

Dedicated to
Adeline Mary “Cookie” Downing
Loving Wife, Mother and Grandmother
Who, for fifty years has fulfilled the Description
of
The Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31:10–31

An Introductory and Explanatory
Survey of The English Bible

New Testament Volume I

Introduction to the New Testament
The Gospels and Acts

W. R. Downing

ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστιν



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Preface

There is a great difference between God's Word and God's world, although both are forms of Divine revelation (Psa. 19:1–14; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21; Rom. 1:18–20). The Word of God is absolute, changeless and self-authenticating. By contrast, the world of God is constantly changing and progressing toward the final consummation. This Survey of the Bible traces this progressive Divine revelation through the biblical documents, surveys these documents, and prepares the serious Bible student for subsequent disciplines which deal in much more depth with the canonical, textual, historical, biblical, theological and practical issues.

This is the third volume of the *Survey of the Bible*. With this volume we introduce the New Testament and concentrate on a general introduction and then in particular the Four Gospel accounts and the Book of Acts.

The second and final volume on the Old Testament considered Prophetic Literature and the Intertestamental Era, and surveyed the political, social and religious transitions from Malachi to Matthew. The introduction to this volume will study in more detail some of the major personalities, issues, cultural and religious institutions that defined the first century AD.

A Bible Survey is distinct from a Bible Commentary, which would be much more expanded and inclusive. A survey considers introductory and background issues and an outline or analysis of a given writing upon which a commentary would subsequently be based.

A survey of the New Testament is not necessarily a critical New Testament Introduction, which would be concerned with both General and Special Eisagogics. Much space would be devoted to the canon, various studies in Biblical Criticism, Genres and a history of hermeneutical and historical approaches with attention given to textual and salient doctrinal emphases.

A Survey of the New Testament is not necessarily synonymous with a New Testament Biblical Theology, although both must treat doctrinal realities. A New Testament Biblical Theology would necessarily derive from the progressive nature of Divine revelation—the organizing and operative principle of Biblical Theology—and the interrelationship between the Old and New Testaments. The emphasis would be upon the anticipatory nature of the Old and the culminative nature of the New. The distinctive feature would be the eschatological character of the New in view of fulfilled prophecy, the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ and the consequences of these truths.

A survey is also more historical and analytical than theological, as it neither approaches each writing with the priority given to a systematic or dogmatic theological template, nor emphasizes major theological themes which would seek to maintain the unity and diversity of New Testament revelation. Theological particulars are introduced, as befitting a survey, but not fully explored as being beyond the limits of such a work. Biblical theology presupposes and builds upon the survey of a given work.

A Survey of the New Testament is, in every respect, introductory, not exhaustive. Thus, it deals with the realities and issues which critical introductions and Biblical Theologies consider more extensively. It is necessarily foundational, not final; introductory, neither inclusive nor exhaustive in its considerations.

The Old and New Testaments together form a unity in diversity. The Old Covenant gives way to the New. The Old Testament Messianic prophecies find their fulfillment in the person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The four Gospel records form the foundation of which the Acts and Epistles are the biblical structure and finality. A Bible Survey demonstrates this essential interrelationship.

The purpose of this first volume on the New Testament is to give an introductory preparation for the study of the Gospel records and the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and then the significance of the resurrected and ascended Lord through his inspired Apostles in the initial spread of Christianity.

May this introductory volume become a companion in basic biblical study, and these studies prove to be instructive in the historical and biblical foundation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and his power as realized through his Apostles.

For the author, this has been a consuming work of devotion to our seminary students and church members. May all profit thereby.

—W. R. Downing

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New Testament Linguistic Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and explanations are used in the exegetical notes and footnotes pertaining to the Old Testament Hebrew [MT], the Septuagint [LXX] and the Greek New Testament, various reference works and biblical commentaries. These are included for this Survey and also for reference to other works.

ἀ	Aquila. A revision of the LXX.
abl.	Ablative case. The case of separation.
absol.	Absolute. Used for the Gk. Gen. or Acc. Absolute.
acc.	Accusative case. The case which relates to the direction, extent or end of action.
act.	Active voice.
anarth.	Anarthrous. Without the definite article. Stresses character or quality. See “Arthrous,” “def. art.”
aor.	Aorist tense. A punctiliar action or event. Viewing an action as a whole rather than a process.
aor. imp.	Aorist imperative. A command or entreaty to commence an action at once with a sense of urgency and determination. See “pres. imp.”
aor. subj.	Aorist subjunctive.
aor. subj. prohib.	Aorist subjunctive of prohibition. A command or entreaty to not even begin a given [anticipated] action. See “pres. imp. of prohib.”
Arab.	Arabic.
Aram.	Aramaic.
art.	Article. Definite article. Stresses identity. See “def. art.”
arth.	Arthrous. Articular, having the definite article. Stresses identity. See “Anarthrous,” and “def. art.”
cl.	Clause, or Class of conditional sentence.
cod.	Codex, codices. A codex is a ms. with pages sewn together in a book form, replacing the earlier scroll form.
cond.	Conditional, conditional sentence.
conj.	Conjunction.

const.	Construction, with reference to various linguistic arrangements.
Const. St.	Used for Heb. words in “Construct State,” or dependent and often joined to another by <i>maqquph</i> (ֿ). See “Absol. St.”
Crit.	Critical. The Critical Text, the latest Greek eclectic text.
D	Latin Vulgate. C. 406 AD.
D	“Deuteronomic.” See JEDP.
dat.	Dative case. The case of personal concern.
def. art.	Definite article. See “Arthrous,” “Articular.”
def. dir. obj.	Definite Direct Object.
demon.	Demonstrative.
dir. obj.	Direct Object.
dual.	Dual number. Heb. thought of some things as naturally existing in pairs.
E	“Elohistic.” See JEDP.
E.g.	<i>Exempli gratia</i> , “for the sake of example.”
emph.	Emphatic, emphasize.
emph. imp.	Emphatic Imperative. In Heb., the addition of the suffix ׀ to the imp. vb. for greater emph.
emph. pos.	Emphatic position. Inflected languages often reserve word-order for emphasis, usually placing the emphatic words or phrases toward the first of the given statement. At times the emphatic words are placed last for a culminative emphasis.
Eng.	English.
Eth.	Ethiopic Version.
fem.	Feminine gender.
fig.	Figure, figurative.
fut.	Future tense.
gen.	Genitive case. The case of source or possession.
Ger.	German.
Gk.	Greek.
Heb.	Hebrew.
i.e.,	<i>id est</i> , “that is.”
imp.	Imperative mood. The mood of command or entreaty. See “pres. imp.” and “aor. imp.” See also “ind.,” “subj.” and “opt.”

imperf.	Imperfect tense. The Gk. imperfect denotes continuous [linear] or repetitive action in time past. The Heb. imperfect denotes an incomplete action. See “perf.”
ind.	Indicative mood. Statement of fact or [presumed] reality. See “subj.,” “opt.” and “imp.”
indef.	Indefinite.
ind. obj.	Indirect object.
inf.	Infinitive.
inst.	Instrumental case. The case of means.
intens.	Intensive. Various constructions may be used to produce an intensive expression.
interj.	Interjection.
interrog.	Interrogative.
K, cop ^{sa}	Coptic Sahidic Version.
K, cop ^{bo}	Coptic Bohairic Version.
κ τ λ	An abbreviation for καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν, lit: “and the rest or remaining.” Roughly the equivalent of “etc.”
KJV, AV	King James Version or Authorized Version of the English Bible (1611).
LLat.	Late Latin.
Lat.	Latin.
Lex.	Lexicon.
loc.	Locative case. The case of location.
LXX	Septuagint. The Greek Version of the Old Testament, c. 246 BC, which is designated by the Roman Numerals for “Seventy.”
masc.	Masculine gender.
ME.	Middle English.
MFr.	Middle French.
mid.	Middle voice. The middle voice in Greek is reserved for either a reflexive or intensive expression.
MLat.	Middle Latin.
ms.	Manuscript. A hand-written document. Pl., “mss.”
n.	Noun.
neg.	Negative.

neut.	Neuter gender.
OE	Old English.
OFr.	Old French.
opt.	Optative mood. The mood of possibility, further removed from reality than the subj. See “subj.,” “opt.” and “imp.”
Orig.	<i>Hexapla</i> of Origen, Polyglot, c. 230 AD.
part.	Particle.
pass.	Passive voice.
per.	Person.
perf.	Perfect tense. The Gk. perfect tense views an action as past and the results existing into the present. The Heb. perfect denotes a completed action. See “imperf.”
periph.	Periphrastic. An equitive verb construed with a participle used to emphasize a given action or state.
pl.	Plural number.
pluperf.	Pluperfect tense. An action considered as extending from one time to another in the past.
pos.	Position. Refers to word-order in either Gk. or Heb. sentence. See “emph. pos.”
poss.	Possessive.
prep.	Preposition. These may be used either separately or intensively [the “perfective” use] in a compound word.
pres.	Present tense. An [linear] action considered as in progress from the present view of the speaker or writer.
pres. imp.	Present imperative. A command to keep on doing a certain action.
pres. imp. of prohib.	Present imperative of prohibition. A command to stop something already in progress.
pron.	Pronoun.
ptc.	Participle. A verbal adjective. The pres. ptc. can be used with a def. art. (rel. ptc.) to emphasize an outstanding characteristic. The ptc. may be used temporally with an equitive verb to emphasize a given action or state.

Q	Qumran Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls [DSS].
qual.	Qualitative. Combined with the rel. pron., used to demonstrate a kind of person or thing.
rel.	Relative. The rel. or arthrous ptc. is used to stress a given characteristic.
rest. att.	Restrictive attributive. The repetition of the def. art. with the adj., both in the same case and gender as the preceding noun, for emphasis.
RV, ASV	Revised Version or American Standard Version of the English Bible (1901)
G, LXX	Septuagint.
ó	Symmachus, a later literary version of LXX [c. 170].
sing.	Singular number.
stat. vb.	Stative verb. A vb. that describes a state of being, condition or quality. An intransitive vb.
subj.	Subjunctive mood. The mood of contingency or probability, closest to reality. See “ind.,” “opt.,” and “imp.”
Syr.	<i>Old Syriac</i> . The language of ancient Syria, an Aramaic language [Aramaean] very closely related to the Chaldee. Syriac versions are significant in the textual criticism of the Hebrew OT.
S, syr ^p	<i>Peshitta</i> or <i>Peshito</i> (“Simple”). A standardized Syrian text that dates from the early fifth century, based on earlier texts (c. 120). See “Old Syriac.”
Talm.	<i>Talmud</i> . The written body of Jewish tradition and commentaries, comprised of the Mishna and Gemara.
θ	Theodotian, a 200 AD version of LXX.
TR	<i>Textus Receptus</i> . 1633 revision of the 1550 <i>Stephanus Text</i> with emendations from Beza’s final editions (1588–89, 1599).
transl.	Translated.
vb.	Verb.
Ver.	Version.
v.l.	<i>Varia Lectio</i> . A variant reading in the text.

voc. Vocative. The case of direct address.

Bibliographical Abbreviations

The following works may be cited in this Bible Survey. These include standard lexicons, concordances, biblical commentaries and some of the abbreviations used by such.

ACNT	<i>American Commentary on the New Testament.</i>
Alf	Henry Alford, <i>The Greek Testament.</i>
Barnes	Albert Barnes, <i>Notes on the Old and New Testaments.</i>
BHC	B. H. Carroll, <i>An Interpretation of the English Bible.</i>
Calvin	John Calvin, <i>Commentaries.</i>
D&M	Dana & Mantey, <i>Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament.</i>
DJBP	<i>Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period.</i>
EB	<i>The Expositor's Bible.</i>
EBC	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary.</i>
EGT	<i>Expositor's Greek Testament.</i>
Ellicot	C. J. Ellicott's <i>Bible Commentary.</i>
EJ	<i>Encyclopedia of Judaism.</i>
G&N	Geisler & Nix, <i>General Introduction to the Bible.</i>
Gill	<i>John Gill's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures.</i>
Hall	Bishop Joseph Hall, <i>Contemplations on the Historical Passages of the Old and New Testaments.</i>
HBHBK	<i>Halley's Bible Handbook.</i>
HEND	Hendriksen, <i>New Testament Commentary.</i>
H&R	Hatch & Ridpath, <i>Concordance to the Septuagint.</i>
ICC	<i>International Critical Commentary.</i>
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.</i>
JFB	<i>A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.</i>

JHM	J. H. Moulton, <i>Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> .
K&D	Keil & Delitzsch, <i>Commentary on the Old Testament</i> .
Kitto	John Kitto, <i>Daily Bible Illustrations</i> .
KYB	W. Graham Scroggie, <i>Know Your Bible</i> .
L&B	W. Thompson, <i>The Land and the Book</i> .
Lange	<i>Commentary on the Holy Scriptures Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical</i> .
L&S	Liddell & Scott, <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> .
LXT	<i>Ralph's Septuaginta</i> .
M&G	Mouton & Geden, <i>Greek Concordance</i> .
M&S	McClintock & Strong, <i>Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature</i> .
MH	Matthew Henry, <i>Commentary on the Whole Bible</i> .
Meyer	H.A.W. Meyer, <i>Commentary on the New Testament</i> .
NAC	<i>New American Commentary</i> .
NBC	<i>New Bible Commentary</i> .
Nelson	<i>Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts</i> .
NICOT	<i>The New International Commentary on the Old Testament</i> .
NIDNT T	C. Brown, <i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> .
NIGTC	<i>New International Greek Testament Commentary</i> .
Poole	Matthew Poole, <i>A Commentary on the Holy Bible</i> .
PC	<i>The Pulpit Commentary</i> .
Pillar	<i>Pillar Commentary</i> .
RCHL	R.C.H. Lenski, <i>The Interpretation of the New Testament</i> .
RWP	A.T. Robertson, <i>Word Pictures in the New Testament</i> .

SEC	<i>Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.</i>
TDNT	R. Kittle, <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.</i>
TNTC	<i>Tyndale New Testament Commentary.</i>
Trapp	John Trapp, <i>Commentary on the Old and New Testaments.</i>
UBHBK	<i>Unger's Bible Handbook.</i>
Wallace	Daniel B. Wallace, <i>Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics.</i>
WBC	<i>Word Biblical Commentary.</i>
WEC	<i>Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary.</i>
WEV	<i>Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.</i>
WHA	<i>Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible.</i>
ZPBD	<i>Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary.</i>
ZPBE	<i>Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia.</i>

A General Introduction to the New Testament

Introductory Remarks and Observations

The volumes of this Survey of the Bible necessarily overlap in some areas, with some necessary repetition. Some of the following remarks and observations are in part reiterated and abbreviated from volume one on the Old Testament.¹

The Unspeakable Privilege of Possessing the Scriptures

Possessing the Word of God in one's own language is the greatest of all privileges afforded to man. Countless martyrs have given their lives for this simple privilege. Its study will dispel all superstitious ignorance, enable one to truly know God, himself and the world about him, the future, the present and the past in terms of a Christian Theistic World—and Life View. The Bible will give him the key to understand himself as the image-bearer of God living at a given point in history. It reveals God in all His Divine attributes, man in both his sinfulness and in a state of grace, and the Lord Jesus Christ in all His redemptive work and glory. The Bible makes perfectly clear the blessed truth of redemption and salvation. All this awesome truth is given in one volume in understandable language and meant to be our sole rule of both faith—what we are to believe—and practice—how we are to live (Psa. 1:2; 119:11, 105).

The Nature of Divine Revelation

Divine revelation is both general and special. General revelation is contained in created reality (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 19:1–5; Rom. 1:18–20; 2:11–16; Heb. 11:3). This natural revelation, both external and internal, although habitually suppressed [κατεχόντων] by fallen, sinful man, is sufficient to leave him without a defense or apologetic [ἀναπολογήτους]. Special

¹ For the primary introduction, see *An Introductory and Explanatory Survey of the Bible*, I, pp. 15–53.

revelation, which has existed from the very beginning (Gen. 2:16–17) has been inscripturated and forms the rule of both faith and practice.

The Scriptures are self–attesting or self–authenticating. As the very Word of God inscripturated and Divinely inspired, there is no other or higher authority to which they may be subjected. This Survey of the Bible presupposes the absolute authority and self–authenticating nature of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 4:12–13; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).

Apart from the objective truth of Divine revelation, everything is subjective and open to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. To state that the Bible is to be our sole rule of both faith and practice is to say that all the Scriptures are determining for all of life.

What is the Bible?

The Bible² is one unified Book by one Divine Author, comprised of sixty–six integral or cohesive parts [the various “books” of the Bible]. It is the very Word of God inscripturated [written down]. The Bible is the inspired, authoritative, infallible, self–authenticating and inerrant self–revelation of the triune God to man.

The Structure of Our English Bible

It is of primary importance to understand that our English Bible is *not* arranged in chronological order. Rather, the various books are grouped together in a very general interrelated arrangement of Historical, Poetical and Prophetical in the Old Testament and Historical, Doctrinal and Prophetical in the New.

The KJV of our English Bible contains 1, 189 chapters; 31, 173 verses; 773, 693 words and 3, 536, 489 letters. The present format of our English Bible into chapters and verses for ease of

² “Bible,” from Βίβλος, “book.” The opening word of our NT: Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...

reference, however, is *not* inspired. The Hebrew Old Testament had various paragraph divisions in the Masoretic Text.³ Modern chapter divisions were made in the thirteenth century and the present verse divisions in 1555.⁴ One must read the flow of thought and not allow chapter and verse divisions to obscure any truth.

The Old and New Testaments

The major division in our Bible is that of the Old and the New Testaments. Throughout the Bible runs a principle of progressive revelation.⁵ God progressively reveals Himself and His creative and redemptive purposes. These all coalesce in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the consummation of both creation and redemption (Rev. 4:11; Gen. 3:14–19; Eph. 1:9–11; 2 Pet. 3:7–13).⁶

³ Masoretic Text (c. 1100 AD). The standardized pointed Hebrew text, the work of the Massorettes or ancient Hebrew scribes (c. 400–900 AD). The Masoretic Text is divided into 452 lessons. The whole MT has ancient paragraph divisions.

⁴ The modern chapter divisions are the work of Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (c. 1227). The modern verse divisions were made by Stephanus in his Greek NT (1555).

⁵ There are five interrelated branches to Theology: (1) Exegetical Theology, doctrinal truth derived from the text. (2) Biblical Theology. Its organizing principle is that of progressive revelation and the development of doctrine. (3) Historical Theology, tracing the development of doctrine from the N.T. to the present. (4) Systematic Theology, a systemizing and harmonizing of doctrine from the first three disciplines. (5), Practical Theology. This is theology applied to the life of believers individually and corporately. One can clearly mark the necessity of understanding the principle of progressive revelation, as it is situated in the very nature of a consistent theology.

⁶ See the following section on The New Testament in relation to the Old Testament.

Approaching the Study of the New Testament

“There are four great fields of New Testament study, the critical, the historical, the exegetical and the theological.”⁷ These are matters dealt with in detail by scholarly Introductions to the New Testaments.⁸ This Survey of the Bible seeks to treat such areas of study in a more abbreviated way, adding the areas of expository, analytical and devotional studies. Although the reader may not concentrate on the critical and exegetical, he ought to become generally acquainted with such studies as under girding the more practical areas. One’s goal ought to be to know the Scriptures in their entire context and possess a reasonable comprehension of all fields of New Testament study.

A Note for Serious Bible Students: The Need for a Study of the Original Languages

This Bible Survey is an introductory study of the English Bible. It is a beginning, not an end—a study which is preliminary and must be followed by more extensive and intense biblical studies. Although this is a study of the English Bible, it in no way denigrates a study of the original languages of Scripture. As in every thorough, literary or scientific approach to any given subject, we must go back to the originals—*ad fontes*—to be certain of our correct grasp of the truth. Behind a mastery of our English Bible, which is a version of a translation, stands the intricacies, grammatical constructions, syntax and nuances of the Hebrew, Aramaic and

⁷ Henry C. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. xi.

