

DATING THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The New Testament's four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the only real sources of information about the alleged life of the historical Jesus. They are also the only accounts of this life that Christians consider divinely inspired. The other gospels that were excluded from the New Testament were written too late to be of any value. Considering the fanaticism that marks most forms of Christianity, it is remarkable that their precious gospels show no indication of having existed in their present form at least until more than a century after Jesus died.

The gospels could have been written a year after Jesus died and Jesus might still not have existed. Selective choice of the readership by the engineers of the Church could have ensured that Jesus would be believed in. But the longer the gospels can be proved to have existed after Jesus died the more likely it is that Christianity is a fake. Had the gospel writers not been ashamed of how late they wrote they would have given us dates for then as now people did not like late accounts or accounts that could be late.

Evidence of reasonable publication matters more than the date something was written. It will matter if you want to argue that society could contradict a pile of historical lies when it gets a read at them. If the date is late and the publication is late then we are entitled to refuse to take the gospels as gospel truth.

Matthew uses Mark, which dates from 70 AD (at the very least) so it is a later gospel. Mark is more ordinary and shorter and less detailed so it is likely to be earlier.

In the first chapters of Matthew, we read that the Magi or the magicians were led by a star to Jesus. This is accepted to be a reference to astrology. Matthew then makes a link between Jesus and the occult which supports the Jewish tradition that Jesus was an occultist though Jesus pretended to be anti-occult. This proves that Matthew which was geared towards Jewish Christians was written when the Jews had lost their stability and influence after 70 AD and especially after the Bar Kochba revolution when they got the worst blow. Matthew would not say such a thing about Jesus unless he thought the Jews were not a threat anymore.

Matthew 16:1-4 has the Jews asking Jesus for a sign. He tells them about how they can tell what the next day will be like by observing the sky and that they cannot read the signs of the times. Then he says they will get no sign but that of Jonah. The signs of the times can only be the immorality in the world that will force God to judge the world and visit it with destruction. The sign of Jonah implies the resurrection of Jesus which will call them to repentance for Jonah was resurrected or sort of for the purpose of calling the people of Nineveh to repentance. Matthew would have looked on the destruction of Jerusalem as the part fulfilment of this prophecy. He was looking back on it after 70AD. He wouldn't write until he saw evidence in the times that Judaism was perhaps about to be destroyed which points to a second century date such as during the Bar Kochba rebellion. He was wrong but he wouldn't have written down the prophecy unless he thought it was going to be shown to come true.

In Matthew 23, Jesus hysterically accused the Jews of killing all the innocents who had ever died on the earth from the blood of Abel to that of Zechariah, son of Barachiah. The author of Matthew was likely to have known that there were no Jews when Abel son of Adam and Eve was murdered and that Abel was murdered by his jealous brother Cain. This implies that Matthew was written in a time of dreadful persecution of the Jews and their scriptures, the Old Testament, which they pored over like there was no tomorrow. This would explain his wilfully misinterpreted prophecies and his errors. He was sure that few would see through him.

Zechariah was not killed until the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus happened and that was in 70AD. Josephus records that event but, predictably, conservative Christians choose to believe the Matthew gospel that it happened before Jesus' time. Small wonder, for it would mean that the gospel was written after 70 AD after Zechariah's death and would imply that Matthew or the author was putting words in Jesus' mouth. Even 15 years is a long time in a traumatised country. Israel was tormented during and after the alleged time of Christ. So why trust the gospels even if they were not composed after long after Christ?

Christians then tell us we believe non-religious records written long after the times so we shouldn't approach the gospels with the attitude that they may be spurious if written long after Jesus. But the non-religious records do not ask for the sacrifice of the intellect and happiness and life and deserve to be believed. Religion has a bad record when it comes to truth for power is its priority. It asks us to be biased and unreasonable. We only believe the non-religious records because they could be right and because it is better to believe them than to be silent. We are not believing in them despite them being so late after the event. We are believing in them because we need them. The Christians are just trying to manipulate us. Supernatural claims written down long after the event shouldn't be taken seriously even if historical claims to which there is

no objection written down long after the event are taken seriously.

Anyway, Matthew was written when it was safe to slander the Jews and blame them for the crucifixion of Jesus – another indication that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD which was a terrible blow to Judaism and had prospects of being lethal for it. Matthew could only blacken the Sanhedrin after it disbanded at that time. The gospels are all cagey about saying outright that the Romans took Jesus and crucified him. They say it ambiguously though. Luke 23:25 says that some “they” took Jesus and crucified him. We have to go to the lines immediately preceding that to find out who “they” are. Only the Jews baying for Jesus’ execution are mentioned so it is clear that Luke is squarely stating that the Jews nailed Jesus to the cross. Embarrassed Christians say that he is ambiguous for they know that the Jews historically cannot be blamed. He is not. John did the same thing. He blamed the Jews too as the notes to his chapter 19:16 in the NAB admit. The NAB then lies saying that John admitted later that the Romans were the killers. But when you check this out you find that soldiers are mentioned but we are not told if they are Roman or what they are. They could be Temple Guards. The Temple Guards were Jews. The further a gospel goes in blaming the Jews the younger it is. Luke and John knew they did not have to go as far as saying the Jews physically crucified Jesus but they did to suit the rabid anti-semitic climate of the early second century. Otherwise they would not have stooped so low. They did not care much for Jesus when they slandered his killers.

