



# Authorship & Date

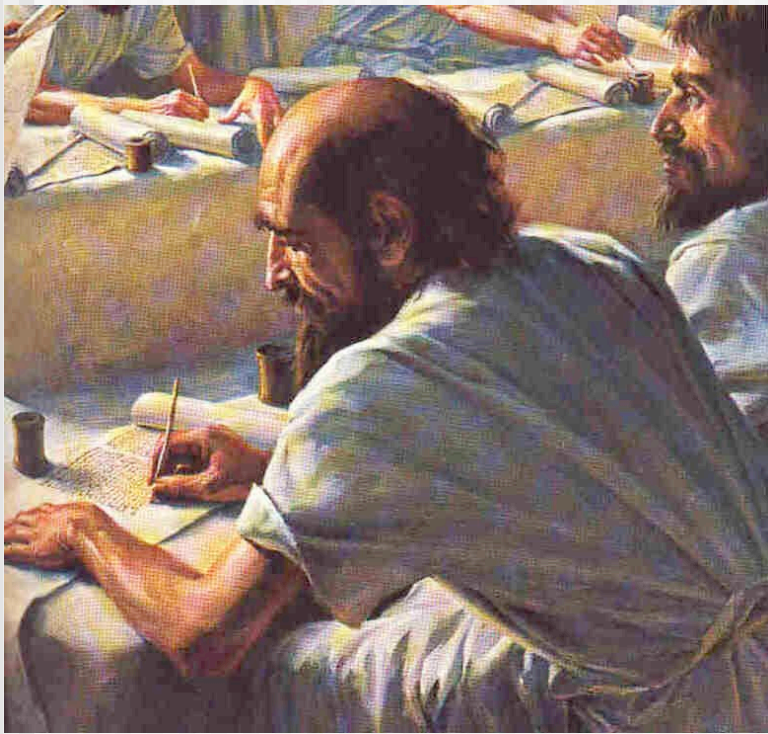
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of the Synoptic  
Gospels

*Robert C. Newman*

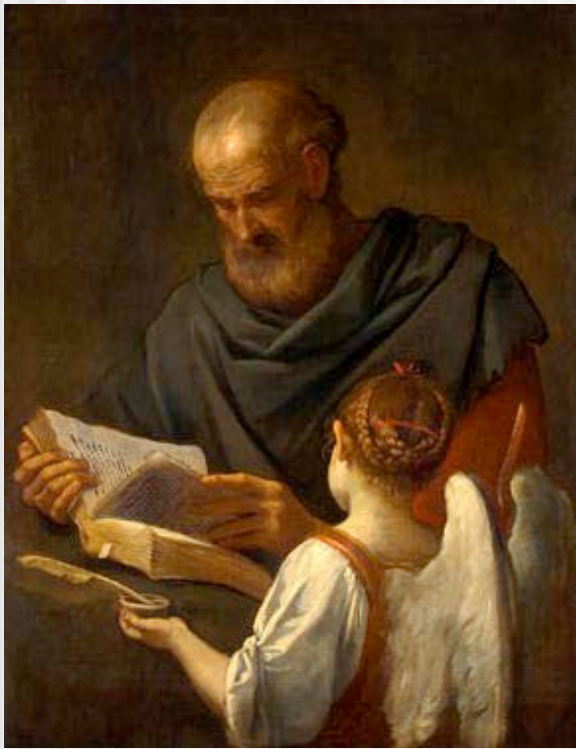
# Authorship

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# Authorship of Matthew

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Internal Evidence  
External Evidence

# Internal Evidence

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- Except for the title, the text of Matthew is anonymous.
- Title: Euaggelion kata Maqqaion
  - No titles on Matthew manuscripts give any other author, or none.
  - Don't know if title put on Gospel by original author.
- Interesting that only this Gospel lists Matthew as "tax collector."