⁸ See the various Introductions to the New Testament in the bibliography at the conclusion of this volume.

Greek. Behind exposition must be exegesis, and an exegesis of the text can only be obtained from the original languages.⁹

Christian experience and practice are to be grounded in biblical doctrine. Biblical doctrine derives from and depends on Divine revelation. Inscripturated Divine revelation depends on language. Language depends on grammar and syntax, and the grammar and syntax of the very Word of God are properly considered only by a careful exegesis in the original languages which possess terminology, word–order, grammatical and syntactical nuances impossible to the English language.¹⁰ This is the necessary and logical manifestation of a belief in verbal, plenary inspiration.

Let it never be forgotten that being limited to the English Bible—a version of a translation—two steps removed from the very truth of God in all its original fullness, emphasis and glory—is at best to have a mere second–hand knowledge of the Word of God. Further, our Lord himself spoke and taught in either Aramaic or Hebrew, but all was derived from or based upon the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures! From The Lord Jesus Christ to the inspired Apostles, and up to the present, every great man of God has entrenched himself in the original languages of Scripture.¹¹ Let not the beginning student become discouraged, however. The key to comprehending Scripture is progression, as a true and consistent study of the Scriptures is a life–long pursuit.

⁹ Careful exegesis is especially necessary due to the “dynamic equivalence” paraphrasing in most modern versions. See The section on “English Translations and Versions of the Bible and New Testament” in this General Introduction.

¹⁰ It must be carefully noted that it is not the English Bible which is inadequate, but the English language. The English language simply cannot express the fullness of the original languages of Scripture.

¹¹ See the author’s *Selected Shorter Writings*, Chapter Three: “Why Study the Original Languages of Scripture?” pp. 55–103.

This Bible Survey is the beginning of Bible study, not its culmination. It is designed to give one an inclusive general grasp of the unfolding drama of redemption and an introduction to the biblical record in the context of history and the whole of Scripture. May this prove to be an incentive to a further, more intensive study of God's inscripturated Word.

The Necessity for and Importance of One's Presuppositions

Some biblical scholars hold that we must approach the New Testament Scriptures with an "open mind" and without any presuppositions.¹² First, we must understand that not all biblical scholars are regenerate, or true believers. Some approach the Scriptures with secular presuppositions which are counter to the self-authenticating nature of Scripture. Old Testament studies have suffered from the influence of the "higher" or rationalistic critics and such theories as an evolutionary theory of Israel's religion and the biblical canon, the Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch, biblical mythology and form criticism. These have sought to undermine the veracity of the biblical documents by positing either a later date or sought to impugn the authorship, holding to various unknown authors or later redactors—an evolutionary view of the God and writings of the Old Testament.¹³

New Testament studies have likewise had to deal with various forms of radical biblical criticism. Some alleged evangelical scholars have embraced such ideas as salvific inerrancy,¹⁴ theistic evolution and annihilation. It is also true

¹² One's presuppositions are his undisputed assumptions, axioms; first truths which are so ingrained as part of one's world-and-life view that they are never questioned.

¹³ See *An Introductory and Explanatory Survey of the Bible*, I, pp. 33–36, 67–75.

¹⁴ Salvific inerrancy is the notion that the Scriptures are inerrant concerning redemptive or salvific issues, but contain historical and scientific errors.

that some alleged evangelical scholars have modified their views to be acceptable to the scholarly community.

Note: There are various defective and radical approaches to the New Testament: first, the old documentary hypothesis, usually concentrated on the Old Testament and the JEDP. theory of redactionism begun by Jean Astruc (1684–1766), and brought later into the New Testament as “Source Criticism,” seeking to discover the sources of the biblical writings according to naturalistic assumptions and principles

Second, the historical school of religious Rationalism, a strange admixture of Rationalism, Pietism and Romanticism,¹⁵ originated with Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791), who denied Divine inspiration, held that the biblical record was historically conditioned to localized situations, and that our Lord and the Apostles accommodated themselves to the contemporary religious thinking of their day. He thus held that the Scriptures were fallible records, mixed with error, and that historical investigation had no bearing on faith.

Third, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761–1851), professor at Jena, Würzburg and Heidelberg, Naturalistic commentator and author of a *Life of Jesus* (1828), explained away the miracles as natural events. “Of all the rationalistic theories the Naturalistic is the most violent and radical.”¹⁶ Strauss’s *Life of Jesus* (1835) in the mythical tradition was an answer to Paulus’s work.

Fourth, Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) wrote an extensive critique of Christianity from a Deistic standpoint, later published by G. E. Lessing as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774–1778). Reimarus thought our Lord to be a mere man, a political agitator who was executed by the Romans for treason.

Fifth, Reacting against the Naturalism of Paulus and others, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Christian Gottlieb Heyne (1729–1812) developed the idea of biblical

¹⁵ From Rationalism, they adopted their critical spirit, from Pietism, a subjectivism that separated objective truth from faith, and from Romanticism, the idea that the Bible was a literary monument to be interpreted in literary categories.

¹⁶ Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 167–168.

mythology as a legitimate factor in historical criticism and as a literary category. They sought to separate religious feeling from both myth and history. Heyne was the first to define myth as a literary category, a device commonly and universally used by primitive peoples before the development of rational thought.¹⁷

Sixth, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schliermacher (1768–1834), professor at Halle and Berlin, was the father of liberal German theology in the nineteenth century. He combined a critical approach (ignoring inspiration) to textual and historical issues with a religious tone he had inherited from Pietism. According to Kantian Idealism, he sought to make a distinction between what he considered essentials and non-essentials and separated the rational from the irrational, relegating religion to the realm of feeling. He viewed Christianity as the highest form of religious evolution.

Eighth, Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), professor at Tübingen was one the greatest and most influential critical New Testament scholars of the nineteenth century. His Hegelian philosophy led him to consider early Christianity as a synthesis created from the conflict of opposing forces.

Ninth, Rudolf Sohm (1841–1917), a jurist, who argued that Church History must be pursued theologically. Hermann Usener (1834–1905) was a leading scholar in the field of Comparative Religions and led in the “History of Religions” approach to New Testament criticism. Otto Pflleiderer (1839–1908) held that there was a radical difference between our Lord and Paul which resulted in the Hellenization of Christianity. Others of this school included Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926), who applied the Comparative Religions approach to the Old Testament, and Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), the author of the multi-volume *History of Dogma* (1886–1889).

Tenth, Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) pioneered the path in Form Criticism, which sought to examine the genre

¹⁷ The Radical critics held alleged “biblical myths” to be important vehicles for the expression of philosophical and religious ideas in an essentially poetic or epic form. Story-telling was used by primitive peoples as philosophy or rational thought would be used by more advanced peoples.

[*Gattung*] and “setting in life” [*Sitz im Leben*] of biblical construction. This theory holds that behind the documents were oral traditions, sagas, legends and myths, which may be discovered under the layers of the text.

Finally, Gerhard von Rad (1901–1971) pioneered the development of Redaction Criticism. He argued, in opposition to Form Criticism, that the development of religious traditions was more important than their origin, and thus the focus moved to the alleged various redactions within the layers of the text, to the theology of the redactors, and to a study of the concept of covenants in the religious history of Israel.

Note: These are noted in order that the reader might be see the divergent, defective and radical views of some scholars and be familiar with the names and ideas of radical critics whose views are expressed or referred to in some biblical commentaries.

Second, such a notion as an “open mind” or being non-presuppositional is necessarily false. The Scriptures themselves are presuppositional and absolutely authoritative in their declaration. The Bible begins with a presuppositional statement; it never seeks to prove the existence of God. Further this very first statement sets forth the self-existence of God, the truth that every fact in this universe is a created fact, a declarative statement concerning the absolute power and sovereignty of God and the Creator-creature distinction—truths which are maintained throughout Scripture (Gen. 1:1).

Man, as the image-bearer of God, is by nature a presuppositionalist. In his primeval or prelapsarian state, he was created to “think God’s thoughts after him,” i.e., to give the same meaning to everything which God had given by creative and definitive fiat. Every fact in this created universe is a created fact defined by God (Gen. 1:1). In his present fallen, sinful state, man is biased against both general and

special revelation, habitually suppresses the truth,¹⁸ worships the “god” of his own imagination and side-steps the Creator to worship creation,¹⁹ and thus interprets everything according to his own faulty presuppositions (Rom. 1:18–25). The issue is, then, to have the correct or self-consistent presuppositions which are necessary for the cogent study of Scripture.

The first and primary presupposition is the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures themselves, constituting them, as Divine revelation, inspired and inerrant (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Thus, the Scriptures are fully and finally authoritative for both faith and life. A Theistic World-and-Life View is necessarily grounded in a revelational epistemology, i.e., the Scriptures as Divine, self-attesting revelation form the basis of one’s consummate knowledge and view of God, himself and the world about him.

The second presupposition is the self-attesting or self-authenticating nature of Scripture. It is fallacious to seek to credential or try to prove the trustworthiness of Scripture by external evidences such as history, science, archeology, cosmology, philosophy, psychology, comparative religions, etc. The undeniable and inescapable reality is that whatever one uses to credential or prove the trustworthiness of a given entity must always possess more authority than the entity itself. To state that the Bible is self-attesting or self-authenticating is

¹⁸ Rom. 1:18, “hold” [κατεχόντων] pres. ptc., denotes “habitually suppressing.” Rom. 1:20 summarizes fallen, sinful man’s culpability by stating that he is, even before natural revelation, without an apologetic [ἀναπολογήτους].

¹⁹ Rom. 1:21–22 describe man’s intellectual futility [έματαιώθησαν εν τοις διαλογισμοις αυτων] and incapacitated spiritual blindness [έσκοτίσθη ή ασύνετος αυτων καρδιά]. v. 23–24 describe his attempt to drag God down to his level through idolatry, and v. 25 reveals that he has exchanged the truth of God for the lie [τω ψεύδει], i.e., the prevailing principle of falsehood existing among fallen, sinful mankind, side-stepping [παρά] the Creator in order to worship creation.

to presuppose its highest and ultimate authority. This is not to be decried as circular reasoning. When dealing with ultimate issues and realities, all human reasoning is presuppositional and therefore broadly circular.

The third presupposition is that the inspired canon of Scripture is comprised of those books historically contained in the thirty–nine books of the Old and twenty–seven books of the New Testament. No other writings among the hundreds of religious works, including the Old Testament and New Testament Apocryphal or Jewish and alleged Christian and Gnostic Pseudopigrapha are inspired, authoritative or within the canon of Divine revelation. The biblical canon of sixty–six books form a coherent whole, a unity of anticipation and realization which is unique as Divine inscripturated revelation.

The fourth presupposition is that there is a necessary intertextual, historical, prophetic and redemptive relationship between the Old and New Testaments. In broad terms, “Scripture interprets Scripture.” All Scripture is to be interpreted according to “the Analogy of Faith” [*Analogia Fidei*], i.e., the coherent or non–contradictory character of the whole of Scripture as it bears upon any one given point.

Note: The terminology “analogy of faith” was originally based on a misunderstanding of Rom. 12:6, “...according to the proportion of faith” (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, i.e., the measure of personal faith—not going beyond what God has given by way of personal gifts of ministry and faith personally or individually received).

The term “faith” was taken by the Church Fathers in an objective sense as the doctrinal teaching of Scripture rather than a subjective sense of personal, experimental faith, belief or trust. They spoke of the *Analogia* or *Regula Fidei* as pertaining to the general principles of the Christian faith. Thus, the term entered into Christian Theology.

The Old Testament and Old Covenant anticipate and find fulfillment in the New Testament and New or Gospel Covenant (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 5:17–18; 26:56; Lk. 24: 25–27, 44–48; Acts 3:18; 13:26–30). The redemptive promises to the Patriarchs

and nation of Israel anticipate the coming of the Messiah, the true “Seed of Abraham,” the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:14–15; 12:1–3; Gal. 3:16). The Levitical priesthood, offerings and Monarchical institutions of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in our Lord as the ultimate Prophet, Priest and King. All prophecy in the Old Testament points ahead to the first and second comings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the consummation of the age and ultimately the consummation of world history.

The fifth presupposition is that because of the coherent nature of Scripture and the interrelationship between the Old and New Testaments, a consistent Biblical Theology may be gathered from the various books of the Bible, consistent with the Bible’s principle of progressive revelation and its unfolding drama of redemption. Old Testament Biblical Theology and New Testament Biblical Theology will have their necessary distinctives.

The sixth presupposition is the necessity of the indwelling and illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit to properly understand, open and consistently apply the Scriptures (Jn. 16:13–15; 1 Cor. 2:9–17; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 5:8–14; 2 Pet. 1:19–21; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Such spiritual illumination may vary with each individual due to internal and external circumstances, but every true believer possesses a regenerate mind-set and a given degree of spiritual perception or illumination.

These are essential presuppositions. Others might be added concerning the distinctives of the New or Gospel covenant, the emphasis upon conversion and personal faith, the realities of Christian experience, the nature of the New Testament Church and the essential eschatological nature of the New Testament and the Kingdom of God.

Chronology of the New Testament Era (6 BC-100 AD)

This age includes both the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and also the lives and ministries of the inspired Apostles.

Death of Herod the Great (c. 6 BC)

Herod Philip the Tetrarch, Ruler of the Northern Provinces (4 BC–34 AD)

Herod Antipas, Ruler of Galilee and Perea (4 BC–39 AD)²⁰

Herod Archelaus, Ruler of Idumea, Samaria and Judea (4 BC–6 AD). Deposed by Romans

The Annunciation and Birth of John the Baptist (6–5 BC)

The Annunciation and Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (c. 4–6 BC)

Coponius, Roman Procurator of Judea (6–8 AD)

Ambivius, Roman Procurator of Judea (9–12 AD)

Annius Rufus, Roman Procurator of Judea (12–15 AD)

Caesar Tiberius, Roman Emperor (14–37 AD)

Valerius Gratus, Roman Procurator of Judea (15–26 AD)

Joseph Caiaphas, Jewish High Priest (c. 18–37 AD)

The earthly ministry of Jesus the Christ (c. 26–30 AD)

Pontius Pilate, Roman Procurator of Judea (26–36 AD)

Marcellus, Roman Procurator of Judea (36–38 AD)

Caligula (Gaius), Roman Emperor (37–41 AD).

Caligula ordered his statue placed in the Jerusalem Temple. Procrastination by Petronius and Caligula's death prevented this and a Jewish uprising.

Claudius Caesar, Roman Emperor (41–54 AD)

King Herod Agrippa I, Procurator of Palestine (41–44 AD)

Spread of the gospel through the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul and others (c. 33–63 AD)

²⁰ Herod Philip and Herod Antipas were sons of Herod the Great and ruled in various parts of Judea and Galilee during the earthly life and ministry of our Lord.

Cuspius Fadus, Roman Procurator of Judea (44–46 AD)
 Tiberius Julius Alexander, Roman Procurator of Judea
 (46–48 AD)
 Ventidius Cumanus, Roman Procurator of Judea (48–52 AD)
 Marcus Antonius Felix, Roman Procurator of Palestine
 (51–59 AD)
 Claudius commands all Jews to leave Rome (c. 52 AD)
 Nero, Roman Emperor (54–68 AD)
 Porcius Festus, Roman Procurator of Palestine (c. 59–61 AD)
 Herod Agrippa II (Marcus Julius Agrippa). Last of the
 Herodian Kings (c. 28–93 AD)
 Albinus, Roman Procurator of Judea (61–65 AD)
 First Roman State persecution of Christians (c. 64–68 AD).
 Paul imprisoned, first at Caesarea, then at Rome.
 Gessius Florus, Roman Procurator of Judea (65–70 AD)
 Galba, Roman Emperor (68–69 AD)
 Otho and Vitellius, Roman Emperors (68–69 AD)
 Vettulenus Cerialis, Roman Procurator of Judea (70–72 AD)
 The Jewish War and destruction of the Temple (68–70 AD)
 Vespasian Roman Emperor (69–79 AD)
 Lucilius Bassus, Roman Procurator of Judea (72–75 AD)
 The Jewish final stand and mass suicide at Masada
 (c. 74 AD)
 M. Salvienus, Roman Procurator of Judea (75–86 AD)
 Titus, Roman Emperor (79–81 AD)
 Lucius Flavius Silva, Roman Procurator of Judea (c. 73?
 –81 AD?)
 Pompeius Longinus, Roman Procurator of Judea (86 AD)
 Domitian, Roman Emperor (81–96 AD)
 Nerva, Roman Emperor (96–98 AD)
 Trajan, Roman Emperor (98–117 AD)
 Hadrian, Roman Emperor (117–138 AD)

The final Jewish *Bar Kochbah* rebellion and end of Jewish national life (c. 132–135 AD)²¹

Chronology of The Apostolic Age

I. The Messianic Era (26–30 AD)

- A. The Year of Obscurity (26–27)
- B. The Year of Opportunity (27–28)
- C. The Year of Opposition (29–30)

II. The Apostolic Era (30–100 AD)

- A. The Era of Transition (30–48)
 - B. The Era of Expansion (48–64)
 - C. The Era of Persecution (64–100)
-

Contemporary Events
and Persons

Events and Persons Connected
with Church History

Messianic Era (26–30 AD)

This period of history properly commences with the events leading to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ministry of John the Baptist and the baptism and public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.²²

Note: The chronology of the Messianic Era is detailed separately under a Harmony of the Gospels and a

²¹ From the time of the Persian Empire there were repeated Jewish rebellions. The only one successful in gaining religious freedom was the Maccabean revolt. Most revolts were smaller in scope and crushed by the existing powers (e.g., Lk. 23:18–19, 25; Acts 5:34–37; 21:38). The final *Bar-Kochba* ["Son of the Star," Numb. 24:17–19] revolt ended with the destruction of Jewish national life.

²² Chronological data on the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ may be obtained from: Loraine Boettner, *A Harmony of the Gospels*; Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*; F. W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*; John Peter Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ*; A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*; W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*.

Chronology of the life of Christ at the conclusion of An Introduction to the Gospels in this volume.

Apostolic Era (30–100 AD)

This period of history extends from the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the end of the Apostolic Era or the end of the first century AD.

Era of Transition (30–48 AD)

Pentecost and the empowering of the New Testament Church (30)²³

Martyrdom of Stephen (33–35?)

Conversion of Saul (34–37?)²⁴

Gaius (Caligula) Roman Emperor (37–41)

Marcellus, Roman Procurator (38)

Britain becomes a Roman province (43)

Primitive Christianity introduced into Britain (c.43)

Herod Agrippa I (37–44)

Epistle of James (44–46)²⁵

Maryllus, Roman Procurator (39–44)

Claudius, Roman Emperor (41–54)

Martyrdom of James the Greater (son of Zebedee)
(c. 44)

Cuspius Fadus, Roman Procurator (45–46)

²³ The Lord Jesus Christ instituted His church during His earthly ministry. The New Testament church had every essential before Pentecost. Pentecost was the empowering or credentialing of the already-existing New Testament church.

²⁴ Chronological data on the life and missionary work of the Apostle Paul may be obtained from: W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, and F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*. A study on the Apostolic churches and doctrine may be found in Augustus Neander, *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*.

²⁵ Invaluable data on the order, historical circumstances and content of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament may be found in most standard New Testament Surveys and Introductions. See Bibliography.

