

## Matthew's style

Matthew writes in Greek. Like Luke he uses Mark's Gospel for his outline and then adds stories from his own community; for example his story of the birth of Jesus.

Jews won't say the word 'God'. When they find it in their Scripture they say 'Adonai' instead, a word which means Lord. Matthew, therefore, doesn't talk about the Kingdom of God, he speaks about the Kingdom of *heaven*. Chapter 13 of Matthew's Gospel is full of parables about the kingdom.

Matthew also links Jesus to Moses: Just as Moses escapes a ferocious ruler, so Jesus has to; just as Moses brings God's gift of the 10 Commandments from Mount Sinai, so Jesus teaches from a mountain.

## Who was Matthew?

We really don't know who wrote the Gospel we call 'Matthew'.

The early Church thought that this Gospel was written by one of the disciples – the tax collector Levi – who is called Matthew in this Gospel. (See Mt 9:9-13) That's why this Gospel appears as the first Gospel in the New Testament: Mark and Luke were thought to have copied what Matthew wrote.

However, more recent study of the writing shows that whoever wrote this Gospel was more interested in things that worried the Church around the year 80, not during the lifetime of Jesus. So most likely Matthew copied Mark - not the other way!

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

## Matthew's Purpose

Like all the Gospel writers, Matthew is writing to share his personal belief in Jesus. He has come to know and love Jesus through hearing others speak about him. Now he wants to pass his belief on.

Matthew uses quotes from the Old Testament (First Testament) often in his writing. This makes us think that Matthew was writing for a Jewish community. By using quotes from the Old Testament Matthew can show how Jesus fulfills all the promises and expectations of the Messiah the Israelites (Jews) had been waiting for.

Matthew sometimes writes very harshly about how the Jewish leaders react to Jesus. We think this is because his own community was in conflict with the Jewish leaders *they*, rather than Jesus, encountered. Matthew wants to encourage his community to stay true to what they have come to believe about Jesus, not to return to their previous Jewish faith.