In the years between the death of Jesus and the gospel-writing period, sayings from Jesus, stories about him, collections of parables or miracle stories, glimpses of the Passion, and resurrection experiences had been told, heard, and eagerly told. For centuries, Christianity assumed the priority of Matthew as the first gospel book to be written and the historical eyewitness value of John. After all, both were held to be ‘apostles’. Throughout this account Matthew lays strong emphasis on continuity. The message preached by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples is the same, about the kingdom at hand. The achievement of Matthew's Gospel was to take up the Jesus story, as presented by Mark and supplemented from sayings out of teaching material, and anchor it more firmly in Scripture, God's broad plan, and the church's mission, with a call for ethical rigour before God.