- Era of Expansion (48–64 AD)
- Tiberius Alexander, Roman Procurator (48)
- Ventidius Cumanus, Roman Procurator (49–52)
- Paul’s First Missionary Journey (48)
- Epistle to the Galatians (48–49)²⁶**
- Herod Agrippa II (50–93)
- The Jerusalem Conference (50)²⁷
- Paul’s Second Missionary Journey (51)
- Epistles of 1 & 2 Thessalonians (51–52)**
- M. Antonius Felix (Roman Procurator, 51–59)
- Gospel of Mark (50–55)**
- Paul’s Third Missionary Journey (53)
- Philip the Apostle bound & stoned at Hierapolis in Phrygia (c.54)
- Epistles of 1 & 2 Corinthians (53–57)**
- Nero, Roman Emperor (54–68)
- Epistle to the Romans (57)**
- Paul imprisoned at Caesarea (58–60)
- Gospel of Matthew (60–63)**
- Gospel of Luke (61–64)**
- Porcius Festus, Roman Procurator (60–61)

²⁶ The date of the Galatian Epistle is determined by the usage of the term “Galatia.” If Paul was referring to the northern portion of the Roman province, then Galatians would have been written later, about 57–58 A.D., forming both a logical and historical introduction to Romans (the “northern Galatian” theory), but if referring to the whole province, then the “Churches of Galatia” would refer to the area of his first missionary journey (the “Southern Galatian” theory). This latter view, which internal evidence seems to substantiate, would necessitate the earlier date.

²⁷ This is traditionally referred to as the “First Church Council” in an ecumenical sense. It was rather a church conference between the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch. Although the Apostles were present, there was no ecclesiastical hierarchy or court, rather a discussion and conclusion. The Apostles did *not decree* anything, but *requested* the compliance of Gentile Christians in certain matters pertaining to immorality, idolatry and diet (Cf. Acts 15).

Martyrdom of James the Just (61)

Paul taken as prisoner to Rome (61–63)

**Epistles to the Ephesians,
Colossians, Philippians, and
to Philemon (60–63)
Book of Acts (63)**

Albinus, Roman Procurator (62–65)

Paul's release from first Roman imprisonment (63)²⁸

Epistles of 1 Timothy & Titus (63–64)

Era of Persecution (64–100 AD)

Note: It is remarkable that the latter part of the first century AD is virtually unknown to historians except in the most general terms. Such lack of historical detail must be considered in the context of the political unrest in the Roman Empire, the frequent transitions in leadership, and destruction of records. This is especially true with regard to matters of Church History. Much information rests on early tradition. Records of the martyrs were preserved and later generations venerated them. Many church records were destroyed during the Imperial persecutions of 303–310 AD.

It is most probable that all of the original Apostles with the exception of John were martyred during the Neronian persecution. For traditional stories concerning the Apostles and others martyred in the first century, Cf. Thieleman J. Van Braught, *Martyrs' Mirror* (1660) or John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (1563).

The Great Fire in Rome and first persecution of Christians under Nero. Believers ravaged by beasts, crucified, used for human torches in Roman celebrations (64)

Barnabas martyred (burned to death) at Salamia in Cyprus (64)

Annaeus Seneca, Roman statesman, Stoic Philosopher (5 BC–65 AD)

²⁸ There are two views of Paul's imprisonment. Some hold that there was one Roman imprisonment; others that there were two, between which Paul was released and re-visited many of the churches, ministering until the outbreak of the Neronian persecution.

Epistles of 1 & 2 Peter, Hebrews, Jude and 2 Timothy (64–68)

- Gessius Florus, Roman Procurator (66–70)
- Martyrdom of John Mark the evangelist (c. 68)
- Martyrdom of Peter and Paul: Peter (traditionally) crucified upside down. Paul beheaded (68)
- Aristarchus, Epaphras, Priscilla, Aquilla, Andronicus & Junia martyred at Rome (c. 68)
- Silas martyred at Corinth (c. 68)
- Onesiphorus & Porphyrius martyred (torn to death) (c. 68)
- Andrew the Apostle martyred (crucified) at Patras in Achaia (c. 68)
- Bartholomew the Apostle tortured & beheaded in Armenia (68)
- Thomas the Apostle martyred (tortured & burned alive) in Calamina (c. 68)
- Matthew the Apostle martyred (tortured & beheaded) in Nad-davar (c. 68)
- Simon Zelotes & Judas Thaddeus the Apostles martyred (one crucified, the other beaten to death) (c. 68)
- Matthias the Apostle martyred (stoned & beheaded) (c. 68)
- Prochorus, Parmenas & Nicanor, 3 of the first deacons martyred (c. 68)
- Olympus martyred (c. 68)
- Carpus martyred at Troas (c. 68)
- Trophimus martyred (beheaded) (c. 68)
- Maternus, Egystus & Marianus martyred in Germany (c. 68)
- Hermagoras martyred at Aquileia (c. 68)
- Onesimus & Dionysius the Areopagite martyred (c. 68)
- Civil wars following the death of Nero (68–69) and the Principates of Galba (68–69), Otho (69) and Vitellius (69)
- Vespasian, Roman Emperor (69–79)
- Apollinaris martyred at Ravenna (c.70)
- Final revolt of Jewish Zealots and destruction of Jerusalem and Temple (70–72)

Titus, Roman Emperor (79–81)

Domitian, Roman Emperor (81–96)

Flavius Josephus writes his *History of the Jews* (81–96)

General persecution of both Jews and Christians in the reign of Domitian (93–96)

Luke the evangelist martyred (hanged) (c. 93)

Antipas martyred (burned alive) (c. 95)

John exiled to Patmos (96)

**The Gospel of John, 1, 2, & 3 John,
Revelation (90–98?)²⁹**

Trajan, Roman Emperor (98–117)

Timothy martyred (stoned) at Ephesus (c. 98)

Urticinus martyred (beheaded) at Ravenna (c. 99)

The martyrs Vitalus (buried alive) & wife (beaten to death) at Milan (c. 99)

²⁹ The dating of the Johannine writings is divided between two views: first, the traditional view that John, out-living the other Apostles, wrote his works at the end of his life during the Domitian persecution (c.90–98 AD). Second, the preterist view that the New Testament canon was complete before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. John then wrote his works during the Neronian persecution. Both views have had strong conservative adherents.

The Nature and Structure of the New Testament

The New Testament in Relation to the Old Testament

The term “New Testament” stands in contrast to the “Old Testament” as the finality of Divine special revelation in its progressive and culminative content. The word “testament” [διαθήκη] denotes “covenant,”³⁰ and the terminology “new testament,” first used by our Lord himself at the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20), then echoed by the Apostle Paul of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:25), then of the entire New or Gospel covenant (2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 9:15), refers to the realization of the Covenant of Grace which the progressive covenants of promise in the Old Testament prophetically anticipated.

The Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, comprise two-thirds of the Bible in the thirty-nine books in the English Bible. The New Testament comprises the final third and contains the final twenty-seven books of the English Bible. The Old Testament is the inscripturated record of Divine revelation which prepared the world for the Gospel or the New Covenant. The two Testaments are complementary. The promises made to Abraham, the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Messianic anticipation with all its glory and world-wide dominion all find their fulfillment in the full realization of the New Covenant. The New Testament presupposes the Old Testament.

Note: The Old Testament reveals creation and its purpose (Gen. 1:1–31; Rev. 4:11), man as the image-bearer of God and the Creation Mandate (Gen. 1:26–28), the Fall and its consequences (Gen. 3), the establishment of blood sacrifice by God himself (Gen. 3:21; Heb. 9), the Flood (Gen. 6–8), the

³⁰ διαθήκη, covenant, is the Gk. equivalent of the Heb. בְּרִית. The Lat. is *testamentum*.

Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9:1–17), the focus of redemptive history through Abraham and the promises made to him (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:6; Gal. 3:6–16), the formation of the nation of Israel as the recipient and repository of Divine revelation, the giving of the Moral Law (Ex. 20:1–17), the establishment of a priesthood (Ex. 40; Psa. 110; Heb. 4:14–5:10), the establishment of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam. 7) and the prophetic corpus—all of which was to find realization and fulfillment in the New Testament.

The New Testament is gospel-oriented and characterized eschatologically. The Old Testament anticipation finds its realization and fulfillment in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of the gospel answers to the righteousness of God and is apprehended and appropriated by faith in the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16–17), who is the fulfillment of the institutions of the sacrificial system (Jn. 1:29), prophet (Deut. 18:15; Jn. 7:40), priest (Heb. 4:14–5:10) and king (Psa. 2), and through his impeccable life [active obedience], suffering and death [passive obedience], burial, resurrection and ascension back into glory as the God–Man, Sovereign Governor and final Judge (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 17: 1–5; Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 1:13–17; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1–3; Rev. 20:11–15).

The following couplets epitomize this relationship between the Old and New Testaments:

The New is in the Old contained,
The Old is by the New explained.

The New is in the Old concealed,
The Old is by the New Revealed

The Old Testament is characterized by anticipation,
The New Testament is characterized by realization.

The Old possesses the commencement of Divine revelation

The New possesses the consummation of Divine revelation

The Old is historically and prophetically conditioned

The New is historically and eschatologically conditioned

This progressive principle of revelation, which finds its culmination in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, is stated in succinct fashion in the opening words of Hebrews (1:1–2):

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds...

Note: Mark the basic structure: "...God...having spoken...by the prophets....spoke in [his] Son... [ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας...ἐν τοῖς προφήταις...ἐλάλησεν ...ἐν υἱῷ...]. God having spoken through various means [dreams, visions, direct revelation] through the prophets has now spoken with all finality in [his] Son. The anarth. const. emphasizes the quality or character—the finality—of Divine revelation.

The Old Testament contains the Old Covenant, which was preparatory for the New or Gospel Covenant. God has always dealt with man within a covenant relationship—from a principle of representation and imputation—i.e., either in Adam or in Christ [this identification is also termed Federal Theology], and not merely on a personal basis (Rom. 3:24–6; 5:11–19; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45–47). We were in Adam by nature; we are in Christ by grace.

There has ever been and will ever be only one method of salvation and a right relationship with God—through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament believers looked forward to the cross; we, as New Testament believers look back to it, as it were (Gen. 3:15; Jn. 8:56; Heb. 11:1ff). There was never salvation through racial genealogy, animal sacrifice or the works of the Law (Jn. 1:12–13; Rom. 3:27–31; 9:31–32; Gal. 2:16; 3:10–16).

Covenant Theology views Scripture in terms of the Divine eternal, creative and redemptive purpose or Covenant of Redemption [the *pactum salutis* or “Covenant of Peace”] and its out-working in time and history in terms of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace revealed in Scripture.

The various subordinate and progressive covenants under the Old Covenant and Testament [Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic] were covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12), and the New or Gospel Covenant is the realization and finalization of the Covenant of Grace. In short, the New or

Gospel Covenant *is* the Covenant of Grace. It is all of free and sovereign grace from election to glorification, and pertains to the elect alone.

Note: The eternal redemptive purpose extends from personal election (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 11:5; 2 Pet. 1:10), to predestination (Eph. 1:5, 11; Rom. 8:29–30), covenant redemption (Rom. 3:24–26; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12; 1 Pet. 3:18), effectual calling (Rom. 8:30; 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:26; Gal. 1:6; Eph. 4:4; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:9; 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 1:1), regeneration (Jn. 3:3–5, 7; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), justification (Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 5:1–2, 16, 18; 8:30; Gal. 3:24; Titus 3:7), adoption (Gal. 4:4–7; Rom. 8:13), sanctification (Jn. 17:17; 1 Cor. 1:1–2, 30; 6:11; 2 Cor. 3:17–18; Heb. 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:15–16) and glorification (Psa. 73:24; Rom. 8:18, 23; 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:43, 2 Cor. 4:17; Col. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:1, 10; Jude 24).³¹

The New Testament Scriptures, then, are the finality of Divine revelation in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lk. 24:25–27, 44–47; 1 Tim. 3:16). As the fulfillment and finality of Divine revelation, the New Testament is inherently eschatological. This eschatological aspect is marked in the nature of the Kingdom of God as both present and future, and in the glory of the future resurrection, judgment and final state.

The use of the Old Testament in and by our Lord, and the New Testament and its authors, is a vital consideration. Quotations or allusions to Old Testament passages are either from the Hebrew text or the Septuagint [LXX], the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures made in Alexandria, Egypt (c. 246 BC). There are direct quotations, allusions and general references which connect Old Testament

³¹ See W. R. Downing, *Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism: A Discussion of the Primary Issues Involved*, Morgan Hill, CA. P.I.R.S. Publications, n.d. 26 pp.

promises, prophecies, personalities and principles with New Testament fulfillment, realization and application.³²

The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God forms a central truth in our Lord's earthly preaching.³³ A thorough study will reveal that the kingdom of God³⁴ is a comprehensive term for the sovereign rule of God and the realm over which this rule extends. The kingdom of God is the inclusive, comprehensive, sovereign and redemptive work of God in the world; the church is an organism within this kingdom, proclaiming its message and furthering its advancement as it has been commissioned (Matt. 16:18–19; Acts 19:8; 20:24–25; 28:23, 31; Col. 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:4–5).

The kingdom of God will be progressively manifest until it is entirely comprehensive in its revealed or experimental scope, finding its ultimate conclusion in filling the world and in the “new heavens and earth” (Dan. 7:13–14; 1 Cor. 15:24–28; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 11:15; 19:6; 21:1).

Scripturally, the kingdom has past (prophetical), present (historical) and future (eschatological) aspects. Thus, the kingdom of God is universal and includes all believers. It also includes a realm in which the power of Divine rule is experienced.

Note: For a through discussion of the Kingdom of God, see George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 57–69; Mark A. Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, pp.

³² See G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* for an extended commentary and study of each passage.

³³ E.g., Matt. 6:33; 12:28; Mk. 1:15; 4:26–27; 9:1, 47; 10:14–15, 23; 14:25; Lk. 6:20; 13:28; 17:20–21; Jn. 3:3. See also: Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 15:50.

³⁴ The “kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of God” are identical. Matthew uses the term “kingdom of heaven” 19 times, and in each case the other Synoptic Gospels render it the “kingdom of God.”

66–68; and James Stalker, “The Kingdom of God (of Heaven),” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, III, pp. 1805–1808.

These qualities have led some to confuse the kingdom with the church. The distinctions between the kingdom of God and the New Testament church may be seen by contrast. Men “see” and “enter into” the kingdom of God by regeneration. This is quite apart from any direct connection with a church, but is concerned with the sovereign grace and power of God alone in its realization (Jn. 3:3, 5). Entrance into a New Testament church is upon the scriptural prerequisites of conversion, baptism and the vote of the church (Acts 2:41).

The kingdom is universal; the church is necessarily local [i.e., a body, assembly, congregation. Such language would be utterly foreign in reference to the kingdom of God]. The kingdom is a monarchy; the church is a democracy under the headship of Jesus Christ and the rule of his Word. There is a gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 9:35), but never a gospel of the church. The kingdom is an indistinct, unobservable entity (Lk. 17:20–21); the church is observable and quite distinct in all its characteristics (e.g., membership, leadership, ordinances, ministry, etc.).

The New Testament church as an institution will end with this economy, finding its fulfillment in the church glorious (Eph. 3:20–21; Heb. 12:22–23). Thus, the church is contained within the kingdom, but the kingdom is neither contained within the church nor equivalent to it. Such contrast manifestly distinguishes between the kingdom and the church.

Note: It must be noted in church history that when the church and kingdom are considered synonymous, there are inevitable political, social and military implications. Both Romanism and Protestantism have historically resorted to political power and even to the sword to enforce their dictums and defend their causes (Cf. 2 Cor. 10:3–5).

The Books, Dates and Authors of the New Testament

There are eight authors of the New Testament writings: Paul, Peter, Luke, John, James, Matthew, Jude and John Mark.³⁵ Paul penned the majority of the New Testament, but at times used an amanuensis, perhaps because of his eyesight (e.g., Gal. 4:15; 6:11; Rom. 16:22). Peter wrote two Epistles, John wrote five books: his Gospel, three Epistles and the Revelation. James, Matthew and Jude each wrote one book and John Mark probably wrote his Gospel under the influence of Peter. James and Jude were half-brothers to our Lord and converted after his resurrection (Jn. 7:3–5; 1 Cor. 15:7). John Mark, though not an Apostle, was often with Disciples in the Gospel record (Mk. 14:51–52). The Jerusalem church met in his mother's home at times (Acts 12:12). He was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10).³⁶

The following chart³⁷ summarizes the New Testament writings, the various authors, probable place of writing and the recipients.

Book	Auth or	Date ³⁸	Place	Recipients
James	James	44–46	Jerusalem	Jewish Christians of the Diaspora

³⁵ It is the conviction of this author that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. Some disagree. Other possible authors put forth have been Apollos, Barnabas, Luke and Timothy.

³⁶ The term ἀνεψιὸς [Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ] is primarily a cousin, secondarily, a nephew.

³⁷ Adapted and modified from Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament*, pp. 480–481.

³⁸ The dates of the various New Testament writings are approximate.

Galatians	Paul	48–49 after first missionary journey	Antioch in Syria?	Christians in southern Galatia
1 Thessalonians	Paul	51–52 During Second missionary journey	Corinth	Christians in Thessalonica
2 Thessalonians	Paul	50–51 During Second missionary journey	Corinth	Christians in Thessalonica
Mark	John Mark	50–55	Rome	Non- Christian Romans; new converts.
1 Corinthians	Paul	54–56 During Third missionary journey	Ephesus	Christians in Corinth
2 Corinthians	Paul	54–56 During Third missionary journey	Macedonia	Christians in Corinth
Romans	Paul	58 During Third missionary journey	Corinth The house of Gaius	Christians in Rome
Matthew	Matthe w	60–62	Probably Antioch in Syria	Jewish Christians in Syria or Palestine
Luke	Luke	61–64	Caesarea or Rome	Theophilus

Colossians	Paul	61–63	Rome	Christians in Colossae
Philemon	Paul	61–63	Rome	Philemon, his family, and the church in his house at Colossae
Ephesians	Paul	61–63	Rome	Christians in the region around Ephesus
Philippians	Paul	63	Rome	Christians in Philippi
Acts	Luke	63	Rome	Theophilus
1 Timothy	Paul	63–64	Macedonia	Timothy in Ephesus
Titus	Paul	63–64	Nicopolis	Titus in Crete
1 Peter	Peter	64–67	Rome?	Jewish Christians in Asia Minor
2 Peter	Peter	67–68	Rome or Babylon	Jewish Christians in Asia Minor
Hebrews	Paul	64–68	Unknown	Jewish Christians in Rome or Jerusalem
Jude	Jude	68	Unknown	Christians in general
2 Timothy	Paul	68	Rome	Timothy in Ephesus
John	John	64?–98 ³⁹	Ephesus	Christians in the region of Ephesus

³⁹ The traditional dating for the Johannine writings is the mid to late nineties of the first century. Some recent scholars would place all the New Testament writings before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

1 John	John	95–96	Ephesus	Christians in the region around Ephesus
2 John	John	97	Ephesus	A Church near Ephesus
3 John	John	97	Ephesus	Gaius, a Christian in the region around Ephesus
Revelation	John	98	Isle of Patmos Asia Minor	Seven churches in western Asia Minor

The Structure of the New Testament According to Literary Genre

Genre [Fr., “kind or sort of,” Lat: *genus, generis*, “of the same nature or species.”⁴⁰ A given category of literature], which means a given type, kind or category of writing, has become popular in recent biblical studies. The Old Testament generally is essentially historical, poetical and prophetic.

The New Testament is very generally historical or biographical in the Gospels and Acts, doctrinal in the Epistles and prophetic or apocalyptic in Revelation. Within the various biblical writings, however, one may find passages which are personal or autobiographical, historical narrative, parabolic, poetical, personal admonitions and many Old Testament quotations or allusions. The genre of a given

⁴⁰ “A literary genre may be defined as a group of texts that exhibit a coherent and recurring configuration of literary features involving form (including structure and style), content and function.” D. E. Aune, as quoted in Craig E. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, Eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, p. 402. Modern commentators make much of the various scriptural genres.

passage influences both the interpretation and application of Scripture.