# External Evidence

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- A number of early church fathers testify to this Gospel as being written by Matthew:
  - Papias (~130)
  - Irenaeus (~180)
  - Pantaenus (~180)
  - Clement of Alexandria (~200)
  - Origen (~240)
- None suggest another author nor deny Matthew as author.

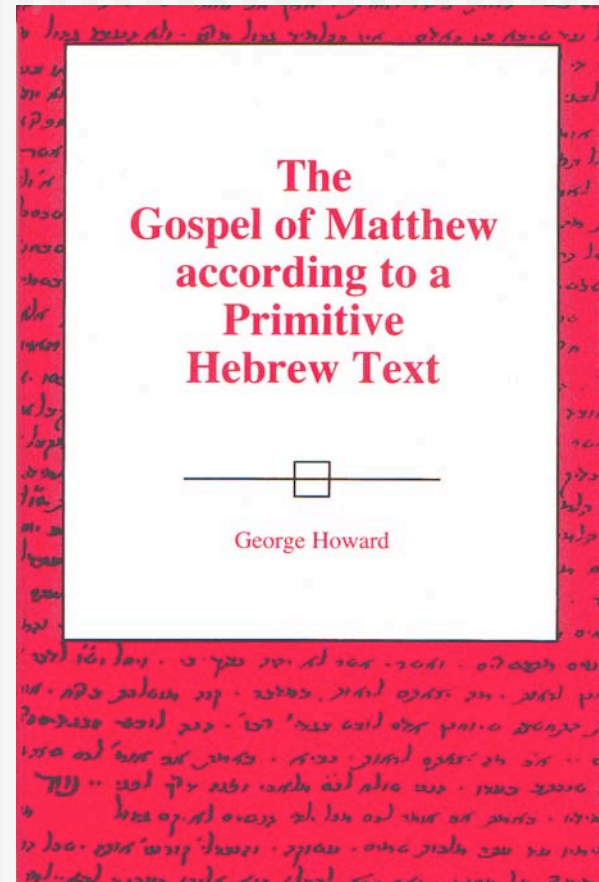
# Papias (writing ~130)

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- “Then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, but everyone interpreted them as he was able.”
  - Cited by Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.16
- Papias’ original is not extant, but still survived into the Middle Ages.

# Papias (writing ~130)

- What is meant by “oracles”?
- What is meant by “Hebrew dialect”?
- George Howard has recently discovered a Hebrew Matthew preserved in an anti-Xn Jewish polemic from the Middle Ages.



# Irenaeus (~180)

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- “Now Matthew published also a book of the Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter & Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome & founding the church.”
  - *Against Heresies* 3.1.2
- Calls Matthew’s work a Gospel, puts it in Hebrew dialect, and gives a date.

# Pantaenus (~180)

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- “Pantaenus also was one of them and is said to have gone to India, where the story goes that he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had preceded his arrival, among certain people there who had learned of Christ; that Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them; and that he had left the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which also was preserved to the time indicated.”
  - Eusebius, *Church History* 5.10.3

# Pantaenus (~180)

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- A Xn from Alexandria, who was head of the catechetical school there.
- Notice Eusebius gives this as indirect information.
- The Hebrew text is said to have been preserved still in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

# Clement of Alexandria (~200)

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- “Again in the same books, Clement gives a tradition of the early presbyters concerning the order of the Gospels in the following manner: He said that those Gospel which contain the genealogies were written first; but the Gospel according to Mark had this occasion...”
  - *Outlines*, cited in Eusebius 6.14.5
- Puts Matthew & Luke earlier than Mark.

# Origen (~240)

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- “In the first of the books on the Gospel according to Matthew, observing the ecclesiastical canon, he testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing somewhat as follows: As he has learned by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are undisputed in the Church of God under heaven, that first there was written the Gospel according to Matthew, the one-time publican but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it in the Hebrew language for those from Judaism who believed.”
  - *Comm on Matthew*, cited in Eusebius 6.25.3

# Summary on Authorship

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- That Matthew wrote the Gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition & of the titles on extant manuscripts.
- That Matthew's Gospel was the first written is also given several times in the tradition.
- That Matthew's Gospel was written in Hebrew (or Aramaic) is a regular feature of the tradition.

