Son, 1:1-13
 - a. Ministry of John the Baptist, 1:1-8
 - b. Baptism of Jesus, 1:9-11
 - c. Temptation of Jesus, 1:12-13
- 2) Jesus' Ministry Begins in Galilee, 1:14-3:6
 - a. Introduction, 1:14-15
 - b. Calling four disciples, 1:16-20
 - c. Ministry in Capernaum, 1:21-34
 - d. Ministry in Galilee, 1:35-45
 - e. Healing of paralytic, 2:1-12
 - f. Calling of Levi, 2:13-17
 - g. Pharisees' questioning, 2:18-22
 - h. Disciples pick grain on the Sabbath, 2:23-28
 - i. Jesus heals on the Sabbath, 3:1-6
- 3) Jesus' Ministry Continues in Galilee, 3:7-5:43
 - a. Increasing popularity among Jews and Gentiles, 3:7-12
 - b. Commissioning of the twelve, 3:13-19
 - c. Growing controversy with religious leaders, 3:20-30
 - d. Teaching about Jesus' true family, 3:31-35
 - e. Teaching on the kingdom, 4:1-34
 - f. Calming of the storm, 4:35-41
 - g. Exorcising the Gerasene demoniac, 5:1-20
 - h. Raising Jairus' daughter, healing woman with hemorrhage, 5:21-43
- 4) Jesus' Ministry Concludes in Galilee, 6:1-8:26
 - a. Rejection by people of Nazareth, 6:1-6
 - b. Mission and ministry of the twelve, 6:7-13
 - c. Herod's reaction to Jesus and John, 6:14-29
 - d. Feeding of five thousand, 6:30-44
 - e. Walking on water, 6:45-52
 - f. Healing many in Gennesaret, 6:53-56
 - g. Confrontation with Pharisees, 7:1-23

- h. Healing the Syrophenician woman, 7:24-30
 - i. Healing a deaf man, 7:31-37
 - j. Feeding four thousand, 8:1-10
 - k. Confrontation with Pharisees, 8:11-21
 - l. Healing a blind man, 8:22-26
- 5) Jesus' Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem, 8:27-10:52
- a. Peter's confession and Jesus' teaching about self-denial, 8:27-38
 - b. The transfiguration, 9:1-13
 - c. Exorcising a demon possessed boy, 9:14-29
 - d. Jesus' instruction about His death and resurrection, 9:30-50
 - e. Teaching about divorce, 10:1-12
 - f. Teaching on faith, the kingdom of God, and eternal life, 10:13-31
 - g. Jesus' teaching about His death and resurrection, 10:32-45
 - h. Healing of blind Bartimaeus, 10:46-52
- 6) Jesus' Final Ministry in Jerusalem Before His Crucifixion, 11:1-13:37
- a. Triumphal entry, 11:1-11
 - b. Cursing of fig tree, cleansing of the temple, 11:12-26
 - c. First confrontation with Jewish leaders, 11:27-12:12
 - d. Second confrontation with Jewish leaders, 12:13-34
 - e. Warning of hypocrisy, commendation of widow's offering, 12:35-44
 - f. Olivet discourse, 13:1-37
- 7) Jesus' Suffering and Resurrection, 14:1-16:8
- a. Plot to kill Jesus, anointing for burial, 14:1-11
 - b. Passover observed, 14:12-25
 - c. Betrayal and arrest, 14:26-52
 - d. Trial, 14:53-15:15
 - e. Suffering and crucifixion, 15:16-41
 - f. Burial and resurrection, 15:42-16:8
 - g. Post-resurrection ministry and instructions, 16:9-20