The Structure of the New Testament According to Doctrinal Emphasis

Although each biblical writing may have a variety of truths inculcated, there is often one general theme or doctrinal teaching which is predominant and occasioned the writing and the recipient. The New Testament, when considered as to its composite content, forms a complete Divine revelation and instructions for the Christian's rule of both faith [what he is to believe] and practice [how he is to live]:

Genre & Structure	Book	Doctrinal Emphasis & Predominant Theme
Four Gospels Historical	Matthew	Jesus Christ as King and Promised Messiah
	Mark	Jesus Christ as The Servant
	Luke	Jesus Christ as the Son of Man
	John	Jesus Christ as the Son of God
Historical	Acts	The Building of the Church
Pauline Epistles: Letters to Churches & Individuals	Romans	Salvation: Doctrinal and Experiential
	1 Corinthians	Corrections in Christian Conduct
	2 Corinthians	Portrayal of the Christian Ministry
	Galatians	The Implications of Justification by Faith
	Ephesians	The Believer's Position in Christ
	Philippians	The Believer's Attitude in Christ
	Colossians	The Believer's Completeness in Christ

	1 Thessalonians	The Second Coming Described
	2 Thessalonians	The Second Coming Clarified
	1 Timothy	Conduct in the House of God
	2 Timothy	The Final Charge of Paul to Timothy
	Titus	The Need for Sound Doctrine and Good Works
	Philemon	A Personal Favor Requested
General Epistles	Hebrews ⁴¹	The Superiority of Christ
	James	The Need for Good Works as the Evidence of Genuine Faith
	1 Peter	The Conduct and Joy of Christian Suffering
	2 Peter	The Certainty of the Gospel and the Day of the Lord
	1, 2, 3 John	The Way of Fellowship and Genuine Faith
	Jude	Warning Concerning False Teachers
Apocalyptic	Revelation	The Divine Redemptive Program

⁴¹ The author would include Hebrews, although a general epistle, within the Pauline corpus.

The Canon and Text of the New Testament

The studies of Canonics and Textual Criticism underlie the other New Testament studies. Every approach builds upon the inspired and authoritative exclusiveness of the inscripturated canon. New Testament Textual Criticism is concerned with establishing the text of this canon of Scripture in the original Greek.

Although usually considered too advanced or controversial for a Bible Survey, the serious Bible student should have some working knowledge of the issues involved. Thus the subjects of Canonics and Textual Criticism are introduced.

The Canon of the New Testament

The subject of the scriptural canon is considered in the first volume of this Survey of the Bible.⁴² The term “canon” refers both to the standard of Scripture, i.e., which writings are canonical, and also to the body of writings which are alone canonical or inspired Scripture.

Note: The word *canon* is derived from the Greek [κανὼν, *canōn*], and originally signified a measuring staff or straight rod. It was probably a derivative of the Hebrew [קִנֵּה, *kaneh*], or reed, an Old Testament term for a measuring rod [a reed used as a measuring instrument]. By the time of Athanasius (c. 350), the term “canon” was applied to the Bible, both as the rule of faith and practice, and as the body of inspired and authoritative truth.

Early Christianity did *not* canonize the Scriptures by its own [the church’s] authority, i.e., select which writings were to be included or excluded, but rather *recognized* those writings that were and are canonical. The differences between the canonical and non-canonical writings were and are immediately discernable. How did the early Christians

⁴² See *An Introductory and Explanatory Survey of the Bible: Old Testament*, I, pp. 25–27.

recognize certain books as Scripture [Divinely inspired] and reject others? The answer lies in the application of various principles gathered from early Christian writings which detail the process used by the early Christians and churches:

Is the book authoritative? Does it possess Divine authority? Is the book authentic, i.e., was it written by one of the Apostles or the stated author? Does the given book agree with the rest of Divine revelation and with the rule or “analogy of faith?” [This refers to the inclusive, non-contradictory or coherent nature of the Scripture as the very Word of God inscripturated. This also refers to the self-consistent teaching of Scripture as it touches on any given point].

Is the book dynamic, i.e., does it possess the power of God to evangelize and edify? This refers to the witness of the Spirit in the power of his Word. Is the book recognized by the early Church Fathers? Is the book received by the people of God?

Thus, the Scriptures formed the churches, and not the reverse. Scripture stands upon Divine authority, not upon any ecclesiastical authority. The Scriptures, then, are self-attesting or self-authenticating. The Holy Spirit witnesses to the veracity of Scripture to the believer.⁴³

The complete scriptural canon is comprised of sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament canon and twenty-seven in the New—those writings which were self-attesting and universally accepted as sacred writings in the Hebrew

⁴³ Repeated from *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27. For a complete discussion of the canon of Scripture, see H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*. Houghton, NY: Word-Bearer Press, 1960. 422 pp.; Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971. 480 pp. and Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970. 5 Vols.

canon [Old Testament] and the Apostolic writings of the New Testament, all of which occur in our Bibles.⁴⁴

The New Testament canon of twenty-seven books is generally divided into three sections: Historical [the Gospels and Acts], Doctrinal [the Pauline and General Epistles] and Prophetical [Revelation]. These and no others are considered canonical, i.e., as inspired and authoritative Scripture.

This is significant, as there existed, in the first centuries of Christianity, hundreds of allegedly “Christian” writings: The writings of the Apostolic Fathers,⁴⁵ the various Gnostic “gospels,” which numbered at least fifty-two; the abbreviated and edited New Testament “canon” of Marcion (c. 140–160),⁴⁶ and a large body of Apocryphal and Pseudopigraphical works, which numbered at least ninety-four.

Although the writings of the New Testament were written in the first century AD, the early churches, due to the existence and relatively rarity of only handwritten copies, continued state persecution and book burning of Christian literature, the scattered nature of Christian assemblies throughout the Roman empire and beyond, and the existence of various other “Christian–Gnostic” writings, the issues of canonicity were not finally settled by the Romish State Church until the Synod of Hippo (393) and the Councils of Carthage (397, 419), which reaffirmed the canon as given by the Council of Laodicea (363).

It must be noted, however, that the present New Testament canon was largely settled among the churches before end of the

⁴⁴ The LXX [Septuagint] contained the Old Testament Apocrypha, but these were never accepted into the Hebrew canon.

⁴⁵ The Apostolic Fathers are the early Church Fathers whose writings span from c. 95–150 AD. ,e.g., Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, the Didache, Shepherd of Hermas.

⁴⁶ Marcion the Gnostic was the first “Higher Critic” and radical redactor of Scripture. He edited and revised the New Testament canon. His edited “canon” contained eleven books.

second century. The *Homologoumena* [ὁμολεγόμενα, “saying the same thing,” or accepted writings] consisted of twenty books. The *Antilegomena* [ἀντιλεγόμενα, “spoken against,” or disputed] consisted of seven books: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation. The seven disputed books were generally accepted before the end of the second century. The length of time does not reflect negatively on the early churches, as though they were indecisive, but positively, as it reveals the care taken to doctrinally and practically recognize the sacred writings and no others.⁴⁷

New Testament Textual Criticism

This section, though usually considered too advanced for a Bible Survey, is included to explore the science of Textual Criticism, allay irrational fears concerning the text of the New Testament, deal with irrational and emotional controversies and polemically correct the misunderstandings which surround the nature and history of the text.

Every student of the New Testament ought to be aware of its essential presuppositions and principles, regardless of his own personal views.

Biblical Criticism⁴⁸ is a department of Exegetical Theology.⁴⁹ It is comprised of two branches: Textual and Historical Criticism. These are also termed “Lower” and “Higher” Criticism because the latter is founded and dependent upon the former.

⁴⁷ See H. S. Miller, *Op. cit.*, pp. 96–149 for a full and concise discussion of the canon and canonization of Scripture.

⁴⁸ “Criticism” derives from the Gk: κριτής, a judge. Cf. Heb. 4:12, “For the word of God is...a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” “Discerner” is κριτικός, or “critic, judge.” A biblical critic is one who approaches the Scriptures with judgment, or uses judgment, i.e., investigates the Scripture.

⁴⁹ Theological science is comprised of five interrelated branches: Exegetical, Biblical, Historical, Systematic and Practical.

Textual or “Lower” (being first and foundational) Criticism is an integral part of establishing the text of Scripture. Historical or “Higher” Criticism (based upon the results of Textual Criticism) seeks to establish the genuineness and authenticity—authorship, date and historicity—of any given biblical document through both internal and external evidence. Internal evidence includes whatever might be in the text of the document itself, e.g., claims to authorship, historical data and circumstances, doctrinal emphases, a distinct writing style, etc., existing in the text. External evidence may be derived from other biblical documents, parallel passages in other documents, historical incidents that corroborate the given document, religious tradition, etc.

Prejudice Against Biblical Criticism

There is a great deal of prejudice on the part of the uninformed against the very idea of “Biblical Criticism.” Mark the following: first, among some, any rational or intelligent attempt to deal with the text of Scripture and the plain facts of history seems repulsive and an attempt to call into question the very Word of God. This anti-intellectual or irrational stance not only stifles investigation, it also fails to deal with the historical facts and tends to denigrate even the study of the original languages of Scripture.

Second, the term “Higher Criticism” has been traditionally used by Fundamentalists and some Evangelicals in a very narrow and negative sense as pertaining solely to the rationalistic attempt to destroy the validity and authority of Scripture. It is held to be synonymous with “*Destructive Higher Criticism*” [a Radical, Rationalistic Historico-Critical approach], which denies the supernatural, Divine inspiration and miracles, etc., and thus undermines any historical and doctrinal validity to the Scriptures. Thus, the legitimate science of Biblical Criticism has largely been lost or misunderstood.

Note: This section deals with lower or Textual Criticism. The issues of Historical or Higher Criticism, and pointedly, *destructive* High Criticism have been surveyed under the

section “The Necessity and Importance of One’s Presuppositions.”⁵⁰

Third, the “King James Version Only” mentality among Fundamentalists and some Evangelicals has become cultish. Any attempt to read or even refer to the original languages⁵¹ or to another Bible version is considered to be heretical and destructive of the faith. Such has become an almost superstitious and irrational approach to the text of Scripture. *It must be remembered that the King James Version—as good as it may be—is inescapably the version of a translation, and thus at times twice removed from the original language.*⁵²

One must understand that it is not Biblical Criticism *per se* which is erroneous, threatening or heretical, but the erroneous presuppositions of the given biblical critic which are at fault. Radical or “Destructive” Higher Criticism was a child of The Enlightenment [German Rationalism, French Skepticism and English Deism], beginning in the eighteenth century, which was grounded in a denial of the supernatural, and thus the inspiration, veracity and authority of Scripture. This could only produce a alleged scholarly approach devoid of faith.

Unbelieving scholars have gone to the Scriptures to denude them of the supernatural and reduce them to mere historical or traditional religious documents which are largely unreliable.⁵³ Contrary to this assault upon the Scriptures, believing, conservative biblical scholarship has used the very same science legitimately to defend the Scriptures.

⁵⁰ See pp. 28–34 of this General Introduction.

⁵¹ One very narrow Fundamentalist view is that the KJV “corrected” the original languages! This, of course, would mean that Christians did not possess the true Word of God until 1611!

⁵² See the note on the necessity of understanding the original languages of Scripture in this General Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 26–28.

⁵³ See pp. 29–31 for a discussion of radical biblical criticism.

Biblical Criticism: A Necessary Science

Biblical Criticism is a necessary theological science which deals with both the text of Scripture and with the essential aspects [genuineness and authenticity] of each biblical document. Biblical Criticism is necessary for various reasons: first, the autograph copies (the original, inspired documents hand-written by the inspired writers themselves or through an amanuensis) have long since disappeared.⁵⁴ What remain are copies—and probably much later copies of copies. Aside from some papyri fragments, the oldest New Testament Greek mss.⁵⁵ are in codex form and date no earlier than about the late third or early fourth century.⁵⁶

Second, many of the biblical documents which we possess in the original languages have differences in the reading of their texts [variant readings]. This is understandable, given the intervening centuries, the hand-copying of mss. until the advent of printing in the fifteenth century, the thousands of existing copies, the lack of supervision in copying New Testament passages,⁵⁷ ancient translations and versions, heretical translations and versions,⁵⁸ Scriptures either quoted or

⁵⁴ The “original mss.” are not identical with the “original Greek,” which refers to the language, not the mss. We possess the latter, not the former.

⁵⁵ Manuscripts are hand-written documents. The abbreviations are “ms,” manuscript, and mss., manuscripts, plural. These abbreviations are used for the remainder of this section.

⁵⁶ The codex is the book form with leaves or pages rather than continuous scrolls, a practice not in vogue until about the third or fourth century AD. Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947–1956), the oldest Hebrew Old Testament mss. were dated about 1100 AD.

⁵⁷ The Hebrew text was under scribal control and care, and so contains few variants. There was no control over the copying of New Testament mss. in early Christianity.

⁵⁸ E.g., Marcion, a Gnostic heretic, made his translation of parts of Paul’s epistles, severely editing them (140–160 AD).

paraphrased in personal correspondence or for use in worship [*lectionaries* or *periscopes*], etc.

Through an exacting process, the attempt is made to sort out the original reading. If there is a questionable issue due to several readings which may be valid, then a list is drawn on a descending scale as to which reading carries the most weight or seems to fit grammatically, syntactically, historically, doctrinally or according to the author's style, etc. A list of such readings usually occurs in the critical apparatus at the bottom of the given page of a critical Greek Testament.

Third, variant readings usually follow a given pattern, i.e., they may often be traced through various succeeding copies. For instance, if a given reading [transposed letter, different wording—ending, word, etc.] found its way into a given copy, two common things might occur: first, subsequent copies would carry this reading, and, possibly, if the wording were awkward, ungrammatical or doctrinally questionable, a subsequent copyist might change it or put an alternate reading in the margin. At times these marginal readings allegedly crept into the text.

There was often no limitation, supervision or scrutiny in copying the New Testament. Quotations, paraphrases or general references occur in personal letters and in the writings of the early Christian writers. The pattern of variant readings has resulted in various text "families," i.e., patterns traceable geographically and historically through subsequent copies and textual variants.

Fourth, the early churches and Councils had to engage in Biblical Criticism in the process of *recognizing* the canon of Scripture. [See the preceding section on the Canon of the New Testament]. Thus, even in the early churches, Biblical Criticism included the text of Scripture itself, internal and external evidences, its doctrinal content, use by heretics, separation from other extant contemporary Christian literature, its place in religious society and use by the churches, a close and discerning investigation of the writings of the early Church Fathers and their use of scriptural texts, etc.

Fifth, Biblical Criticism provides the available means and process to help ascertain the genuineness of the document, e.g., the Epistle of 2 Peter and the Book of Revelation were the final biblical books to be fully recognized as canonical because of textual difficulties and the question of genuineness in the early churches. The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is still an open question with many.⁵⁹ The debate over the genuineness of 1 John 5:7–8 continues to foment to this day.⁶⁰

Sixth, archeological finds shed light upon the history of ancient peoples and thus upon the history detailed in Scripture. Although such “evidences” do not “prove” the Scriptures to be true,⁶¹ they may help in shedding light upon past events, customs, practices and thus various uses of words, terminology and language which help in understanding the text,⁶² the times in

⁵⁹ The Pauline tradition dates to about the third century, but Paul’s name does not occur in the document, and the style is quite different from that of his other writings. The subscript of the *Stephanus Text*, (13:25b) [πρὸς Ἑβραίουσ ἐγράφη ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας διὰ Τιμοθέου] varies in some mss. and is open to various interpretations. Internal evidence suggests Pauline authorship [e.g., 10:33–34; 13:18–19, 23–24].

⁶⁰ Although occurring in some ancient versions, no Greek text contained the passage. Erasmus thus left it out of his 1516 Greek Testament. The Romanists objected. He stated that he would include it if they could produce a Greek ms. which contained it. The passage was dubiously found in a sixteenth century Greek ms. of questionable origin. Thus, it was later inserted by Erasmus and eventually found its way into the *Stephanus Text* (1550), and into the KJV.

⁶¹ The truth of Scripture, i.e., its self-authenticating nature, is vouchsafed to the mind and heart by the Holy Spirit; it is not proven by various evidences, as though the lesser could “prove” the greater.

⁶² The rich source for such investigation, which has greatly and positively affected the study of New Testament Greek and Textual Criticism has been such items as the papyri (primitive paper made from papyrus, and found in the form of personal correspondence, documents, etc.), *ostraca* (pottery shards with writing on them) and inscriptions (public documents) of the first three centuries AD.

which a given writer lived, or the various issues, places and even prophecies about which he wrote. Such evidence is incorporated into the study of Scripture by the use of Biblical Criticism.

Seventh, the Radical [rationalistic] “Higher” Biblical Critics have been and are being answered by conservative scholarship using the same principles of Biblical Criticism, but with presuppositions self-consistent with biblical Christianity.

Thus, throughout both Jewish and Christian history, Biblical Criticism has existed in one form or another. From the very beginnings of historic Christianity, Biblical Criticism has been with us in one form or another as a necessary science. Among the Jews, textual criticism was a necessary exercise from the use of the LXX (c. 246 BC), the *Targumim* [Chaldean or Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew text] and Talmudic writings (c. 200—500 AD).

Textual Criticism: The Controversy

Some Greek scholars hold to the “Critical Greek Text” [which is the Greek text as established by the latest scholarship]; some hold to the theory that the oldest mss. are the most trustworthy, as being closer to the original sources. Others hold more to the idea that the “Majority Text” [representative of the Byzantine type Text, including the so-called *Textus Receptus*] is closer to the true reading. This controversy has divided many who have little or no idea of the issues involved. The arguments are often more irrational and even superstitious than intelligent or scholarly and pour over into the “King James Only” controversy.

The major division is generally between the so-called *Textus Receptus* [TR] and the *Critical Text*. The *Textus Receptus*, or “the text received by all” is alleged to undergird the KJV. It is representative of the Byzantine or Majority text family. The Critical Text is the latest product of New Testament Scholarship, and gives the best-attested text with a critical apparatus with the important variant readings listed, if necessary, on a descending scale. The latest Critical Text is the twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle–Aland Greek text.

The Issues

The text issue arose in the nineteenth century with the theories of B. F. Wescott and F. J. A. Hort, Greek scholars who championed a few of the oldest and most recently discovered Greek texts.⁶³ Wescott, Hort and others held that these oldest mss., when in agreement, represented the original, or much closer to it than the relatively more recent “Majority Texts” (including the so-called *Textus Receptus*) and the majority readings, from which it was held by others that the most common reading among variants was probably the original or closest to it.⁶⁴

The “Wescott & Hort” theory gained preeminence among New Testament scholarship and their influence was seen in the *Revised Version* [RV] [English] of 1881, the *American Standard Version* [ASV] of 1901, also commonly called the “Revised Version;” the *Revised Standard Version* [RSV] (1952), etc.⁶⁵ Thus, the controversy moved from the Greek text to the various versions, and the emergence of the “King James Only” mentality among those who thought that any change was suspect and

⁶³ The *Codex Alexandrinus* (designated “A” [c. 450], presented in 1078 to the Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt), the *Codex Vaticanus* (designated “B” [c. 325–350], catalogued in the Vatican Library in 1475), the *Codex Sinaiticus* (designated “~~Σ~~,” [c. 340] discovered in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai by Count von Tishendorf in 1844, 1859), the *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (designated “C” [c. 345], brought to Italy about 1500 by John Lascaris), and *Codex Bezae* (designated “D” [c. 450–550], found in 1562 by Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor at Geneva).

⁶⁴ Contemporary New Testament scholarship has retreated somewhat from the theories of Wescott and Hort, and today is more conservative. The theory of the majority text is once again flourishing among conservatives, and evangelical scholarship is returning to a more balanced view.