# Authorship of Mark

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Internal Evidence  
External Evidence



# Internal Evidence

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- Like Matthew, Mark is anonymous in its text, except for its title, Euaggelion kata Markon.
- Some have suggested the style fits Peter's personality:
  - Impressionable rather than reflective
  - Emotional rather than logical
  - Many vivid details
- The outline of Mark fits Peter's talk at Cornelius' house.
- The narrative standpoint is consistent with Peter's authorship.
- Mark 14:51 makes best sense as a sketch of Mark himself.

# Is this Mark?

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Mark 14:51 (NASU) A young man was following Him, wearing [nothing but] a linen sheet over [his] naked [body]; and they seized him. 52 But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.

# External Evidence

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- A number of early church fathers testify to this Gospel as being written by Mark:
  - Papias (~130)
  - Justin Martyr (~145)
  - Irenaeus (~180)
  - Clement of Alexandria (~200)
  - Tertullian (~200)
  - Origen (~240)

# Papias (~130)

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- “And this the Presbyter used to say: Mark, indeed, since he was the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately, but not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterwards, as I have said Peter, who fitted his discourses to the needs but not as if making a narrative of the Lord’s sayings; consequently, Mark, writing some things just as he remembered, erred in nothing; for he was careful of one thing — not to omit anything of the things he heard or to falsify anything in them.”
  - Cited in Eusebius 3.39.15

# Papias (~130)

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- Papias is citing information from before him.
- The “Presbyter” is most likely the author of 2 & 3 John — the Apostle John.
- Mark is the “interpreter of Peter.”
- Is Papias following rabbinic usage here? (quotation & comment?)

# Justin Martyr (~145)

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- “It is written in his memoirs that He changed Peter’s name, as well as the sons of Zebedee, Boanerges.”
- Has just mentioned Peter; here alludes to Mark 3:16-17.
- Justin’s usage is “memoirs of the Apostles,” not “memoirs of Jesus.”
- So Mark is pictured as “memoirs of Peter.”

# Irenaeus (~180)

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- “Matthew published... while Peter & Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome... After their departure Mark, the disciple & interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing the things preached by Peter.”
  - *Against Heresies* 3.1.2
- “Departure” could be taken literally (leaving Rome) or figuratively (death).

# Clement (~200)

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- "... the Gospel acc to Mark had this occasion: When Peter had preached the word publicly in Rome & had declared the Gospel by the Spirit, those who were present — they were many — besought Mark, since he had followed him for a long time & remembered the things that had been spoken, to write out the things that had been said; and when he had done this, he gave the Gospel to those who had asked him. When Peter learned of it later, he neither obstructed nor commended it."
- Peter is apparently still alive at the time.

# Tertullian (~200)

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- “So then, of Apostles, John & Matthew instill us with faith; of apostolic men, Luke & Mark renew it.”
  - *Against Marcion* 4.2
- Is Tertullian giving an order of writing here?

# Origen (~240)

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- "... and that 2<sup>nd</sup>ly there was written the Gospel acc to Mark, who made it as Peter instructed him, whom also he acknowledges as son in the Catholic Epistle in these words saying, 'The church in Babylon, elect together with you, & Mark my son, salute you.'"
  - *Comm on Matthew*

