

Matthew's Gospel (pg. 87)

- The author of the gospel of Matthew wrote for a specific group of people: the Jewish followers of Jesus. What religious challenges were these people facing?
- Matthew addresses the Jewish community.
- A division had arisen between those who followed Jesus and those who saw him as subversive to the Jewish tradition.
- With the destruction of the temple, a split developed between the Jewish rabbis and the Jewish followers of Jesus.

How did the Church emerge out of the situation?

- After the temple was destroyed, the rabbis and Pharisees refused the followers of Jesus the right to participate in the synagogue. Eventually the followers of Jesus became known as Christians and formed the early Church.

What did Matthew's gospel seek to accomplish?

- Matthew wrote the gospel so that the community could continue to follow Jesus after the death of the twelve apostles.
- He interpreted the meaning of Jesus' words and deeds for this time to address the concerns of the community.
- He warned the followers of Jesus to remain united, to refrain from judging one another, to accept the sinner among them, and to accept a stable structure.

Gospel: "The Good News" (pg. 88)

Q: *What are the 3 stages of the development of the Gospels?*

1. Jesus' ministry, death and Resurrection
2. Oral Tradition
3. Written Gospels

Q: *Who was the audience that each of the Gospels were written for?*

Matthew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the <u>Jewish</u> followers of Jesus
Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the <u>Christian</u> community in Rome in an atmosphere of persecution and fear during a time when it was illegal to be a Christian
Luke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for <u>non-Jewish</u> Christians who live in a Greek-speaking urban environment
John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to an unknown community of <u>Jewish Christians</u>. Jesus is presented as the Word that has come to us from God and lived among us.

Matthew's Jesus - The Ultimate Teacher (pg. 89)**1. How does Matthew portray Jesus as a teacher?**

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And to remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (28.18-20) Jesus' presence in his Church as teacher will be constant through the disciples who have been given the Holy Spirit. Moreover, Jesus brings the teaching of Moses to perfection. Jesus is the ultimate, supreme teacher.

2. How does Matthew compare Jesus and Moses?

Both Moses and Jesus were deeply passionate about living the will of God. They turned to it for guidance on how they should behave from day to day. Jesus is the law and the law is love; it is written in our hearts. Jesus is the

new Torah. Both Moses and Jesus were threatened as infants, had to be protected and had a connection with Egypt.

3. What is he (Matthew) seeking to demonstrate?

Jesus is the new Torah to the Church (Moses left Israel with five teachings: the five books of Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). This teaching of Jesus does not replace the Torah, but fulfills its original intent. Ultimately, Jesus teaches not only Israel; he teaches all nations with authority.

Apocalyptic Literature (pg. 89)

It is a style of writing that evolved during Israel's troubled history (**politically**: Roman rulers; **religiously**: temple run by the wrong high priests; **culturally**: pressures of Greek influence) around the time of Jesus.

Apocalyptic writings are writings of crisis. They emphasize an end to evil-dominated history. The end is presented as a coming of God to judge this world. It frequently employed frightening imagery of end-time wars between good and evil and of convulsion in nature. Jesus uses this apocalyptic language but strips it of many of its images; Jesus proclaims, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near".

Reflect: *Some say that with all that is all going on now (e.g. wars, conflict, natural disasters), that the "end times" are near. Do you agree or disagree? Why?*

Parousia (pg. 90)

Refers to the second coming of Christ which is to take place "at the end of the age." This time ends time: it is the ending of the story of salvation. The end is described as completion - the full revelation of God. He will appear as the Son of Man in his glory.

Matthew's Church and the "Kingdom of God" (pg. 90)

Question for discussion: What do you think is meant by the terms, "kingdom of God" and 'kingdom of heaven'?

1. What does the text say is meant by the terms, "kingdom of God" and 'kingdom of heaven'?

- It is not a place, but a symbol or metaphor for God
- "kingdom of God/heaven" = God (not his reign or rule)
- "The kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17.21) = God is now acting among you = the nearness of God = God is not distant but close at hand, right here in the midst of us
- In Jesus God is already at work
- The sick, sinners and outcasts, those who heard Jesus' words tasted the kingdom of heaven

2. What is Matthew's understanding of Church?

- The Church is not the kingdom of God. The Church is the people who follow the way of Jesus and accept the free gift of God's salvation.

3. What is Paul's understanding of Church?

- He calls those who are gathered in the Church the "first fruits" (1 Cor. 15.20)
- The Church lives in the present time what the full revelation of God will bring about

4. Review: What is the Sermon on the Mount?

- The platform for the life of the disciples. The disciples are to model this new Torah.
- It reflects what a fully redeemed world looks like
- It contains the heart of Jesus' ethical message
- The Beatitudes are part of this platform

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives the platform for the life of the disciples. The disciples are to model this new Torah. This completion of the Torah reflects what a fully redeemed world looks like.