⁶⁵ The modern tendency in most modern versions is toward paraphrasing Scripture, a practice which does not rest on any given Greek text.

undermined the Word of God. Even the study of Hebrew or Greek became somewhat suspect among some groups.⁶⁶

The Facts

The first printed Greek New Testament was that of Erasmus in 1516. Erasmus collected Greek mss. of the books of the New Testament until he had sufficient to complete almost all of the New Testament. Lacking the last verses of the Book of Revelation, he translated the text from the *Latin Vulgate* into Greek to complete the work.⁶⁷ This eclectic text became the basis for the *Stephanus Text* of 1550, and was the text which served as a basis for the *King James Version* of 1611.⁶⁸ This text was later edited again with emendations from Beza's Greek text and in 1633 was described in its publication as "the text received by all," hence the idea of *Textus Receptus*.

Note: Theodore Beza (1519–1605), the successor to John Calvin at Geneva, published several editions of the Greek New Testament between 1565 and 1604, using the *Stephanus Text* of Robert Etienne with a few alterations. The Elzevir Brothers, printers at Leiden and Amsterdam, used Beza's text of the 1565 edition for two printings. The 1633 edition became the so-called "Received Text" [TR]. The designation *textus receptus* was taken from the words of the preface: *Textum*

⁶⁶ Most departures from the faith came through the department of Old Testament in many seminaries and universities through the rise of "Destructive" Higher Criticism. This gave rise to the modern "Bible School" movement, which centered on the sufficiency of the English Bible and often denigrated a study of the original languages.

⁶⁷ Erasmus translated from the Latin Vulgate into Greek several passages from Revelation, including the final six verses. For a full discussion of Erasmus' Greek Testament, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. 98–103.

⁶⁸ An eclectic text is a text selected from various sources. Erasmus collected almost enough Greek mss. to complete the New Testament, but had to translate the final verses of Revelation from the Latin into the Greek. The so-called *Textus Receptus*, as Erasmus' Greek New Testament (c. 1516), and the *Stephanus Text* (c. 1550) before it, was an eclectic text.

ergo habes nunc ab omnibus receptum in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus, i.e., “Therefore you now have the text received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted.

The facts of history plainly reveal that the so-called *Textus Receptus* is itself an eclectic text. It was *the* “critical text” of its day, i.e., the best which then contemporary scholarship could produce from the best available sources. It was not a mysterious, perpetual or “preserved” text which had been kept “pure” for many centuries. This fact, of course, is lost on those whose ignorance of history, superstition, and lack of any knowledge of the original languages, cause them to refuse to even consider this.

The Sources for Textual Criticism

A manuscript is a hand-written document. Thus, the extant mss. of the New Testament are those which were written by hand before the advent of printing in the fifteenth century. The text of the New Testament exists in three forms: The ancient Greek mss., the ancient translations and versions, and the writings of the early Church Fathers.

Greek Manuscripts

There are approximately 4,700 mss. of the whole or parts of the Greek New Testament. Of this number there are: first, the *Uncial* mss. numbering over 240.⁶⁹ These mss. are dated from the third to the sixth centuries. These are the most important documents for the study of the text of the New Testament. Second, the 2,646 *Minuscule* mss.⁷⁰ These mss. are dated generally from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries. Third, *Greek Lectionaries* [*Pericopes*]⁷¹ number 1,997. These contain

⁶⁹ Uncials were written in capital letters without word divisions. The lines were approximately twelve letters each.

⁷⁰ Minuscles written in small case (as our modern New Testament Greek texts) with separated words, and often in cursive [with connected letters].

⁷¹ “*Pericope*,” from the Gk περίκοπη. orig., “to cut around,” and thus, to select out and isolate a short passage for liturgical worship.

Scripture lessons for church liturgical worship. These were necessarily copied from very ancient sources. Fourth, *The Papyri*.⁷² These mss. date from the second to the third centuries, and so from sources allegedly very near the originals. These are seventy in number.

The second source are the ancient translations and versions. There are some 9,000 copies of the early versions, i.e., copies which are dated in the early centuries, not subsequent copies of more modern times. These early translations and versions of the first centuries still exist and are in some cases a century or more older than the leading extant Greek mss. and were without doubt translated from very early copies of the Greek text. These versions are significant in that they give a witness to Greek mss. which are no longer in our present possession. There are three sources: the ancient Syriac, the Latin and the Coptic.

The ancient Syriac versions include: *Ancient Syriac* (c. 150 AD). Partly preserved in the Dura fragment discovered in 1920. *The Diatessaron of Tatian* (c. 160 AD). An ancient harmony of the four Gospels. *The Old Syriac* (c. 200 AD). Two incomplete copies of the Gospels. One discovered in the St. Catherine Monastery in 1892; the other in 1848 in Egypt. *The Peshitta* ["simple"] (c. 250 AD). A revision of the *Old Syriac*. 2 Peter, 3 John, Jude, Revelation missing, reflecting concern and uncertainty of early churches concerning the canon at that time. *The Philoxenian–Harklean Syriac* (c. 508 AD). A worked done by Bishop of Hierapolis in 508 of the books omitted by the Peshitta, and later revised by Thomas of Harkel with other Scripture. A slavish rendering of the Greek text. *The*

⁷² Papyrus was an early form of paper made from the papyrus reed. The Earliest scriptural Papyri are: *The John Rylands Fragment*, which contains a portion of Jn. 18:31–38 (c. 117–138 AD). *The Chester Beatty Papyri*, consisting of three codices containing most of the New Testament (c. 250 AD). *The Bodmer Papyri*, containing parts of the New Testament and early homilies and hymns for liturgical purposes (c. 200 AD).

Palestinian Syriac (c. 600 AD). An independent work not affected by previous Syriac versions. The text is largely lectionary.

The ancient Latin versions. Latin gradually overcame the use of Greek in the Western churches by 200 AD. It is possible that an ancient Latin version existed before this time. *Old Latin Version* (c. 200 AD). *The Latin Vulgate* of Jerome (c. 403 AD). This is included, although the textual resources Jerome used to “correct” the *Old Latin Version* remain unknown.

The ancient Coptic versions. The Coptic Christians needed their own translation of the New Testament early in the second century with the spread of Christianity into Egypt. The two versions in Coptic are: *the Sahidic Version* (c. 200 AD). This was the version used in Upper Egypt in the earliest times. *The Bohairic Version* of Lower Egypt is later in date, but became the official Version of the Coptic Church.

The early Church Fathers. The third source for the study of the Greek text is from the quotations of the early Church Fathers. The Greek texts they used in those early centuries (c.100–800 AD) would be preserved in their writings. The advantages are that these men lived and wrote in specific places at specific times. The texts they had can then be studied historically and geographically, as well as textually.

The disadvantages are that often the Fathers may have quoted from memory or paraphrased some passages, and some of their earliest writings are only preserved in the writings of later Church Fathers. This latter disadvantage makes variants a great possibility due to the existence of later texts, “corrections,” and probable scribal errors.

The Most Important Greek Mss

The 240 and more uncial mss. of the Greek New Testament are the most important documents for New Testament Textual Criticism as they are the oldest and most complete. Some of the papyri are older, but exist only in fragments. The Minuscule mss.

were written later and are therefore neither as ancient nor probably copied from sources as ancient as the Uncials.

Following are the most important Uncial mss, or some of the most important out of the thirty–seven considered most important, because of their early age and relative completeness:

1. The *Codex Sinaiticus* (designated “**Ⲛ**,” [c. 340] discovered in a monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai by Count von Tishendorf in 1844, 1859). This uncial ms., written on vellum, contains almost all the LXX and the entire New Testament, except two short passages, the O.T. Apocrypha and several of the Epistles of the Early Church Fathers. It contains evidence of scribal “corrections” in the sixth or seventh century. It is of the Alexandrian type text, with some instances of Western type readings.
2. The *Codex Vaticanus* (designated “B” [c. 325–350], catalogued in the Vatican Library in 1475). Written on vellum [parchment], it includes most of the LXX, almost the entire New Testament in Greek, and part of the Apocrypha. It is of the Alexandrian type text. Biblical Scholars were forbidden by Rome to study it for almost 400 years.
3. The *Codex Alexandrinus* (designated “A” [c. 450], presented in 1078 to the Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt). This uncial vellum text was eventually shipped to England (1624–1627), but arrived too late for it to influence the King James Version. This uncial contains almost the whole LXX version of the Old Testament and most of the New Testament, with some additional writings from the Apocrypha.
4. The *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (designated “C” [c. 345], a palimpsest ms. brought to Italy about 1500 by John Lascaris).⁷³ This uncial contains parts of the Old Testament

⁷³ “Palimpsest” [rubbed out, erased], “rescriptus” [written again or over]. Originally, the ms. contained the entire Bible, but was erased and written over by Ephraem, who wrote his sermons on the vellum. By chemical treatment, the original writing was restored.

and Apocrypha and most of the New Testament. This ms. is a compound of all the textual types, agreeing frequently with the Byzantine or Neutral type text.

5. The *Codex Bezae* [*Codex Cantabrigiensis*] (designated “D” [c. 450–550], found in 1562 by Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor at Geneva, at St. Irenaeus Monastery at Lyons, France. Beza gave it to Cambridge University). The oldest bilingual ms. of the New Testament, written in both Greek and Latin. This uncial ms. contains most of the four Gospels, Acts and 3 John, with variations [variant readings] indicated. The Gospels are of the Western type text.
6. The *Codex Claromontanus* (designated D² or D^{p2} [c. 550], found by Beza at Clermont, France, at a monastery). This uncial contains most of what is missing in the *Codex Bezae*. The text is distinctly of the Western type.

Text Families or Types

Through tracing the occurrence of variant readings and other peculiarities, the Greek mss. of the New Testament can presumably be traced not only textually, but historically and geographically to a common ancestor, a primitive text or copy. The various Greek mss., the quotations from the Fathers, the lectionaries and the papyri have enabled scholars to trace the various text types to their allegedly common ancestors textually, historically and geographically.

This has given rise to distinct text “types” or “families,” especially during the time of the Minuscule mss. (c. sixth–fifteenth centuries), which were written after the era of the Uncials (c. first–seventh centuries). Text “types” or “families,” therefore, are more predominant in the Minuscule era (seventh–fifteenth centuries). The issue with text families is that these tend to either reject or reflect the Byzantine type of text which is generally represented by the so-called *Textus Receptus*. There are basically four distinct families or types of texts, although

there are some intermingling of various types⁷⁴, leading to various sub-groupings⁷⁵:

1. *Alexandrian [Neutral] Type*. This family of texts allegedly originated around Alexandria, Egypt, a center for Christian scholarship by the second century. This type of text is characteristically marked by shorter readings and a neat, scholarly printing of the Greek than the other families. According to Wescott & Hort, when the *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Alexandrinus* agreed, the reading was the original reading. This, of course, is not rigidly followed by modern scholarship.
2. *Western Type*. This family is a “catchall” type, named after the Western circulation of Greek mss in North Africa, Gaul [France] and Italy. Related to this are the Egyptian and Syriac-speaking churches of the East. This type of text is longer because of the tendency toward periphrastic expressions [longer readings] and alleged interpolations.
3. *Caesarean Type*. Caesarea was the center of Christianity in Palestine in the third and fourth centuries, distinguished by a large library and Christian scholars. The text from this geographical center allegedly originally came from Alexandria, and then went to Armenia and the Caucasus in western Russia. This text historically stands between the Alexandrian and Western type in its development.

⁷⁴ There are allegedly three ways in which text types or families can become mixed: (1) A scribe may have had before him two different manuscripts which represented two text types and copied from each. (2) He may have had one text before him but been familiar with another type of text which he consciously or unconsciously inserted. (3) The text before him may have already have been “corrected” by a text of a different type or marginal corrections may have crept into the text.

⁷⁵ The scheme of Wescott & Hort is no longer strenuously followed, except in a general sense of the various text families.

4. *Byzantine Type*. [Κοινή]. This is alleged to be a conflated⁷⁶ type of text which smooths out difficulties and harmonizes differences. Used liturgically by the Byzantine [Greek] Church. Considered to be a rather late and secondary type of text. Some of its readings, however, derive from the Church at Antioch (c. 300 AD). The so-called *Textus Receptus* represents this type of text.

How “Corrupt” is the Greek Text of the New Testament?

The so-called “corruption” of the Greek New Testament refers to the variant readings which have crept into the text. These exist as a textual, historical fact which must be accounted for. But the issue for the Greek student is, How significant are these?

The Byzantine type of text, represented by the *Stephanus Text of 1550* and its revision, the so-called *Textus Receptus*, was the Greek text of Western scholarship until the discovery of the great Uncials in the nineteenth century. It ought to be noted that both the *Stephanus Text* and *Textus Receptus* were published with a critical apparatus with variant readings noted in their text.

These variant readings were acknowledged by all scholars, and neither text was considered to be non-eclectic [a pure or preserved text] until reaction to the theories of Wescott & Hort by advocates of the *Textus Receptus* and the later “King James Only” controversies.

The following information and quotations demonstrate the true state of New Testament textual critical scholarship concerning the state of the text:

The Numbering of Variant Readings

According to the system of exact enumeration necessarily espoused by textual criticism there are over 200,000 variant readings in the mss. of the Greek New Testament. For every text to have an individual place and proper significance, each variant

⁷⁶ “Conflation,” from the Lat: *conflare*, “to blow together.” The merging or blending of two variant readings into one.

reading, no matter how minuscule (e.g., change of a letter) is counted in each ms. *Thus, if 100 mss. had the same exact variant reading, that variant is not counted as one variant, but as 100 variants, i.e., 1 variant x 100 equals 100 variants. Thus, the number of different variant readings is much, much smaller than the 200,000.*

Quotations Concerning the Variant Readings

The following quotations give a clear picture of the state of the Greek text of the New Testament, enabling us to state that we have almost without the slightest doubt, the original text [of the autograph copies] of the New Testament. B. B. Warfield wrote:

...if we compare the present state of the New Testament text with that of any other ancient writing, we must...declare it to be marvelously correct...such has been the providence of God in preserving for His Church in each and every age a competently exact text of the Scriptures, that not only is the New Testament unrivalled among ancient writings in the purity of its text as actually transmitted and kept in use, but also in the abundance of testimony which has come down to us for castigating its comparatively infrequent blemishes...Its wonderful approximation to its autograph is the undisguised envy of every modern reader of ancient books....

...Dr. Ezra Abbot was accustomed to say that about 19/20 of them [variant readings] have so little support that, although they are various readings, no one would think of them as rival readings; and 19/20 of the remainder are of so little importance that their adoption or rejection would cause no appreciable difference in the sense of the passages in which they occur. Dr. Hort's way of stating it is that upon one word in every eight various readings exist supported by sufficient evidence to bid us pause and look at it; that about one word in sixty has various readings upon it supported by such evidence as to render our decision nice and difficult; but that so many of these variations are trivial that about only one word in every thousand has upon it substantial variation supported by such evidence as to call out the efforts of the critic in deciding between the readings.

The great mass of the New Testament, in other words, has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no variation...⁷⁷

Commenting on the Words of Hort above, as related by Warfield, Geisler and Nix state, “Mathematically, this would compute to a text that is 98.33 percent pure.” They then refer to the statement by A. T. Robertson that the real concern of textual criticism is of a “thousandth part of the entire text.” “This would make the reconstructed text of the New Testament 99.9 percent free from substantial or consequential error.”⁷⁸ Phillip Schaff, the astute church historian and scholar, stated,

...of the [thousands of] variations only about 400 affect the sense; and of these 400 only about 50 are of real significance for one reason or another, and, again, not one of these 50 ‘affect an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.’⁷⁹

Thus, we possess the complete Greek New Testament text with only a few minor considerations in the variant readings.

The Methodology of New Testament Textual Criticism

The Evidence for Textual Criticism

The evidence available for textual criticism is of two types: internal [intrinsic] and external. Generally, external evidence is more important than internal evidence because it is more objective, but decisions ought to take both into account. Textual Criticism is both a technical science and a delicate art.

External Evidence

External evidence deals with the comparison of mss., either singularly, in groups or in “families” [text types]. There are three categories of external evidence: (1) Chronological. The date of the text type is important, as is the date of the given ms. Earlier

⁷⁷ B. B. Warfield, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, pp. 12–14.

⁷⁸ Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 365–366.

⁷⁹ H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 280.

text types are preferred over later ones. (2) Geographical. A wide distribution of witnesses are preferred over those having some geographical proximity, i.e., a reading is preferable which is not limited to a given textual type or “family,” but transcends such geographical limitations. (3) Genealogical. Witnesses to variants are “weighed,” not “counted,” i.e., the Alexandrian text is usually considered superior and the Byzantine text generally inferior. A reading supported by two or more text types is usually considered superior to one supported by only one text type.

Internal Evidence

Internal evidence deals with an individual ms. There are two types of internal evidence: (1) transcriptional, or considered from the standpoint, characteristics or habits of the copyist, and (2) intrinsic, i.e., the individual characteristics of the given author. This would include his peculiar style throughout the book or his corpus of writings, the immediate context of the given passage, the harmony of reading with the author’s doctrinal or practical teaching elsewhere [and in the context of the canonical writings], and the influence of the author’s linguistic and cultural background.

Transcriptional Evidence

This is concerned with the alleged errors of the given copyist or scribe.⁸⁰ These errors have been classified as either unintentional or intentional. It must be carefully noted that these principle or rules concerning errors are neither primary nor arbitrary, but were developed into an organized body through the efforts to explain the existing variant readings, i.e., these later

⁸⁰ Two issues of note: (1) The text became corrupt to some extent by the existence of the variant readings. This is without question. (2) A “copyist” or “scribe” could have been a professional scribe or copyist, a pastor or elder, or simply an individual Christian who copied a given document or passage without any supervision whatsoever. The copyist could have been a heretic who changed a reading in some way to conform to some ancient religious group. Some passages may have been quoted and copied from memory, etc.

efforts of scientific conjecture to explain the variants reflects the nature of such pre-existing variants.

Unintentional Errors

These unintentional errors have been classified in a in a seven-fold manner:

1. Errors of the eye, or misreading a ms. These may be sub-classified as: (1) Repetitions of letters, syllables, words or phrases. (2) Omissions of letters, syllables, words or phrases. (3) Transposition of letters, syllables or words. (4) Differences in spelling or pronunciation.⁸¹ (5) Similarity of letters. (6) Mistaken abbreviations. (7) Insertions from marginal glosses, doxologies, etc. (8) Wrong division of words. (9) Eye wandering to a different line or column.
2. Errors of the ear, if the copyist were taking dictation. This could include wrong spelling of diphthongs, or the differences between long and short vowels, etc.
3. Errors of speech on the part of the one dictating the document's contents. Failure to properly enunciate correctly, misreading [errors of the eye] on the part of the one dictating, etc.
4. Errors of the mind, or memory.
5. Errors of judgment. Misreading or misunderstanding an abbreviation, allowing marginal errors and readings to creep into the text, having two or more variant readings present, or more than one ms.
6. Errors of the pen. This concerns a possible dysfunction between the eye and the hand in the process of writing.
7. Errors of carelessness or ignorance. Human thinking, copying and writing are prone to such. This would include missing words, wrong words, misspellings, etc.

⁸¹ By the second and third centuries, some letters had become interchangeable, e.g., ω and ο, ω and ου, η and ε, η and ει. See Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek*, pp. 196–198.

Intentional Changes

At times, the copyist may have intentionally changed the text he was copying or editing. These alleged or possible changes are classified in an eight-fold manner:

1. Linguistic and rhetorical corrections. Changing a letter or the sake of euphony, smoothing apparent harshness of expression, changing rare forms or idioms into more usual forms of expression, grammatical corrections.
2. Historical changes. These may have been made to conform to other passages or mss.
3. The influence of translations and versions known to the copyist. Some mss. were bilingual, and the influence of language may be reflected in another.
4. Harmonistic changes. Attempts were made for one account in one of the Gospels to harmonize with the same account in another Gospel record.
5. The substitution of a more inoffensive term, i.e., euphemism. The more offensive term would be relegated to the margin, for the time being.
6. Changes to remove a real or apparent difficulty. Some mss. omitted Jn. 8:1–11 for fear of promoting immorality.
7. Doctrinal corrections. These seem to be rare, but 1 Jn. 5:7–8 could be part of such an issue.
8. Liturgical changes. Most of these occur in lectionaries, where the Scriptures might be altered for singing or responsive reading.