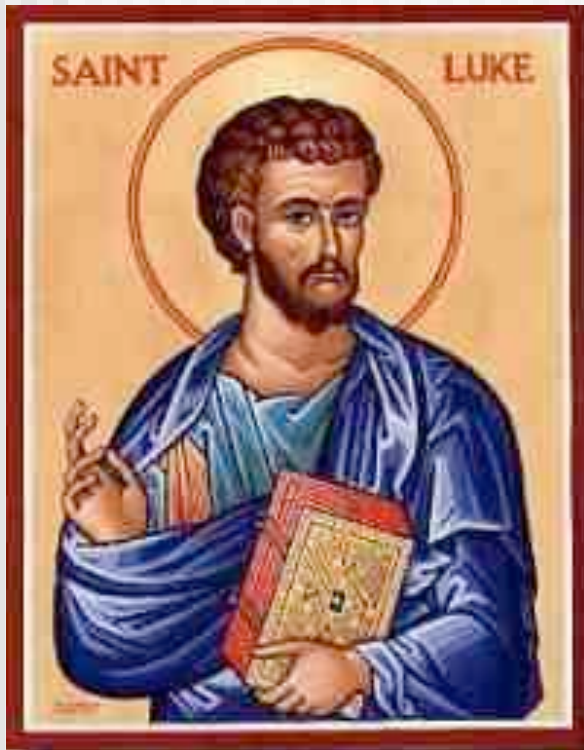
# Summary on Authorship

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- That Mark wrote the Gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition & of the titles on extant manuscripts.
- So is the belief that he gives us Peter's preaching.
- These traditions are consistent with the nature of the Gospel itself in a stronger & more obvious way than for Matthew.
- Some see a contradiction in the tradition re/ the date of Mark & Luke.

# Authorship of Luke

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Internal Evidence  
External Evidence

# Internal Evidence

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- Except for the title, the Gospel text is anonymous, *Euaggelion kata Lukan*.
- However, the prologue of Acts links Acts to this Gospel. So does the style of each.
- Internal evidence in Acts suggests that its author was a companion of Paul.

# External Evidence

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- We have fewer early references to Luke than Matthew and Mark. If Papias said anything about Luke, it has not been preserved.
  - Muratorian Canon (~180)
  - Irenaeus (~180)
  - Clement (~200)
  - Tertullian (~200)
  - Origen (~240)

# Muratorian Canon (~180)

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- Early list of books in NT; fragmentary at beginning & end.
- "...but he was present among them, and so he put. The third book of the Gospel is that acc to Luke. Luke, the physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as a companion of his traveling, an investigation, wrote in his own name — but neither did he see the Lord in the flesh — and thus, as he was able to investigate, so also he begins to tell the story from the nativity of John."

# Irenaeus (~180)

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- “Now Matthew published ... After their departure, Mark ... Luke also, the follower of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by that one. Afterwards John...”
  - *Against Heresies* 3.1.1-2
- Seems to be giving chronological order, but doesn't quite say Luke is written third.

# Clement (~200)

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- “Again in the same books, Clement gives a tradition of the early presbyters concerning the order of the Gospels in the following manner: He said that those Gospels which contain the genealogies were written first; but the Gospel according to Mark had this occasion... Last of all, John...”
  - *Outlines*; cited in Eusebius 6.14.5
- Note the chronological order seems to differ from Irenaeus’.

# Tertullian (~200)

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- “So then, of Apostles, John & Matthew instill us with faith; of apostolic men, Luke & Mark renew it... For Luke’s Gospel similarly men are used to ascribe to Paul.”
  - *Against Marcion* 4.2

# Origen (~240)

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- "... and thirdly, that acc to Luke — the Gospel praised by Paul — who made it for those from the Gentiles who believed."
  - *Comm on Matthew*
- The remark about Paul is probably an allusion to 2 Cor 8:18.

# Reference to Luke?

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2Cor 8:18 (NASU) We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in [the things of] the gospel [has spread] through all the churches;

