

A discussion about the authenticity of Matthew 28:19

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We don't really know the true names of the authors of the Gospels, but it was accepted to name them as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. All of these Gospels have something unique in them, and for Matthew it has been said that it is the most Jewish Gospel of them all, but it is also clear that it is the most anti-rabbinic Gospel of them all (referring to Matthew 23). I think it is fair to say (metaphorically at least) that Jesus was the first Karaite Jew: It seems that a group of Jews accepted the Nazarenes view against the rabbinic man-made laws, but they couldn't accept Jesus to be the Messiah, therefore, a new sect was established with the name: the Karaites.

So, it does seem that Matthew was a Jew.

How is that?

Matt 5:17: Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

So, it seems that Matthew was a fundamentalist. This means that Matthew thought that the laws of Moses should be applied today the same as they were applied before. But it should be noted that fundamentalism is related to the thinking process and not to the attitude and behavior: There are some fundamentalists who do cross the red-lines of their religion, and they know that they are sinning and they would refer this behavior to their weakness. The idea here is that fundamentalism is about the thinking process while commitment is related to the attitude and behavior. Therefore, fundamentalism and commitment might not be aligned.

So, Matt 5:17 might indicate that Matthew was a Jewish fundamentalist, but nothing in the Gospel could highlight his commitment to the laws. But in general, it is more plausible here to assume that Matthew was also committed to the laws of Moses.

So, we can say that Matthew was probably a "Jew for Jesus" (i.e. he was a Nazarene). However, it seems that Matthew wasn't just a "Jew for Jesus" but he probably believed that "Jesus is only for the Jews":

Matt 10:5: These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

Matt 15:22: A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." 23 Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

Did Jesus say these things?

This doesn't really matter in this discussion, what really matter here is that Matthew believed that Jesus said these things.

This is the main argument in this article: Matthew was a Jew for Jesus and Jesus was for only the Jews.

But we have a problem in **Matt 28:19**: Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Can the author of Matt 10:5 & 15:24 be the same author of Matt 28:19?

Can a Jew with a belief that Jesus is only for Jews to suddenly be a Jew with a belief that Jesus is for all?

The logic here is not very solid, but it is also not very weak: It seems that the author of Matt 10.5 & 15.24 believed that Jesus was only for Jews, therefore it is a bit hard to accept that this author is also the one who suddenly accepted that Jesus is for all.

We can also highlight a clear motivation for Matt 28:19: without this verse then the Greek will never acknowledge this Gospel. Therefore, there is an interest for someone to add this verse at the end.

Also, there is another issue in Matt 28:19: ... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Now ... This trilogy is not the principle of Trinity, but it is the principle of the Trio that was established by Justin Martyr:

Christians can be divided into two: The Pauline Christians and the Non-Pauline Christians. The Nazarenes are one of the Non-Paulines.

The Pauline Christians can be divided into two: The Trio Christians and the Non-Trio Christians. The Trio Christians are the one who followed Justin, while the Adoptionists can be regarded as one of the Non-Trios.

The Trio Christians can be divided into two: The Trinitarians and Non-Trinitarians. The Trinitarians are the one who won the day in 325AD, and the Arians are one of the Non-Trinitarians.

To my understanding, Justin was the one who highlighted the three most important entities in the mainstream Christianity (Father, Son, and Spirit) and this have established the Trio denomination. The Gospel of Matthew was known at the time of Justin; therefore, it should be expected that Justin would refer to Matthew in regards of this trilogy, but there is no reference from Justin for that. Therefore, it is probable that Matt 28:19 wasn't in the Gospel of Matthew at the time of Justin.

Now ... the previous logic is a negative one using the structure: A is B therefore Not B is Not A. This type of logic needs to be used with cautious as it might contain hidden errors, and it does oppose a well-known concept: the absence of evidence doesn't necessarily mean an evidence for absence. But still, if there were no opposing data (or logic) then this type of logic can be considered.

So, we have here the main logic: Matthew was a Jew for Jesus and Jesus for only the Jews; therefore, it is probable that Matt 28:19 wasn't written by Matthew.

The supporting logic: Justin should have referred the trilogy to the Gospel of Matthew, but he didn't, therefore, it is probable that Matt 28:19 wasn't in the Gospel at that time.

And the motivation for this verse: Without this verse, the Gospel of Matthew would not have been accepted by the Greek.

However, the motivation here does have a serious issue and we can solve it by the following assumption: Matt 28:19 has two parts that were added in different times. The first part: {Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations}, which is equivalent to Mark 16:15. This part probably was added before Justin, and this part would make the Gospel of Matthew acceptable for the Greek. The second part: {baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit} was probably added after Justin.

I am aware that all of the above analyses are not decisive, but they can present a strong model.