Intrinsic Evidence

Intrinsic evidence is concerned with the writer [original human author] rather than a copyist. It seeks to answer the question, “What did the original author write?” The attempt is made to properly ascertain which variant makes the best sense from the standpoint of the writer, his style, doctrinal emphases, the given context, etc. The issue is not what seems best to the critic, but what would have seemed best to the original writer.

Such work is indispensable in dealing with any significant variant.

The Methodology

The methodology of the textual critic includes: (1) comparison of the documentary evidence, and (2) conjecture. The first includes collection of the evidence, the collation of the evidence, comparison of the evidence and the classification of the evidence. The second part of the methodology is conjecture based on scientific principles. Through this two-fold methodology, the critic seeks to ascertain the true text.

The Use of External Evidence

There are certain generally-accepted rules for dealing with external evidence:

1. The number rule. The variant reading found in the greatest number of texts is not necessarily the correct reading. The vast majority of texts are later. The original reading is more apt to be found in a fourth century text than a tenth century text, unless it can be proven that the tenth text was copied from a text earlier than the fourth century text.
2. The manuscript-age rule. Closely related to the previous rule, the oldest text may not be the correct reading, as one fifth century ms. may have been copied from another fifth century ms., while a seventh century ms. may have been copied from a third century ms.
3. The text-age rule. This is concerned with the age of text type or family rather than the ms itself. The type of text might carry more weight evidentially than a given text within a given group.
4. The best-text rule. The best-text [original text] may not be the oldest text, but very best text contained within the mss, taking all other principles together.

The Use of Internal Evidence

There are several general principles dealing with internal evidence:

1. The more difficult reading is preferable, due to the alleged tendency of copyists to smooth out such readings.
2. The shorter reading is preferable over the longer.
3. The more verbally dissonant reading in parallel passages are preferable.
4. The less refined grammatical constructions are preferable.

The General Principles of Textual Criticism

Now, in summary, is a listing of the generally-accepted principles of textual criticism, revealing it to be both a science and an art which demands great reverence for the Scriptures, a thorough acquaintance with the text, and a consistency with the scientific conjecture. This list is essentially taken with little modification from Phillip Schaff's introduction to Wescott & Hort's Greek Testament:

1. The critic must be a trained scholar and know what to look for in order to make a choice in variant readings.
2. Every type of evidence must be thoroughly taken into account.
3. The sources for the given text must be sifted and classified, and the authorities "weighed" rather than "numbered."
4. The restoration of the true text must be founded upon the history and genealogy of the textual variations. The ancestry of the text must be traced as far back as possible.
5. The reading of an earlier ms. is preferable to that of an older ms. because it is presumably nearer the source, although this is not a rigid policy.
6. In general, the shorter reading is preferred to the longer, because additions and insertions are more probable than omissions.
7. The more difficult and obscure reading is preferable to the more simple and easy in construction.
8. That reading is preferable which best explains the origin of the other variants.

9. That reading is preferably which best suits the literary style of the author.
10. That reading which bears the earmarks of doctrinal controversy should be ruled out in favor of one to which no suspicion is attached.
11. The agreement of the most ancient witnesses decides the true reading against all medieval copies and printed editions.
12. The primary uncials outweigh all the other texts.⁸²

We would add that doctrinal considerations may outweigh even a well-attested variant reading, e.g., Rom. 5:1 and the ἔχομεν [pres. ind., “we have peace”] preferred over ἔχωμεν [pres. subj., “let us have peace”].⁸³ The textual reading ἔχωμεν is preferred, but is doctrinally and contextually untenable.

These principles and methodology were not invented by the modern textual critic, but most are of long-standing, as the variants themselves are from the earliest centuries of Christianity. It was left to the modern textual critic to formulate these into a more consistent science.

Conclusion

The Greek Student, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the realities and principles of New Testament Textual Criticism, whether holding to the older texts or the majority readings, must come to terms with the facts of history and the existence of textual variants. He must develop the textual skill, historical acumen and doctrinal discernment to be reverent, intelligent, independent and rational in his studies—and be ever true to the text as he believes it to be.

The English Bible is a version of a translation, but it should never be undermined in the name of scholarship. A positive

⁸² Adapted from H. S. Miller, *Op. cit.*, pp. 289–290.

⁸³ See Bruce M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, p. 511.

approach to biblical exegesis, which deals with the grammar, syntax and nuances of the Greek is a greatly rewarding and edifying exercise. Opening the text in teaching and preaching in a positive manner to bring out the emphases and richness of a given passage is both scriptural (Lk. 11:25–26; Acts 17:2–3) and edifying to one’s self and one’s hearers.

English Translations and Versions of the Bible and New Testament

The Scriptures, although the sole possession of the Jews for centuries, were destined for the world. All human beings are sinners, and all stand in need of inscripturated Divine revelation and the message of salvation. Bible translations and versions⁸⁴ are necessitated by the spread of biblical truth and the necessity of people having the Scriptures in their own tongue.

The first translation and version was into the Chaldee [the *Targumim*]. The second was the Septuagint [LXX] (c. 246 BC)—The Old Testament in the Κοινή Greek language when the latter became the *lingua franca* of the Greco–Roman Empire. With the move from Greek to the Latin, there necessarily arose the various Latin versions [The *Old Latin Version*, c. 200 AD, the *Latin Vulgate*, c. 406 AD]. There were ancient versions in the Coptic and Syriac in the areas of the Near East as the gospel spread to these areas.

The value of a given translation or version is its accuracy and ability to convey the thought of the original languages. The idea of “dynamic equivalence,” which has increasingly influenced modern translations and versions marks the tendency toward paraphrasing which may not be truly

⁸⁴ A translation is from the original language of a given writing to another secondary language. A version is a variation of a translation in a secondary language.

accurate.⁸⁵ The following is a list of the major translations and versions of the New Testament in English:⁸⁶

Version	Date	Notes
Wycliffe	1382	First English version translated from the <i>Latin Vulgate</i>
Tyndale	1525	First English translation from the Greek
Coverdale	1535	First complete modern translation of the Bible in English. First with Royal approval
Matthew's Bible	1537	First published by John Rogers, under the pseudonym "Thomas Matthew." Based on the previous work of William Tyndale
Taverner's Bible	1539	A revision of the Matthew's Bible
Cranmer-Coverdale	1539	Known as "The Great Bible" for its size as a Pulpit Bible
Geneva Bible	1557	The Bible used by the Puritans
Bishops' Bible	1568	A revision of "The Great Bible"
Rheims-Douay	1582	The Roman Catholic translation of the English Bible
King James Version	1611	Also termed the "Authorized Version" Produced by a committee

⁸⁵ The terms "dynamic equivalence" and "formal equivalence" were originally coined to describe ways of translating the Bible. Formal equivalence tends to emphasize fidelity to the lexical details and grammatical structure of the original language. Dynamic equivalence, by contrast, tends to favor a more natural rendering, for instance when the readability of the translation is more important than the preservation of the original grammatical structure. Such modern approaches to Scripture necessitate more than ever the study of the original languages of Scripture. See "A Note for Serious Bible Students: The Need for a Study of the Original Languages" at the beginning of this General Introduction.

⁸⁶ Some of these translations and versions included the entire Bible, others, only the New Testament.

Revised Version	1881–1885	Revision of the KJV by committee of English and American scholars
Twentieth Century New Testament	1899–1900	Produced by twenty anonymous scholars
American Revised Version	1901	Produced by American scholars from the English Revised Version
Weymouth	1903	Known as “The NT in Modern Speech”
Moffatt	1913	“A New Translation by James Moffatt”
Goodspeed	1923	“A New Translation” by Edgar J. Goodspeed
Way’s Translation	1926	Translation and Paraphrase of Paul’s Epistles and Hebrews by Arthur S. Way
Challoner–Rheims	1941	A revision of the Rheims–Douay Version
Revised Standard Version	1946	Produced by committee revising the Revised Version
Williams	1950	“The New Testament in the Language of the People” by C. B. Williams
Confraternity New Testament	1955	A New Testament revision of the Challoner–Rheims Roman Catholic Bible
God’s Word Translation	1995	Produced by God’s Word to the Nations Bible Society
Wuest: Expanded Translation of Greek New Testament	1956–1959	An explanatory paraphrase of the New Testament by Kenneth Wuest
Amplified New Testament	1958	An explanatory paraphrase of the New Testament
Phillips	1958	“The New Testament in Modern English”
New English Bible	1961	Produced by committee from Oxford, Cambridge and Church of Scotland

New American Standard Bible	1963	A revision of the American Revised Version of 1901
Good News for Modern Man ⁸⁷	1966	New Testament: American Bible Society Edition
Jerusalem Bible	1966	A Roman Catholic Revision of the Bible with the Apocrypha
The Living Bible	1971	A Paraphrase using the 1901 ASV as a base
The Living Bible Paraphrased	1972	A Bible prepared initially for children
New International Version	1978, 1984, 2011	A revision of the English Bible in the common language of the American people
New King James Version	1982	A modernizing the King James Version
The Clear English Version	1985	Unofficial Seventh-Day Adventist Bible
The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language	2002	Purported to be an idiomatic paraphrase of the Bible based on the original languages.
New English Translation	2005	“Interdenominational, evangelical and non-sectarian” ⁸⁸
New Living Translation	2007	A revision of the Living Bible [NT]. Allegedly, the third most popular edition of the New Testament
The Restored New Testament	2009	Claims to be based on Greek and informed Semitic sources. Includes commentary and some Gnostic Gospels.

⁸⁷ Also known as *Today’s English Version* (TEV), *Good News Bible* (GNB) and *Good News Translation* (GNT).

⁸⁸ Adapted, modified and updated from Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, pp. 432–433.

English Standard Version	2011	A revision of the Revised Standard Version stressing a formal equivalence approach
Modern English Version (MEV)	2014	Based on Original Languages with KJV as a base

Note: There are a plethora of modern “Study Bibles.” Each of these contains copious notes which reflect the presuppositions and teachings of their authors: Reformed, Dispensational, ultra-Dispensational, Charismatic, evangelical, etc. Such Bibles will differ greatly in their hermeneutical approach and doctrinal teaching. It is the opinion of the author that such should be avoided lest conflicting or corrupt teaching should unduly influence the student. It is easy and dangerous to confuse the Word of God with the word of man.

The World of the New Testament

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son...”(Gal. 4:4). The Divine redemptive purpose entered an age torn by cultural and imperial strife, human wickedness and religious tensions. The Divine purpose, however, was fulfilled without hindrance: our Lord, the eternal Son of God, became incarnate as Redeemer and Messiah, lived, preached, was tried, crucified, buried, raised from the dead and ascended back into heaven (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jn. 3:14–18; Gal. 4:4–5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Acts 1:8) and the gospel went forth throughout the known world through the Apostles and their converts.

A study of the world as it existed at the time of the first century AD is a prerequisite for an intelligent study of the New Testament.

The revelation of God in the New Testament was imparted through men who lived in a definite locale of time and space, and who spoke in the imagery and circumstances of their own era. While the truth and application of the message are unquestionably eternal and unchanging, the correct interpretation depends largely upon a proper comprehension of its historical setting....To us of the ...[twenty-first]...century, the facts which they assumed to be obvious and hence unnecessary to explain are obscure. We can comprehend the historical context of these writings only by careful research and reconstruction of the environment from which they emanated.⁸⁹

The time–frame must begin in 586 BC—the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple under Nebuchadnezzar and the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity—and extend to 135 AD and the Bar Kokhba rebellion which marked the end of Jewish national life. The political, cultural, and religious state of this age casts much light upon the New Testament writings themselves and forms part of the inclusive context in which they were written.

⁸⁹ Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times*, p. v.

The Intertestamental Era

A survey of the Intertestamental Era with its various entities and institutions is considered at the end of volume two of this Bible Survey.⁹⁰ A brief overview, with added emphasis upon the first century, is necessary for an introduction to the New Testament. Politically, the intervening centuries between Malachi and Matthew witnessed the wane and destruction of the Persian Empire (c. 397–323 BC), the rise and fall of the Greek Empire (c. 333–63 BC), with its subsequent Ptolemaic [Egyptian–Greek rulers] (c. 323–198 BC) and Seleucid dynasties [Syrian–Greek rulers] (c. 198–63 BC), the short Maccabean or Hasmonean era of Jewish independence (168–63 BC) and the rise of the Roman Empire with its conquest and rule over Palestine (63 BC–135 AD).

The Babylonian and Persian Empires had left the Jews with the Aramaic language, the *Targumim*⁹¹ and a very large Jewish population which had become entrenched in Middle Eastern society and culture. The Greek Empire had left the Jews with the Greek language and the pervasive Hellenization of their society. The Roman Empire now ruled over the Jews, both of the Diaspora and those in Syro–Palestina.

The short-lived Greek Empire left its indelible mark upon the Greco–Roman society of the first century through the Hellenization of the culture. The Κοινή Greek [common vernacular] was the *lingua franca* of the Empire.⁹² The Jews

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 413–456.

⁹¹ The *Targumim* were Aramaic paraphrases of the Jewish Scriptures with annotations and commentaries. These would later be foundational for Talmudic Judaism (200 AD–).

⁹² *Lingua franca*, derived from the Latin, is a term referring to a common language among peoples of different languages for commerce and social exchange. (Historically, it refers to a mixture of Italian with French, Greek, Arabic, and Spanish, formerly used in the Levant or the area of Syro–Palestina from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries).

spoke Greek and Aramaic [Chaldean]. Hebrew was evidently also spoken, but largely reserved for the Scribes and the study of the Scriptures among the rabbis.⁹³ The “Bible” of the common people was the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures (c. 246 BC).⁹⁴

Note: Divine providence was at work both in the Hellenization of the Greco–Roman society and in the giving the Scriptures in the Κοινή Greek. Our Lord may have spoken and taught in Aramaic, but this would not have had the world–wide influence of the Κοινή. The Old Testament Scriptures in the LXX and the New Testament—both in Greek were meant for the world.⁹⁵

This Hellenizing influence was also felt in Greek customs, the predominance of Greek philosophy and Greek theaters, public baths, hippodromes⁹⁶ and gymnasiums in many cities and even in Jerusalem (Macc. 1:13–15).

Note: The Greek theaters, public baths and gymnasiums, the former with their plays and the latter with their emphasis upon physical nudity and worship of the nude human body, were considered contrary to the Divine Commandments in the Law of Moses and therefore blasphemous to the Jews. Athletic contests and even business meetings were often held in public baths and gymnasiums in the nude. The historian

⁹³ Recent scholarship finds a Hebrew background to many of our Lord’s sayings. For further study of the use and influence of the Hebrew language, see Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 443 pp.; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Dayton, OH: Center for Judaic Christian Studies, 2001. 130 pp., and *New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Holland, MI: En–Gedi Resource Center, 2007. 180 pp.

⁹⁴ The Jewish lawyer [an expert in the Mosaic and Oral Law] in Lk. 10:21–25ff, when questioned exegetically by our Lord, quoted from the LXX of Deut. 6:4–5, not the Hebrew.

⁹⁵ See Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 49–52.

⁹⁶ Hippodromes [fr. Gk. ἵππος, “horse,” and δρόμος, “course”] were arenas or tracks for horse and chariot races.

Josephus [Bk. XII, Chap. V, 1; Whiston's ed., p. 256] states that some Jews had their penises surgically altered [*epispasm*] to hide their circumcision from the derision of the Greeks. See Mark Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, p. 31 and Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p. 381. The Apostle Paul refers to epispasm [μὴ ἐπισπάσθω· ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ] in 1 Cor. 7:18–19. This practice reached its apex in the New Testament Era. The prejudice against and ridicule of circumcision may be the reason for some Gentile proselytes to Judaism to become mere “proselytes of the gate,” i.e., “God-fearers,” rather than fully embrace Judaism as “proselytes of righteousness” and submit to circumcision. The non-requirement of circumcision for Christian converts was one of the first distinctions between Jewish proselytes, the Judaizers and Christian converts (Acts 15:1ff; Gal. 5:2–3; 6:12–13).

The Jews became more or less Hellenized; those of the Diaspora more so than those in Judea, many of whom resisted such cultural influences to varying degrees.

To adequately understand the New Testament Era, the preceding Seleucid, Hasmonean and initial Roman periods need to be studied. These reveal the roots and genesis of the Scribes, Pharisees, the Herodian Dynasty and the general political, cultural and religious context which would come to culmination in the Gospels, Epistles and the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

During the Seleucid rule over Palestine, Antiochus IV, or Epiphanes (c. 175–164 BC), after a humiliating defeat in Egypt, returned and conquered Jerusalem, forbade all Jewish customs, including circumcision, and finally plundered⁹⁷ and desecrated the Second Temple by pouring a broth made of swine's flesh over all the holy vessels and offering a sow upon the altar. This gave rise to the Maccabean revolt under the Hasmonean family of priests, which brought about a short era of Jewish

⁹⁷ The Temple held the national treasury, which housed many talents of gold. Thus, it was considered a great prize of plunder for several Greek and Roman leaders.

independence (c. 168–63 BC). The Temple was cleansed and rededicated in 165 BC. The Feast of *Hanukkah*, “Feast of Lights” or “Dedication” was instituted on this occasion [December 15] (Jn. 10:22).

The Sadducees and Pharisees arose during this time. The Sadducees were of the high priestly families, favored Hellenistic customs, and were the rationalists of the day, denying spirit beings and the resurrection—yet held tenaciously to the Law of Moses. The Pharisees rose with the decline of the Chasadim, and were the orthodox of the time. These believed in spirit-beings and the resurrection (Matt. 22:23–32; Acts 4:1–2; 23:6–10). These also held to the Oral Law or the Tradition of the Elders (Matt. 15:1–6; Mk. 7:1–13), referring to a second, oral law, which Moses allegedly received on Mount Sinai. The Pharisees were the rulers and elders of the synagogues throughout the land and comprised a large part of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, the ruling body of Israel.

The influence of Rome was seen in the form of Roman government, Roman law, Roman roads, the various officials—Caesars, Senators, Procurators [civil governors] Proconsuls [military governors], Legates [Caesar’s personal representatives], Tribunes, Centurions—and the ever-present Roman army. Roman garrisons were stationed in certain troublesome provinces and in Jerusalem in the Tower of Antonia which stood next to the Temple area (Acts 21:31–35). Rome established client kings to rule over vast areas. Herod the Great was Rome’s client king over much of Palestine (c. 37–4 BC). He safe-guarded the eastern boundary of the empire against the Parthians to the Northeast and the Arabs to the southeast. After his death, these territories were ruled by three of his remaining sons under Rome.

In 63 BC Judaism was nominally granted the status of a *religio licita*, or legal religion despite its monotheism in the

polytheistic culture of the empire. Emperor worship,⁹⁸ at that juncture not formally demanded, simply added one more god to its roster of deities. The Jews would not submit. This status of acceptance provided an impetus for the building of synagogues throughout the empire. This favored status would also later provide some protection for emerging Christianity in its first three decades when it was considered merely as a sect of Judaism. Later in the first century (c. 63–68) under Nero, who blamed the Christians for the great conflagration at Rome, Christianity was declared a *religio illicita*, or illegal religion.

Julius Caesar, indebted to Antipater the Idumean, made him procurator of Palestine (c. 47 BC), retaining Hyrcanus II, of the Hasmonean dynasty as a mere figurehead. Antipater made his sons, Phasael and Herod governors, Phasael over Jerusalem and Judea and young Herod over Galilee (37 BC). After the assassination of Julius Caesar, the Jewish leaders, failing to rid themselves of Herod and Phasael through appeals to Antony, sided with Antigonus, the only living son of Aristobulus, the brother and opponent of Hyrcanus II.