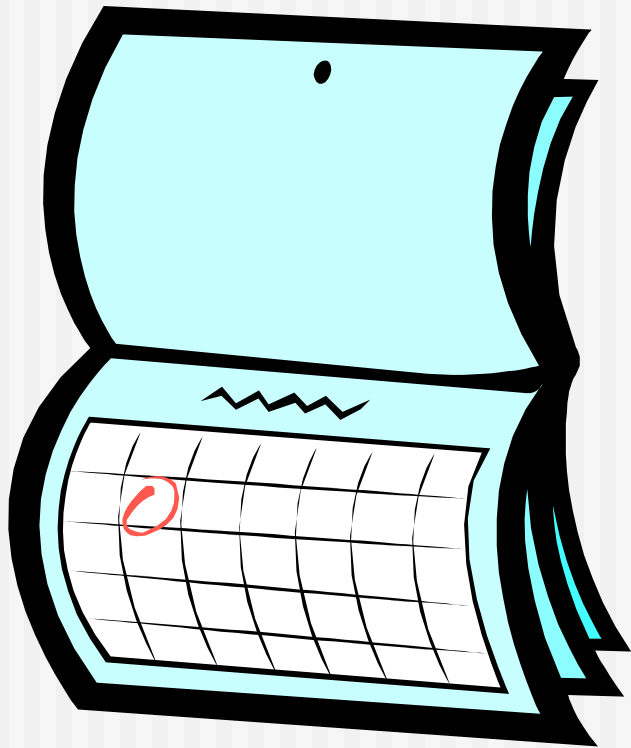
# Summary on Authorship

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- That Luke wrote the Gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition & of the titles on extant manuscripts.
- None of the remarks for Luke are quite as early as those of Papias for Matt & Mark; but by AD 200, these are from whole Mediterranean area.
- These traditions are consistent with the internal evidence of vocabulary & connection with Acts.
- The Gospel is frequently mentioned third, perhaps preserving a tradition on order of authorship.

# Dates

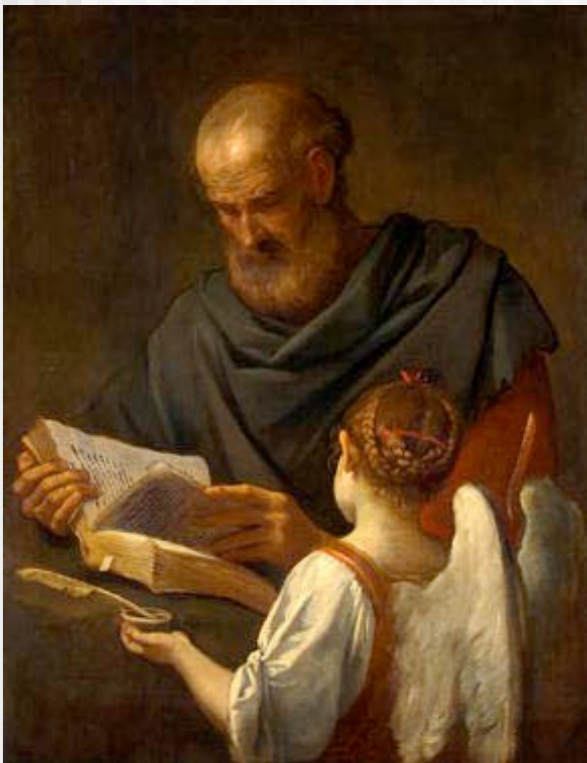
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# Date of Matthew

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Internal Evidence  
External Evidence



# Internal Evidence

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- Very little help here.
- Two remarks suggest Matthew not written immediately after the resurrection.
- Liberals tend to date Matthew after AD 70:
  - Partly to post-date Mark
  - Partly to avoid fulfilled prophecy

# External Evidence

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- Matthew was written before the earliest surviving manuscripts of it.
  - P<sup>64,67</sup> and p<sup>77</sup> come from ~200.
- Pseudo-Barnabas (~132) cites Matt 22:14.
- Tradition on authorship would place it before Matthew's death, so probably well before AD 100.
- Irenaeus' tradition would put it 61-68.
- Other traditions put Matthew first, so perhaps even earlier.

# Various Proposals

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- Range from AD 37 (Old Scofield) to 125 (Robert Kraft @ UPenn).
- My suggestion:
  - Irenaeus is giving date of Greek edition.
  - Original Hebrew earlier, 40s-early 50s.
  - This model is proposed to fit Matthew being 1<sup>st</sup> Gospel, and Luke written before AD 60.