Matthew concludes with Jesus telling the disciples meaning them and their successors to enter every nation to make converts. The author was sure this could happen so it was not written during the times of savage and death-dealing persecution for Christianity nor written when it was small and threatened. This points to a second century date. It could have been written after 70 AD when the Jews stopped persecuting Christians and after the persecutions carried out under the auspices of the Romans.

Matthew alleges that all of Syria knew about Jesus and he was famous there (Matthew 4:24). But no there is absolutely no record of that at all. Jesus was not mentioned in the writings that country has left us. This suggests that Matthew knew very little about Palestine and Syria otherwise he would not have said such a thing. This was suggest the gospel was written in the second century when it was harder for him to get information.

Despite Jesus saying that the generation he lived in would see the signs in Heaven indicating that the Son of Man was coming back, Jesus said that the only sign for his generation would be his resurrection and not that glorious return (Matthew 12). If Matthew was written before 70 AD he would say the return was the sign. Thus Matthew is no older than 70 AD.

It is thought that when Matthew said that Jesus made a prophecy that his apostles will not be finished preaching to all the towns of Israel before he comes back in the second coming (Matthew 10:23) that Matthew must have been written before they died because it would not have been put in after its failure was apparent. But Jesus is just saying that they will never do it until he comes and gives no hint if this will be sooner or later.

The zany book, *The Jesus Papyrus*, argues as follows that Matthew was written before 66 AD. The verse says that Jesus said his followers must flee from one town to the next if they are persecuted and that they would not be in every Israelite town before he comes back. The book says that he is saying they will never flee to non-Israelite towns (page 51). This is a totally nonsensical deduction. Christians went for refuge to the Gentile town of Pella in 66 AD. Following its stupid deduction, the book says the verse indicates that Matthew was written before the flight to Pella for Matthew wouldn't put in a prediction from Jesus that nobody would go to Gentile towns for refuge unless it hadn't happened yet.

Jesus meant, “Flee to any SAFE town at all (be it Jewish or Gentile) and you will not hide in all the towns of Israel until I return”. He would have meant that for it is hardly a good idea to run to another Jewish town if the Jews hold your faith against you and you aren't going to hide your faith.

And how do you know that Matthew cared if Jesus knew the future or not? Matthew was not a theologian. He said Jesus saw something in a verse of Exodus that is obviously not there at all (12:18-27). But if Matthew did care then he was written after 66 AD for he refers to the Christians having to hide in safe Gentile towns.

Some say that Matthew must have been written late when it was known that Peter would be the rock the invincible Church was built on (16:18). Others say that it could have been written in 30 AD as long as there was some kind of a Church. Church may not mean people of God here but community of believers for the word for Church *ecclesia* just means called out. You can be a believer without being reconciled with God or being one of his and still be called to spread the gospel and used for that purpose. It probably doesn't mean people of God when Matthew never calls the Church the people of God and he says Jesus called Peter Satan a few minutes later. Peter might have been the rock the Church was built on meaning that he was the first believer. The first member of your Drama Class could be called the foundation in the sense that he started it off for there is no class without members. But the weight seems to be on the view that this was made up about Peter being rock and the Church being invincible at a time when it was thought no power now could get rid of the Church.

The Gospel says that the story that the disciples stole Jesus from the tomb was told among the Jews until the time he was wrote and was told to discredit the resurrection of Jesus. This gives us a vital clue as to when Matthew was really written. It was written after the Jewish and secular records, if any, were destroyed in 70 AD. The soldiers could not accuse without evidence and so records would have had to be made of suspects and why the tomb must have been robbed by disciples. But Matthew hints that there was no evidence which tells us that there was evidence that they were wrong. This latter evidence must have been ruined enabling the Jews to tell that story. If the Jews were saying that then why had the Sanhedrin nothing to say when the apostles spoke of the resurrection in Acts 4 and could not silence them? Even Paul had no bother from the rumour (Acts 28) in the sixties of the first century. The rumour was a late one. The guards could not have started it for it was less than their lives were worth so somebody might have said they said it after their deaths which would have all transpired by 80 AD.

Maybe Matthew could write what he liked when the gospel was to be secret for a while? But the devotees of the gospel were waiting until the right time to inflict it on the world so the book had to be written as ready to go out when the people were ready.