They then called for aid from the Parthians, whose empire bordered that of Rome to the east.⁹⁹ The Parthians came as far west as Jerusalem, and demanded a meeting with Phasael and Herod. Hyrcanus, who was both high priest and king had Antigonus's ears cut off to disqualify him for the priesthood

⁹⁸ Caligula [*Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*] (37–41 AD) was the first to demand emperor worship. He ordered a statue of himself to be erected in the Temple at Jerusalem. The Syrian legate delayed its erection, Herod Agrippa I intervened, and Caligula was assassinated by a conspiracy of the Praetorian Guard, Senators and courtiers, averting a Jewish holy war.

⁹⁹ The Parthian [Arsacid] Empire (c. 227 BC–224 AD) was located in ancient Iran. It was located on the "Silk Road" of trade and commerce between the Mediterranean world and the Han Empire of China. This empire sought with and defeated the Seleucids and Sycthians. There were several Roman–Parthian Wars. Herod, as a Roman client king, protected the eastern border of the Empire from both Parthians and Arabs.

(Lev. 21:16–24). Herod fled, first to Masada, then to Idumea, then Egypt, and finally to Rome, where he was later crowned as “King of the Jews” by Octavian and confirmed by the Roman Senate. He had fled as a refugee and returned as a king. Within two years he, with the aid of a Roman army, captured Jerusalem and became a client king under Rome. At his death in 4 BC, his three remaining sons were established as governors [ethnarchs] over Palestine.¹⁰⁰

The Babylonian Captivity (c. 597–536 BC) marked the beginning of the Diaspora,¹⁰¹ or the scattering of the Jews, which eventually embraced the entire Roman Empire and beyond. This would lead to the forming of Jewish communities throughout the empire and the building of synagogues as centers of Jewish worship, culture and study. The three great centers of Judaism which developed during this time were at Babylon, Alexandria in Egypt and in Judea and the surrounding areas. Only a small portion of the Jews lived in Palestine, most were located either in Babylon or Egypt. The one great common entity was their religion and the Temple at Jerusalem, the center of national worship and destination for all Jewish pilgrimages.

The Second Temple was rebuilt and enlarged to twice its size by Herod the Great, who sought at times to win the favor of the Jewish population.

Note: Herod’s Temple was a great and exceedingly beautiful edifice (Matt. 24:1ff; Mk. 13:1ff; Lk. 21:5ff). It was not completed until the time of his great-grandson, Herod Agrippa II in 64 AD, only six years before it was destroyed by the

¹⁰⁰ The Herodian Dynasty was constantly intertwined with the history of the New Testament. A later chapter is dedicated to the history of this dynasty and its influence.

¹⁰¹ This sowing of the Jewish people throughout the nations is known as the *Diaspora* [Διάσπορα] (1 Pet. 1:1, “scattered,” as of seed [σπóρος], “dispersed”). The great majority of the Jewish people were of the Diaspora; the minority were located in Judea and the surrounding regions of Galilee and Perea.

Romans (Jn. 2:20). The remaining cedar wood, gathered by Herod Agrippa II from Lebanon, was used to crucify Jews during the siege of Jerusalem (c. 70 AD).

Herod was the greatest architect of this era, building large palaces and fortifications in Jerusalem [his personal palace], Bethlehem [Herodium], throughout Judea, Galilee, northeast to Caesarea Philippi¹⁰² at the foot of Mount Hermon, southeast to Masada¹⁰³ to the west of the Dead Sea and on its eastern shore at Machaerus.¹⁰⁴ The Tower of Antonia in Jerusalem was its major fortress.¹⁰⁵ He also built Judea's one seaport and the city and harbor of Caesarea on the coast of northern Judea.

Various schisms or sects arose during the final two centuries of Jewish national life, fomenting various revolts against both the Greek and later Roman authorities (Acts 5:36–37; 21:38). The Zealots and *Sicarii* were active through the first century AD. The Zealots were founded by Judas of Galilee (c. 6 AD). One of our Lord's Disciples had been a zealot [Simon Zelotes, Lk. 6:15]. The *Sicarii*, or “dagger men” [*Sicarius*, dagger] were an extreme group who assassinated Romans and Jewish collaborators. All these revolts were

¹⁰² Caesarea Philippi at the foot of Mt. Hermon was a Herodian city, with a large temple of white marble dedicated to Octavian [*Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus*]. It later became the capitol for Herod Philip the Tetrarch (Matt. 16:13; Mk. 8:27; Lk. 3:1).

¹⁰³ Masada, a high and isolated, inaccessible, flattened ridge, had both a palace and a fortress. It became a refuge for Herod at one time and was the scene of the final Jewish resistance after the fall and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 73 AD.

¹⁰⁴ It was at this remote palace–fortress that John the Baptist was imprisoned and later beheaded (Mk. 6:17–29).

¹⁰⁵ The Tower of Antonia was built by Herod in 19 BC on the site of the former *Acra* [Gk: Ἀκρά], a fortress built by Antiochus Epiphanes upon his conquest of Jerusalem and later destroyed by the Hasmonean king, John Hyrcanus. Antonia was named in honor of Herod's close friend, Mark Antony. It was a large fortress which stood adjacent to the Temple grounds and housed part of the Roman garrison stationed at Jerusalem (Acts 21:30–40).

doomed to failure, except the short-lived Maccabean revolt in 168 BC. The final *Bar Hokbha* revolt in 132–135 AD ended with a great defeat at the hands of the Romans and the end of Jewish national life. Messianic anticipation continued throughout this time, but was distorted through tradition and misunderstanding, as is true of much of prophecy.

The Political Setting

The preceding political history of the Intertestamental Era prepares for the political arena of the first century AD. The supreme ruler was Caesar Augustus [*Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus*] (27 BC–14 AD) under whose reign the Roman Republic became an Empire. The Roman Senate, which before had exercised great power became limited in its influence. John the Baptist and our Lord were born and grew up during his reign (Lk. 2:1).

The subsequent Caesars: Tiberius [*Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti Filius Augustus*] (14–37 AD), who was the Caesar during our Lord's earthly ministry, at the time of Pentecost and to about the time of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Caligula¹⁰⁶ [*Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*] (37–41 AD), Claudius [*Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*] (41–54 AD). These ruled during the great time of missionary expansion and the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. During the reign of Claudius, all Jews were commanded to leave Rome, due to an outbreak of violence and agitation concerning one "Chrestus" (Acts 18:2).¹⁰⁷ Nero [*Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*] (54–68 AD) instigated the great fire at Rome which destroyed much of the city. He blamed the Christians and the subsequent first state persecution of Christians occurred during his reign. Peter and Paul, with

¹⁰⁶ Caligula was a nickname, meaning a small soldier's boot.

¹⁰⁷ The exact nature of this incident is unknown, as it concerned both Jews and Christians. It seemed to involve the persecution of Christians by Jews or the persecution of both by other groups. Christianity was still considered a sect of Judaism.

other preeminent Christians, including most of the original Apostles, were martyred during this persecution (c. 64–68 AD).

New Testament history ends at about 66–68 AD with the exception of the events prophesied by our Lord concerning the destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian (69–79 AD) and the writings of the Apostle John and his exile. John, the last of the Apostles, wrote his Gospel and Epistles at the end of the first century. The Caesar was either Domitian (81–96 AD) or Nerva (96–98 AD).¹⁰⁸

The Roman Empire was divided into provinces overseen by either procurators or proconsuls. Imperial Provinces were troubled regions ruled by procurators; Senatorial provinces, or regions which were relatively peaceful were proconsular. Judea was administered by a procurator because the Jews were a troublesome people and there were continuous uprisings due to insurmountable religious convictions and governmental abuses.

The following Provinces are mentioned in the New Testament: Achaia (Rom. 15:26), Asia (Acts 20:4), Bithynia (Acts 16:7), Cappadocia (1 Pet. 1:1), Cilicia (Acts 6:9), Cyprus (Acts 13:4), Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10), Galatia (Gal. 1:2), Illyricum (Rom. 15:19), Judea (Gal. 1:22), Lycia (Acts 27:5), Macedonia (Acts 16:9), Pamphylia (Acts 13:13), Pontus (1 Pet. 1:1), Rome [both a city and a province] (Acts 2:10), Spain (Rom. 15:24) and Syria (Gal. 1:21).¹⁰⁹

The various districts or geographical areas within Palestine and the surrounding areas: between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea were Idumea [Edom] to the south of the Dead Sea north of Egypt and the Sinai and west of Arabia. Proceeding north: Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Phoenicia on the coast, Caesarea Philippi in the region of Gaulanitis to the east. Syria lay to the north and east. On the eastern side of Jordan

¹⁰⁸ Circumstances favor the late era with the rise of both Valentinian (see Jn. 1:1–18) and Docetic (see 1 Jn.) Gnosticism.

¹⁰⁹ See Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, p. 14.

were Arabia to the far south, then to the north, Nabatea, Pera and Decapolis.

Judea held the core of the Jewish community outside of Babylon and Alexandria. Samaria was peopled by the *Cuthim* since the time of the fall of the northern Kingdom (c. 721 BC).¹¹⁰ Galilee was peopled with a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Nazareth in Galilee, however, was an all-Jewish community.¹¹¹ Decapolis was mainly Gentile; Perea mainly Jewish.

The local Roman jurisdiction was under the Herodians and Roman Procurators. Herod the Great died shortly after commanding the massacre of the infants in the area of Bethlehem (c. 4 BC) (Matt. 2:13–19), and his three sons were rulers at the beginning of the New Testament Era: Herod Archilaus, the son of Herod and Malthace, a Samaritan, was given the main part of the kingdom: Judea proper, Edom and Samaria. He ruled until 6 AD, when he was banished to Gaul. Herod Philip I, son of Herod and his fifth wife, Cleopatra of Jerusalem, was given jurisdiction over the northeast part of Herod's kingdom; he ruled there until his death in 34 AD.

¹¹⁰ Most of the Israeli population was deported to Assyria. Foreigners, or the *Cuthim*, from northeastern Assyria had been brought in to re-populate the region, intermarry with the remaining remnant and destabilize the culture. These foreigners were from Cuthah, located on the northeastern edge of Assyria, and referred to as the *Cuthim* [כּוּתִיִּם]. This mixed mongrel race later became the "Samaritans" of the Restoration, Intertestamental and New Testament Eras.

¹¹¹ Nazareth in Galilee, where our Lord grew up, was an all-Jewish stronghold and close community, established in the second century BC as a Jewish colony by the Maccabean prince, Aristobulus. The Jews sought to regain this territory through Jewish settlements. This may explain the openness of our Lord's ministry in Galilee, but also the strenuous opposition he encountered from his synagogue discourse at Nazareth (Lk. 4:16–30). See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, p. 152.

Herod Antipas, another son of Herod and Malthace, was made ruler of Galilee and Perea; he ruled there until he was exiled to Spain by Emperor Caligula in 39 AD. This is the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded (Matt. 14:1–12; Mk. 6:14–29) and was involved in the trial of our Lord (Lk. 23:6–15; Acts 4:27–28).

Agrippa I [*Marcus Julius Agrippa*] (10 BC–44 AD) was the grandson of Herod, the son of Aristobulus IV and Berenice. The Emperor Caligula appointed him as ruler of the territories of Herod Philip I after his death in 34 AD, and in 39 AD he was given the territories of Herod Antipas. In 41 AD, he was given the parts of Judea province that previously belonged to Herod Archelaus. Thus, Agrippa I, as a client king of Rome, extended his kingdom to the former boundaries of his grandfather, Herod the Great. He died in 44 AD under immediate Divine judgment (Acts 12:1ff, 18–23).

After the banishment of Herod Archelaus, Judea was ruled by Roman Procurators. Six “governors,” prefects, legates or “deputies” are mentioned in the New Testament: Cyrenius [*Publius Sulpicius Quirinius*] (c. 6–12 AD). He became legate governor of Syria and Judea after the removal of Herod Archelaus, but he had been involved in Syrian affairs before the turn of the century (c. 10 BC) (Lk. 2:2). Caesar Augustus commanded a census every ten to fourteen years to determine the taxation of the peoples of the empire. Luke evidently refers to the first census, not the second, at which time Judas of Galilee raised an insurrection (Acts 5:37).

Note: Radical critics and secular historians point to this as a Lucan error in chronology. However, Luke, the first church historian, was an inspired, astute, exact and contemporary historian (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1:1ff). He would not have been guilty of such an anachronism. The radical critics depend upon the testimony of Josephus, thus discounting the accuracy of Luke’s account. The primary historical point-of-reference is

the writings of Josephus, who was probably in error, confusing two separate events.¹¹²

Pontius Pilate (26–36 AD) was Prefect of Judea during our Lord’s ministry and passion. He offended the Jews by placing statues [idols] throughout Jerusalem and was recalled to Rome after his harsh dealings with a Samaritan uprising. At Rome he committed suicide on orders from the emperor (37 AD). Sergius Paulus [*Lucius Sergius Paulus*], was the Proconsul of Cyprus, who gave Paul and Barnabas a hearing for the gospel (Acts 13:4–121) and was converted.

Gallio [*Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus*] (d. 65 AD),¹¹³ a Spaniard, was Proconsul of Achaia during Paul’s sojourn there (Acts 18:1–17). Marcus Antonius Felix (52–60 AD) was made governor over the former kingdom of Herod Agrippa I and married Drusilla, Agrippa’s sister (Acts 23:26–24:26). Felix had no love for the Jews. He wiped out bands of bandits and revolutionaries (Acts 21:37–39), but also bribed some to assassinate the high priest. The Emperor Nero relieved him of his position, but he escaped retribution. Porcius Festus (c. 60–62 AD) succeeded Felix. Paul stood and defended himself and the gospel before him and Herod Agrippa II (Acts 24:27–26:32).

Every town had a synagogue, and in each synagogue the elders, comprising a “Little Sanhedrin,” sat in judgment over religious and minor civil matters. The Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had the final word. The Jewish courts could not issue a capital sentence. This was the prerogative of the

¹¹² For a full discussion of the census of Quirinius and the accuracy of Luke, see “The Authorship of Luke’s Gospel Account,” pp. 343–344.

¹¹³ Gallio was the son of the great Roman rhetorician Seneca the elder and the brother of Seneca the younger, the philosopher. He is recorded to have been a sensible, dignified man.

Procurator alone.¹¹⁴ The one exception was the violation of the Temple precinct beyond the Court of the Gentiles. Immediate death by Jewish authorities was the penalty, without the necessity of Roman permission (Acts 21:26–31; Eph. 2:11–18).¹¹⁵

The Cultural Setting

Hellenistic Culture

The New Testament was part of the era and culture known as the Greco–Roman world. The name itself demonstrates the strong Hellenistic influence upon the Roman Empire. It is said that the Romans conquered the Greeks militarily; the Greeks conquered the Romans culturally. The government was Roman; the culture was Greek. Κοινή Greek was the *lingua franca* of the world at that time (c. 300 BC to 300 AD).¹¹⁶ Hellenistic culture permeated every aspect of society: its language, customs, entertainment, commerce and education. The three great university centers in the ancient world of that day were Alexandria in Egypt, Athens in Greece and Tarsus in

¹¹⁴ For this reason the Sanhedrin had to appeal to Pilate to put our Lord to death (Jn. 18:28–32). Under Herod Agrippa I, who was a client king, the Jews were once again given the right to capital punishment (Acts 12:1ff). Herod the Great, in his early years as governor of Galilee, put some bandits to death without the approval of the Great Sanhedrin, and was called before them to give an answer for his illegal act. He later massacred most of the Sanhedrin when he returned as client king under Rome.

¹¹⁵ Beyond the Court of the Gentiles in the Jerusalem Temple area were the Court of the Women, the Court of Israel for the men, the Court of the Priests and the most Holy Place. Setting off these courts from the Court of the Gentiles was “the middle wall of partition,” which had entrances over which was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin that no uncircumcised could enter upon pain of death.

¹¹⁶ The rise and fall of the Κοινή Greek language (c. 300 BC to 300 AD) reveals that the New Testament was written at the very height of this language in Divine providence.

Cilicia.¹¹⁷ Many Romans were educated by Greek slaves who became their tutors and those of their sons. Jewish boys were often schooled in the synagogues by the local Rabbis. Throughout most of the Empire, many people were literate.¹¹⁸ While the universities, philosophers and rabbis may have taught in various circles, education in this era was still essentially private; public or statist education was unknown.

Hellenization was furthered even by some Jewish leaders. During the Seleucid rule over Judea, Jason, the brother of Onias III the high priest (174 BC) secured the high priesthood in Jerusalem by a large bribe to Antiochus IV. He sought to Hellenize Jerusalem. He changed it from a Jewish temple–state to a Greek city–state with a council and gymnasium and *ephebeia*, for the training of youth for civil and military service.¹¹⁹ He renamed Jerusalem “Antioch.” “The high priest was then a Seleucid official.” The youths submitted to *epispasm* to hide their Jewish circumcision from the ridicule of

¹¹⁷ The Apostle Paul, whose family had been awarded Roman citizenship, was born and grew up in Tarsus, and so was exposed to Greek philosophy from his earliest days. Later, he sat at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem for Rabbinic training, which included a study of the Greek philosophies (Acts 9:11, 30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3). He stood and delivered his Athenian address in a masterful display of presenting Christianity as a World–and–Life View with an economy of words (Acts 17:16–18, 22–34). See notes on Acts.

¹¹⁸ Jn. 7:15 was not meant to imply that our Lord was illiterate, but that he had not attended the rabbinical schools; he was “unlettered,” ἀγράμματοι, i.e., unlearned.

¹¹⁹ In ancient Greece, the *ephebeia* was a state institution organized to train freeborn youths between the ages of 18 and 20 for military and administrative service. The first year of training, which was devoted to sports and the acquisition of military skills, was carried out under camp conditions; the second year was taken up by garrison and other forms of guard duty. The *ephebeia* in Athens, in contrast to that in Sparta, offered instruction in literature, philosophy, and music. After completing his training in the *ephebeia*, a youth enjoyed all the rights and privileges of citizenship.

the Greeks when exercising nude in the gymnasium and games.¹²⁰

Slavery

The Greco–Roman world was largely populated with slaves from Roman conquests. There was a huge gap between the rich and the poor, with almost no middle class. Roman taxes could take up to one fourth of a person’s productivity. Local taxes added to this burden. The empire was built on a largely agrarian and artisan base. Slave labor was free. Egypt was the bread basket of the empire and so a system of commerce developed which spanned the empire and included by necessity both sea and land routes. The balsam trade in the area of Jericho was the richest production in the empire next to gold and ivory. Palestine was located on the two major trade routes from Arabia and Egypt to Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean.¹²¹ Roman citizenship was not granted to all free men until the second century. In the New Testament Era, it was reserved for those who were native Romans, had purchased this standing at a great price, or had been granted the status through some great service for Rome (Acts 22:25–29).

Morality

With the exception of the Jews, who possessed the Moral Law, the morality of the ancient world of the first century was pagan. Prostitution was a recognized institution with public brothels, and it also had religious overtones, i.e., cultic

¹²⁰ Everett Ferguson, *Loc. cit.* See note on pp. 89–90 in this General Introduction.

¹²¹ “The King’s Highway” was the ancient trade route which ran north from the Gulf of Aqabah in Arabia along the eastern bank of the Jordan River. This was the route of the Exodus when Moses led Israel to the border of the land of Canaan. Another route ran along the coast from Egypt to Damascus in Syria with one port at Caesarea which gave access to the Mediterranean. Jericho stood at the crossroads of the two major trade routes.

prostitution.¹²² Gross immorality, bisexuality, homosexuality and perversion were common, even among the elite. Some of the Caesars were immoral reprobates.