# Date of Mark

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Internal Evidence

External Evidence



# Internal Evidence

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- Nothing direct here.
- Liberals try to post-date predictions, so tend to put it late, just before 70 or later.
- Solution to Synoptic Problem will have a bearing here.

# External Evidence

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- See various church fathers cited earlier. Do Clement and Irenaeus disagree?
- Counts of early mss & citations show Mark was considerably less popular than Matthew. Does this have a bearing on the date question?

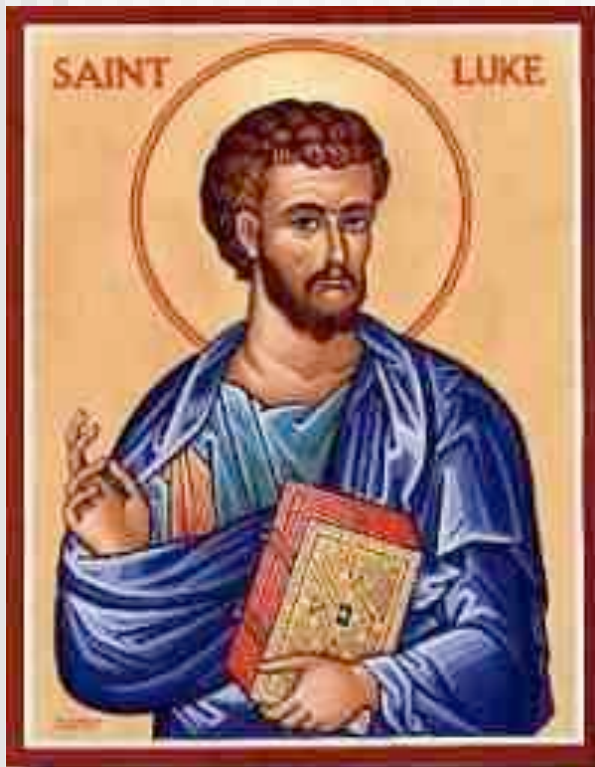
# Various Proposals

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- Several dating schemes:
  - Concordant – Mark in 60s before death of Peter.
  - Discordant – Clement wrong, and Irenaeus means after death of Peter & Paul, so after 68.
  - Conservative 2-document view – put Mark ahead of Matt & Luke, so in late 50s.

# Date of Luke

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Internal Evidence  
External Evidence

# Internal Evidence

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- Clearly Acts presupposes Luke, so Gospel written first.
- Liberals feel Luke 21:20 reflects Jewish war, so date Luke after AD 70 (usually in 80s).
- Not necessary if Jesus can predict future. Evidence from Acts points to its being written before 64.

# External Evidence

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- Acts seems to date from end of Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Roman imprisonment, ~63.
  - Must precede Roman fire, summer 64.
  - No hint of Paul's death, ~68.
- Luke is somewhat earlier than Acts.
- The problem of tradition on relative date of Luke and Mark.

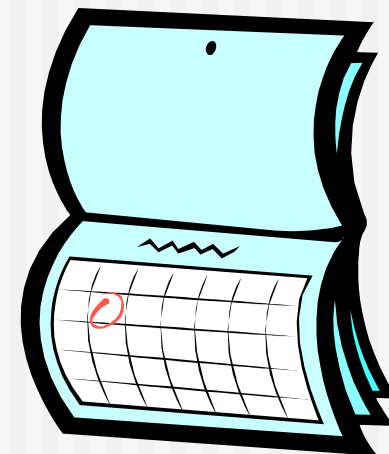
# Summary on Luke's Date

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- We date Luke 58-60, before Acts in 63-64.
- Suggest Luke did his research for Gospel during 2 years Paul in prison in Caesarea; Gospel began to circulate as they left Palestine.
- Luke did research for Acts in Rome during Paul's imprisonment there.

