

Appendix 1

The Dates and Importance of the Four Gospels Being Written Before AD 70

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

The book (Gospel) of Matthew is commonly ranked as *first in time and order* among the writings of the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). The date for Matthew writing his Gospel ranges between AD 38 to AD 68, all authorities agree in maintaining, *that Matthew was published at Jerusalem for the instruction of the Jews*, before the disciples had left Judea to convert the Gentile world.

"First of all Matthew the Publican, surnamed Levi, published a Gospel in Judea in the Hebrew (Chaldee) Language, principally for the use of the Jewish Converts to Christianity" (Jerome in his Preface to his Commentary on Matthew. See also Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, Volume. 6. Chapter 25).

Mark is placed by Irenaeus, Augustin, Origen, Jerome, and Comas of Alexandria, next in order to St. Matthew ; whose Gospel they state to have been writ ten at Rome for the Jews and Gentiles there, under the immediate superintendence and direction of St. Peter, who delivered it to the Jewish Church confirmed by his own authority. "St. Mark accompanied St. Peter (I Pet. 5:13) and was so highly esteemed by him as to be called his son, in the same manner as Timothy is .thus called by St. Paul" (Marsh's Michaelis, Volume 4, Chapt. 5, p. 203).

See Marsh's Michaelis ch. v. sec. 1, vol. iv. ch. v. sec. 2, p. 208. " The Gospel of St. Mark was ratified by St. Peter." Papius apud Euseb. H. E. I. 2. c. 15. Michaelis asserts that the following verse from 2 Pet. 1,15, refers to this Gospel. — " Moreover I (Peter) will endeavour that ye may be able after my " decease to have these things always in remembrance/" Marsh's Michaelis vol. 1. chap. iii. sec. 3, page 91.

" The Third Gospel," says Origen, "is that accord- " ing to Luke commended by St. Paul;" it was written (accordingto Michaelis, in Palestme) " to correct the irt- " accuracies of the accounts, which were then in circu- " lation, and to deliver to Theophilus a true and ge- " nuine document, in order to silence several idle stories, " which might have prejudiced him against the Chris- " tian Religion."2 See Marsh's Michaelis vol iv. ch. vi. sec. 7 and 8, p. 266, 267.

St. Luke's Gospel was written before the Acts of thd Apostles, as is evident from the beginning of the latter. " The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of " all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the " day in which he was taken up," and this book con cludes with St. Paul's having resided two years at Rome (xxviii. 30), from which circumstance it seems evident that it was written shortly after that event. " All that we can affirm with certainty is, that St. " Luke wrote his Gospel before the Acts of the Apostles, " and that the Acts of the Apostles were not written " before the end of the second year of St. Paul's impi- " sonment.1 As it appears then, that these three Gos pels were written in the time of Peter and Paul, who according to the testimony of the Fathers sanctioned the latter two; it consequently follows, that they must have been published previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, as both these Apostles died before the ac complishment of that awful event: It was in the first general persecution of the Christians at Rome under Nero A. D. 67, that the ancients with one voice agree that St. Paul was put to death. That St. Peter was also a sufferer under the same perse cution, is certain, both from written authority and in compliance with the prediction of Christ. (John xxi. 18. — Acts ix. 16.) Sulpicius speaking of this persecution adds, " At that time Paul and Peter were condemned to death, the former was beheaded, Peter was crucified. — " Tum Paulus ac " Petrus capitis damnati; quorum uni cervix gladio

descenda, Petrus in " cruce sublatu est." (Sulp. Sever. Hist. 2. xli. 29.) But as a further proof that Peter's death happened before the destruction of Jerusalem, we have only to refer to his second Epistle, which we shall find to have been written with an express view to prepare them to whom it is addressed to " expect and earnestly to desire the coming of the day of the Lord," lest scoffers " come in the last days saying, where is the promise of his coming? - 3 Pet. iii. 3, but independent of these considerations, it must also be allowed, that their internal character is such, as clearly proves them to have been written by men who actually lived at the time here supposed.¹

There are peculiarities in these Gospels not to be found in that of St. John (which was written at Ephesus after the Destruction; as a supplement to confirm and establish the former,⁸) which evidently refer to the Jews and their City as they were then existing, and which, as Macknight has observed, shew " that this " manner of writing every reader must be sensible John " would not have made use of, had he composed his " Gospel for the use of the Jews, or published it in " Judea: on the other hand the three Evangelists would " hardly have written in the manner they have done, " had they originally designed their works for the Gen- " tiles, or published them out of Judea;"³ so that it is impossible to pretend that these predictions could have been written after the time of their fulfilment : **nor could they have been interpolated after the event, because our Saviour not only foretold the destruction of the City of the Jews, but also the continuance of that desolation ; for " Jerusalem," saith he, " shall be trodden " down of the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles be " fulfilled ;" a prophecy which has long been, and still continues to be accomplished in these our present days; for the Jews have hitherto attempted in vain to collect themselves from the various quarters of the world to form a separate and independent Nation. Moreover, these predictions are frequently interspersed through out the Gospels, as Parables, or subjects of instruction casually introduced, and carry with them nothing like an air of deceit; whereas had they been introduced after the Events to which they refer, there would have been something artificial in them which would have led to an early detection of the fraud.**¹

¹ He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vine yard unto other husbandmen. Matt. xxi. 41. And when the King heard thereof he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city. Matt. xxii. 7, Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Luke xiii. 5. And if thou bear fruit, well; and if not, after that thou shalt be cut down. Luke xiii. 9. Also Matt. iii. 10, and other places.

If evidence were wanted to prove the circumstance of John's Gospel having been written subsequently to those of the other Evangelists ; this minute, but not unimportant observation might be made. The three first Evangelists, when speaking of the apprehension of Jesus and his seizure by the servants of the High Priest, respectively mention that one of them had his right ear cut off by the sword of a Disciple whose name is not specified : but John tells us plainly, and without reserve, that it was Peter whose zeal carried him thus to defend his Lord: and evidently for this reason : that at the time the former Gospels were published, Peter was alive, and the knowledge of this event might have brought him into some difficulty with those who espoused the cause of the servant; but when John wrote, Peter had been some time dead, and therefore no mischief could happen from the development.