

Group 4: Destination of Matthew

by

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Introduction

The destination of the Gospel according to Matthew simply implies those whom the author of the Gospel wrote to. In this synopsis, we shall inquire the destination of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Destination of the Gospel According to Matthew

The destination of the Gospel according to Matthew is uncertain according to Scholars. It was initially assumed that it was written by the evangelist to meet the needs of his own center, though this view was not plausible. The evangelist seems to be more of a traveler than is assumed and so may have written his Gospel in such mission to encourage and enlighten his converts and furnish them with evangelic and apologetic equipment.¹ In line with the aforementioned view, the Commentary in Studies of Matthew's Gospel states that, this Gospel was written down for a number of local Christian communities in northern Israel and southern Syria, mainly consisting of Jewish followers of Jesus that displayed an increasing openness to recruiting new members among non-Jews.²

Eusebius, without giving the authority for the opinion, also says: "Matthew, after preaching to Hebrews, when about to go also to others, committed to writing in his native tongue the gospel that bears his name, and so by his writing supplied to those whom he was leaving the loss of his presence³

Conclusion

The Gospel according to Matthew is believed to have a Palestinian/ Syrian origin as well as destination because: i) The earliest quotation of this Gospel was Ignatius, bishop of Antioch of Syria. ii) In spite of the Gospel being in Greek, it does not deny a Palestinian-Syrian destination since Palestine was bilingual in the first century. iii) The fact that the author takes for granted his audience's comprehension of Jewish customs and places argues strongly for a Palestinian/Syrian destination. This also argues that the audience is racially Jewish in make-up.

¹ Frank E. Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8 (USA: The Zondervan Corporation Grand Rapids, 1984), pp. 21-22.

² Cf. Wim J.C. Weren, *Studies in Matthew's Gospel*, Vol. 130, (Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill Nv, Leiden, 2014) .p. 2

³ Eusebius, Hist., III, 24