# Summary on Dates

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- Matthew – 40s or 50s in Hebrew; Greek edition in mid-60s.
- Luke – 58-60 in Caesarea.
- Mark – early to mid-60s in Rome.

# Characteristics

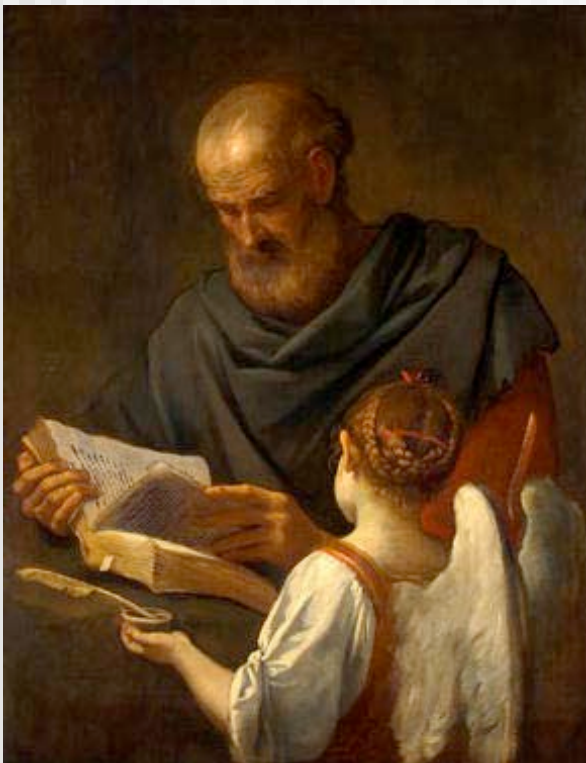
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of the Synoptic  
Gospels



# Characteristics of Matthew

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Author

Audience

Aim & Structure

Distinctive Phrases

Other Material

# Matthew the Author

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- Mentioned by name 7x in NT
- These involve only 2 occasions:
  - His conversion
  - Apostle lists
- Conversion
  - Held dinner for friends to meet Jesus
- Apostle lists
  - Only called “tax collector” in Matthew list
  - Always in 2<sup>nd</sup> group of 4 apostles

# Matthew's Audience

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- Messianic emphasis
  - Implies original audience were Jews
- Tends to assume readers know Jewish practices.
  - Mt 15:2 – tradition of elders
  - Mt 23:5 – broaden phylacteries...
  - Mt 23:27 – like whitewashed tombs...

# Aim & Structure

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- Aim

- No direct statement
- Contents suggest Matthew's purpose is to show Jesus as Messiah fulfilling OT prophecies.

- Structure

- 2 narrative transition passages
- 5 discourses w/ closing transitions

# Distinctive Phrases

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- “That it might be fulfilled”
  - Emphasis on fulfillment of Messianic prophecies and OT typologies
- “Kingdom of Heaven”
  - Synonymous with “kingdom of God”
  - “heaven” one of the common rabbinic substitutions for “God”

# Other Unique Materials

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- References to Jewish customs
- Particular birth materials
  - Wise men, Herod, flight to Egypt
  - Joseph's perspective
- Church passages
  - Peter & the church – Mt 16
  - Church discipline – Mt 18
- Great Commission – Mt 28

# Characteristics of Mark

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Author

Audience

Aim

Characteristics

# Mark the Author

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- Mentioned in NT 10-11x
- Tracing his life:
  - A cousin of Barnabas – Col 4:10
  - Lived w/ mother in Jerusalem – Ac 12
  - Present at Jesus' arrest? – Mk 14:52
  - Associate of Paul & Barnabas on 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey – Ac 13
    - Bails out in middle
    - Paul won't take him on 2<sup>nd</sup> journey

# Mark the Author

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- Tracing his life:
  - Shows up ~10 yrs later:
    - Being sent on mission by Paul – Col 4:10
    - Again a fellow-worker w/ Paul – Phm 24
  - Still later, near Ephesus – 2 Tim 4:11
    - Useful to Paul, to come w/ Timothy
  - Peter calls Mark “my son” – 1 Pet 5:13

# Mark's Audience

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- Pretty clearly Gentile
  - Aramaic phrases are translated
  - Jewish practices explained
- Possibly Roman
  - Several Latinisms
  - But these are associated w/ Roman rule, so probably generally known

# Mark's Aim

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- No direct statement in Gospel.
- Does not say “to preserve teaching of Peter.”
- Opening line may state aim, but this is general aim of all Gospels.
- Perhaps Mark is aimed or especially suited to Roman mentality:
  - Practical, action-oriented, organized

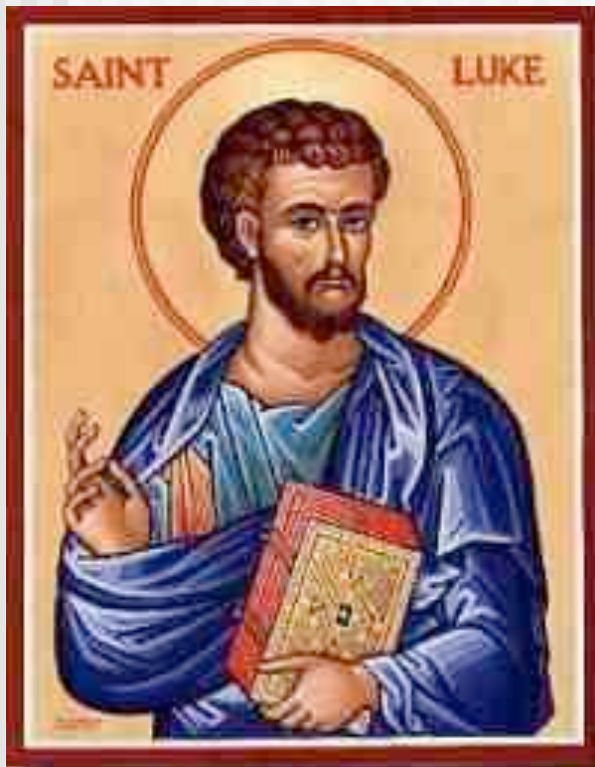
# Mark's Characteristics

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- Vividness
  - Graphic & picturesque detail
- Detail
  - Covers fewer events w/ more detail
- Activity
  - Use of euqu" *euthus* (immediately)
- Aramaic
  - See notes

# Characteristics of Luke

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Author

Audience

Aim & Method

Characteristics

# Luke the Author

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- Mentioned by name only 3x in NT
  - A physician – Col 4:14
  - Faithful companion of Paul – 2 Tim 4:11
  - Gentile – Col 4:14 (in Gentile group)
- Traveled w/ Paul – “we” passages in Acts

# Luke the Greek Physician

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- Terminology suggests he was trained in the tradition of the Hippocratic school, noted for:
  - Diagnosis by observation & deduction
  - Careful case reports
  - Simple treatments
  - High standards of hygiene

# Other Suggestions

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- Luke's Hometown
  - Syrian Antioch acc to Eusebius & Jerome
  - Philippi acc to Sir Wm Ramsay
- Luke is brother of Titus
  - Souter bases this on 2 Cor 8:18
  - Possible, but speculative

# Aim & Method – Luke 1:1-4

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- Aim – to help Theophilus know the reliability of the Gospel history
- Method
  - Aware of status of his subject
  - Studied all related matters carefully
  - Used materials from “eyewitnesses & ministers of the word”
  - Wrote up an orderly, sequential account

# Luke's Characteristics

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- Emphases of his Gospel
  - Universalism
  - Jesus gracious attitude to outcasts
  - Prayer
  - Social relationships
- Unique Materials
  - Semitic praise psalms
  - Certain parables
  - Certain miracles
  - Perean narrative

# The End

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But hopefully, the beginning of a lifetime study of Jesus in the Gospels