Entertainment often reflected the immorality of the time. Greek wrestling, Roman contests and extravaganzas featured chariot races, reenactments of historic battles and barbarous contests with animals in which scores of various wild beasts were killed. The Colosseum, built at Rome during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus (c. 70–80 AD) held such entertainment, with gladiator contests, and later became the scene for the martyrdom of many Christians. All such entertainment was repugnant to the sensitive Jewish mind which was probed by the Law of God and Moses. All such practices were also repugnant to Christianity.

During the New Testament Era and for the first three centuries, most Christians were of the lower social classes. This was often held up as derision against the Christian faith, which was characterized by “atheism,” as Christians did not worship the Greco–Roman pantheon, abandoned traditions and promised forgiveness of sins upon repentance and faith. Celsus (c. 177) wrote a scathing diatribe against Christians who “are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable and stupid, and only slaves, women and little children.”¹²³

Daily Religious, Social and Home Life Among the Jews

Despite the inroads of Hellenization, the Jews stood out distinctly from the surrounding pagan Greco–Roman society. They had a relatively closed society which was bound by a strict monotheism, a mixture of religious truth and tradition, a morality and ethic which primarily derived from the Mosaic

¹²² The *Akro–Corinthus*, the high rocky mount at Corinth, was the site of a pagan temple served by a thousand cultic prostitutes.

¹²³ Celsus, *The True Doctrine*, as quoted in Origen's *Contra Celsus* by Everett Ferguson, *Op. cit.*, p. 563.

Law, and a different attitude toward society, the family and almost all social functions.

Note: The Pharisees, who held great influence over the common people as the orthodox of the day and the leaders in the synagogues, held both to the Mosaic Law in written form and the “Oral Law” or “Tradition of the Elders.”

Religion was, for the traditional Jew, the core of daily life. Christianity would likewise be a stark contrast with contemporary pagan society in almost every area.

The main religious institution throughout the Diaspora and even in Judea was the synagogue. This had become the center of religious life. Tradition demanded that in every place where at least ten heads of families resided, a synagogue was to be formed. Thus, only the smallest villages were without this institution.¹²⁴ Although the Temple was located in Jerusalem, and was the only place where sacrifices could be offered, there were an estimated 480 synagogues in this city. Synagogue worship was held every Sabbath, which was both a day of physical rest and a day of worship.

Tradition placed a host of restrictions upon the individual concerning the Sabbath, especially in matters of travel or various actions. Families attended synagogue worship together. Often the rabbis would bless the little children as the heritage of the Lord (Psa. 127:3; Matt. 19:13ff). In synagogue worship, the Law of Moses was read. Homilies, short expositions or sermons were also usually given, either by a rabbi or someone of importance (Lk. 4:16ff; Acts 13:14ff; 14:1ff; 17:1ff, 10ff, 16–17). The service began with the recitation of the *Shema* [שְׁמַע] as a statement of faith (Deut. 6:4), preceded by two benedictions. The service, after the readings and sermon, would end with various benedictions and the *Shema*.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ There was evidently no Jewish synagogue in Philippi, but a *proseuche* [προσεύχη], i.e., a place of prayer by running water for the convenience of ceremonial washings, which was attended by some women (Acts 16:13).

¹²⁵ See Edersheim, *Op. cit.*, pp. 265–280 for a full discussion of Synagogue worship and order.

Jewish society was further set apart by the observance of the Sabbath. This weekly observance of rest and joy customarily began on Friday evening and ended on Saturday evening.¹²⁶ Traditionally, there was a festive meal when the best of clothing was worn and the finest of food and drink were served after synagogue worship.

Marriage among the Jews was a sacred institution and held in very high regard in contrast to the pagan cultures which also had mere conjugal relationships and open heterosexual and homosexual, social and cultic prostitution. Jewish women usually married at age thirteen and young men between the ages of fifteen to eighteen.¹²⁷ Some might marry at an older age if the marriage were pre-arranged between two families. If a man had no son, his son-in-law would fill that place in the family and be considered as a son.¹²⁸

In the pagan Greco-Roman society the families were usually very small. The object was to have one son, the heir to the family name and estate. Two sons were often desired as one might die from disease or in war. Love and marriage were often separate. Marriage was often for political and socio-economic reasons; erotic love was often sought outside the marriage relationship.

Further, additional children were considered as much less important. Daughters were often considered a liability and were at times abandoned and left to die by exposure. An infant was not considered an individual or recognized by the father as a member of the family until a given age due to the high mortality rate. The recognition was performed with a pagan

¹²⁶ This refers to the weekly Sabbath. There were weekly, monthly, yearly Sabbaths, some observed every seven years and one every fifty years. In connection with the Pilgrim feasts, there may have been two or even three Sabbath days in a row.

¹²⁷ Mary, the mother of our Lord, was probably 13 to 14 years old when she gave birth.

¹²⁸ This was evidently the case with Joseph, the husband of Mary, as revealed in the genealogies (Matt. 1:1-17; Lk. 3:23).

religious ceremony. Death by exposure was therefore not considered as infanticide.¹²⁹

Morality and marriage among the Jews stood in stark contrast to the pagan culture about them. For the Jews, marriages were the consummation of a betrothal which was considered as strong as marriage itself in its commitment. To break such a relationship was considered a divorce (Matt. 1:18–25). The marriage ceremony itself was a public feast followed by the sexual consummation of the union. To ensure the virginity of the wife and guard against any subsequent charges of pre-marital infidelity, the tokens of her virginity were kept by her parents (Deut. 22:13–21).¹³⁰

The Jews were very family-oriented. To be barren or childless was viewed as a curse or Divine disfavor (Gen. 11:30; 16:1ff; 30:1ff; 1 Sam. 1:1ff; Lk. 1:7ff). Sons were especially favored; daughters were for domestic help and had to acquire or be given a dowry for marriage. A man's wealth and estate were often measured in his sons. The sons would marry and bring their wives and children into the family under the patriarchal system. Daughters would build another man's wealth and family.

The Jewish families had two basic terms for “son” [בֵּן, *ben*] and “daughter” [בַּת, *Bath*], but also had nine different names to describe a child, one for each period of development from birth to adulthood: “Zerah” [זֶרַח], “seed, posterity” used for the child at birth (Isa. 44:3). “jeled” [יָלֵד], or “new born.” fem. “jaldah” [יָלְדָה] (Ex. 2:3, 6, 8). See Isa. 9:6 where both terms are used. “Jonek” [יוֹנֵק], a suckling” (Isa. 11:8). “Olel” [עוֹלֵל], still a nursing infant, but desiring more sustenance

¹²⁹ See Everett Ferguson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 73–74. The infants might be rescued by traders and raised to become slaves. In early Christianity, these would be adopted or raised in orphanages by Christians.

¹³⁰ A linen cloth was put upon the marriage bed and the blood of virginity was caught and kept as a stain and witness. This practice was later followed in some ancient Christianized societies.

(Psa. 8:2; Lam. 4:4). “Gamul” [גָּמוּל], weaned one (Psa. 91:2). Weaning occurred usually about age two. “Taph” [טָפַח], toddler (Jer. 40:7). “Elem” [עֶלֶם], Adolescent, becoming firm and strong, sexually ripe. fem. “Almah” [עַלְמָה] (Isa. 7:14). “Na’ar” [נָעַר], shaken off, free. Young man (1 Sam. 17:58). “Bachur” [בָּחוּר], ripened one, a young man in his prime, a young warrior (Isa. 31:8).¹³¹

Male infants were named at their circumcision at eight days of age (Gen. 17:10–12; Lk. 2:21; Phil. 3:4–6). To most names were added the name of the father, e.g., “Simon bar-Jonah,” i.e., “Simon the son of Jonah.” Many names were derivatives of the name of God, e.g., names ending in “el” [אֵל] “Daniel,” “Ezekiel,” names ending “[J]ah” [יָהּ, fr. יְהוָה] “Isaiah,” “Jeremiah.”

In the Greco-Roman era many men had two names, one Jewish, the other Greek, e.g., “Saul” [שָׂאוּל], also named “Paul” [Παῦλος]. Some Christians were named by our Lord or the Apostles according to a given characteristic, e.g., Simon was called “Peter” [Πέτρος], a stone (Mk. 3:16); Joses was called “Barnabas,” or “Son of Consolation” by the Apostles (Acts 4:36). Girls were usually named after something beautiful in nature or pleasant characteristics, e.g., “Tabitha,” gazelle; “Rhoda,” rose; “Rachael,” lamb; “Naomi,” pleasant.

Talmudic tradition states that a father was obligated to his son to do the following: to circumcise him, to teach him the law, to get him a wife and to teach him a trade, “He who teaches his son not a trade teaches him to rob.”¹³² Children were under their mother’s care in their early years. From her they received their earliest religious training (Prov. 1:8; 23:24–25; 30:17; 31:1; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). At age six, the son would be taken by his father to learn a trade and be instructed in the *Torah*.

¹³¹ Alfred E. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, pp. 103–105.

¹³² Babylonian Talmud.

It is in the nature of children to play together—their first social interchange both within and apart from the immediate family. Children’s play can be very instructive concerning the state and character of a given society, as they reflect the history, traditions and concerns of the adult population. Some societies were warrior-oriented. Others were more political. Jewish children, observing the history and social institutions of their closed, predominately religious society, usually played weddings and funerals (Matt. 11:16–19; Lk. 7:31–35). No doubt their play often reflected their past great leaders and heroes, such as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Samuel, David, and the Hasmoneans.

Jewish children were educated at home, both religiously and in a given trade. Some young men would attend the local synagogue school. The wealthy could obtain tutors or send young men to the rabbinical schools. Hellenization encroached upon the religious nature of education in the large cities when some young men were sent to the *ephebeia*.

Jewish homes usually had but one or two rooms. The family would live, cook, eat and sleep in one room. Beds were usually straw mats spread out on the earthen floor. The family, parents and children would all sleep together as a group (Lk. 11:7). A single olive oil lamp gave a dim light to the entire living quarters. Lattice windows would open to an inner courtyard, never to the street.

In larger homes there was an upper room [ἀνάγειον] or guest chamber [κατάλυμα] (Mk. 14:13–16; Lk. 22:8–13). If the house had several rooms, then the building was arranged in the form of a courtyard with an internal patio for privacy. At the end of the kitchen–living room was a manger and below that, two or three steps down, a place for the animals to stay the night to keep them safe from harm and thieves.

Note: Joseph and Mary evidently went to stay with relatives in his hometown of Bethlehem, but the guest chamber [κατάλυμα] was already taken, so they stayed in the kitchen–living area, where our Lord was born, and laid in the manger at the end of the kitchen. The idea that there was no room in

the local inn [πανδοκεῖον]¹³³ and that our Lord was born in a remote cave or stable is erroneous and merely traditional.¹³⁴

The roofs of the houses were flat and surrounded with a low wall about three feet high for safety (Deut. 22:8). This provided a place for storage (Josh. 2:6), drying grain or fruit, and a place for privacy (2 Sam. 11:2; Jn. 3:1ff), intimacy or prayer (Acts 10:9). The doorpost and gate of each home had a small ornate metal container or *mezuzah* [מְזוּזָה, “doorpost”] which contained passages of Scripture (Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21).

Jewish society, being relatively close and interrelated, was given to hospitality. All those within the community and even the Diaspora were considered brethren. Hospitality was characteristic of the Pilgrim festivals, when pilgrims would journey to Jerusalem from Galilee, and, on occasion, from the breadth of the empire. Both Scripture and Rabbinic tradition urged the greatest hospitality upon every home, as well as the care of the poor. Every town had a square, *kahn* or hostel [inn, πανδοκεῖον] for strangers.¹³⁵ Christianity inherited this practice among believers (Heb. 13:2). Hospitality was considered a sacred duty, even to those held in animosity. A host was bound to honor and protect his guests and see to their welfare.¹³⁶

There were three types of social centers: villages, towns and cities. The larger towns and cities were usually walled, had gates and in the center was a large plaza with an open-air market or bazaar. Legal business and other matters were handled at the city gates among the local elders (Gen. 19:1;

¹³³ See Lk. 10:34. πανδοκεῖον was a public house for strangers.

¹³⁴ See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, pp. 26–30.

¹³⁵ Alfred E. Edersheim, *Op. cit.*, pp. 47–50.

¹³⁶ David alludes to this practice in Psalm 23:5. See also Gen. 18:1–8.

Deut. 19:12; 21:19–20; 22:15; 25:7ff; Ruth 4:1–11; 1 Kgs. 22:10).

The water sources consisted of wells, cisterns, streams and reservoirs. In this desert country, cisterns which gathered and stored rain water were the main source of water for domestic use. These are often termed “wells” in the English Bible.

The Greeks and Romans normally ate four meals a day. The Jews by contrast ate but two, the first, about noon and the second about 5:00 PM. In the predominantly agricultural culture and in the hot desert climate much work was done early and there was an extended rest at noon.

The Jewish diet consisted mainly of grains (wheat and barley), honey, fruits (olives, dates, figs, grapes, raisins, pomegranates) and vegetables. Little meat was consumed, except for some poultry. Lamb was consumed during festivals. In the area of the Sea of Galilee fish comprised a large part of the diet. Animal protein came mostly from milk and cheese [“butter”], eggs and poultry.

Clothing and dress among the Jewish people was typical of Middle Eastern culture, with the exception of the blue border and fringes on the outer garment (Numb. 15:38–41; Deut. 22:11–12; Matt. 23:5)¹³⁷ and the prohibition against mixing wool and linen clothes (Deut. 22:11). Both men and women wore an inner garment or tunic [χιτῶν] resembling a long shirt. An outer robe or mantle was held at the waist with a sash or waistband. Jewish women wore a veil which was placed over the head and wrapped about the shoulders.

One’s clothing reflected one’s social standing and wealth, as in most societies. Ornate girdles or waistbands, purple cloth

¹³⁷ Talmudic Judaism: the fringes or tassels [zizith, תִּזְיִת] on the edge of the garment numbered 613: each tassel had eight threads and five sets of knots, totally 613. These represented the 613 traditional precepts of the *Torah*, 248 positive and 365 negative commands or *Mitzvot* [מִצְוֹת]. To tear a tassel or fringe was considered a breach of the law.

and turbans marked men and women of wealth. Multicolored, flowing garments, veils and jewelry, perfume and painted eyes marked the ladies of high social standing, together with earrings, nose rings, bracelets, necklaces of gold with precious stones and headpieces.¹³⁸ Phylacteries [תפילין, φυλακτήρια, “prayers”] were worn by the men at prayer on their foreheads and right arms; the Pharisees wore them continually as part of their clothing. Most wore sandals, but wealthy women often wore embroidered slippers.

Domestic animals included dogs as working and guard animals, donkeys, mules, horses, camels, sheep and goats. Wild animals in biblical times included rock badgers, antelope, jackals, lions, bears, wild asses, wild boar and various birds of prey and vultures.¹³⁹

The Jews were essentially an agricultural people. The major economy was based on farming [crops of grain, vineyards, orchards], animal husbandry, mostly sheep herding, and trades such as carpentry, tent-making,¹⁴⁰ hide tanning, pottery and masonry work.

Transportation and Trade

The Greco–Roman Empire was largely held together, not only by military might, provincial governments, and the *Pax*

¹³⁸ Headpieces were worn on the forehead and consisted of rows of coins. As divorce was the husband’s prerogative, and often for minor offences (Matt. 19:3–10), a woman could take with her only what she wore, thus she carried most of her personal valuables in the form of Jewelry on her person (Lk. 15:8–10).

¹³⁹ The issues and habits of daily life can be studied in the works of Edersheim, Jensen, Wight, Freeman and Ferguson.

¹⁴⁰ The Apostle Paul worked with *Cilicium*, a fabric used for clothing and tents made of dark goat-hair for which the province of Cilicia was famous. He understood how to cut a straight line according to the given weave (2 Tim. 2:15, ὀρθοτομοῦντα, “rightly dividing,” or cutting a straight line).

Romana,¹⁴¹ but also by trade which existed by the ancient trade routes throughout the lands and by sea. Egypt was the major granary of the empire. Ivory was brought from Africa and gold from Egypt and the area of the Red Sea. Balsam came from the area of Jericho.¹⁴² These commodities were transported to Greece and Rome by sea. As ancient navigation lacked the compass,¹⁴³ sailing was by sight and, if necessary, by astronomical determination, and so subject to weather and other phenomena. Thus, ships stayed close by the shores of the Mediterranean.¹⁴⁴

Palestine depended upon travel by the major ancient trade routes which passed through the land from Arabia to the southeast, Egypt to the southwest and Damascus and the Fertile crescent, which ran to the north and east to Chaldea. Palestine's one seaport was Caesarea, built by Herod the Great. The major seaport of the Eastern Mediterranean was Antioch in Syria, on the Orontes River, some 280 miles north of Caesarea.

Land travel was by foot, donkey, camel and cart. People usually travelled in groups for their own protection from bandits (Lk. 11:30f). The cost of commodities and the high

¹⁴¹ The *Pax Romana* [*Pax Augusta*] does not refer to an enforced peace secured and held by Roman power, but to the general time-frame from c. 27 BC to 180 AD in which there was a general peace and stability within the empire. This term was first used by Seneca the Younger, c. 55 AD.

¹⁴² Balsam, an aromatic resin, universally used in medicines and perfume, was the most lucrative trade item in the empire, after gold and ivory. This made the area of Jericho commercially strategic. It occasioned diplomatic dealings and intrigue with Cleopatra, Herod the Great and the empire.

¹⁴³ The earliest form of a magnetic compass was invented about the third century BC by the Chinese. It pointed south. The compass did not come into being or use in the European and Mediterranean world until about the thirteenth century AD.

¹⁴⁴ This is seen in the course of Paul's travel to Rome by the large Egyptian grain ship, which took many months (Acts 27:1–28:14).

local and state taxation kept most people, except the very wealthy, from enjoying the pleasures of foreign goods. Most food, clothing and necessary items were homemade or produced locally by farmers and tradesmen.

The Jews of the Diaspora sought to travel to Jerusalem at the three Pilgrim Feasts, if possible.¹⁴⁵ Because of sea, weather and land travel conditions (Acts 27:9–12), the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost was the most-attended, and provided the great opportunity in Divine providence for the out-pouring of the Spirit and the empowering of the New Testament church (Acts 2:1ff). Because of the great animosity against the Samaritans and the dangers of being robbed on the pilgrimage, those from Galilee would cross to the east of the Jordan River just below the Sea of Galilee and travel down the eastern trade route through Decapolis and Perea, cross the Jordan go through Jericho and up to Jerusalem.

The Philosophical Setting

Greek Philosophy

There has always existed both a confrontation with and an influence of philosophy upon theology. These effects have been both positive and negative.

Note: Philip Schaff held that there were positive effects:

The Grecian philosophy, particularly the systems of Plato and Aristotle, formed the natural basis for scientific theology; Grecian eloquence, for sacred oratory; Grecian art, for that of the Christian church. Indeed, not a few ideas and maxims of the classics tread on the threshold of revelation, and sound like prophecies of Christian truth; especially the spiritual soarings of Plato, the deep religious reflections of Plutarch, the sometimes almost Pauline moral precepts of Seneca. To many of the greatest church fathers, Justin Martyr, Clement of

¹⁴⁵ The three pilgrim feasts [שלוש גרילים, *shalosh regalim*] were the Passover, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost and the Feast of Succoth or Tabernacles. Passover was too early in the year for lengthy or sea travel and the Feast of Tabernacles was too late.

Alexandria, Origen, and in some measure even to Augustine, Greek philosophy was a bridge to the Christian faith, a scientific schoolmaster leading them to Christ. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, I, p. 78.

Note: It must be emphasized that pagan philosophy was fallen man's intellectual search for ultimate truth without the necessary reality of Divine revelation. What approach to truth may be found in the ancient pagan philosophers derived from the image of God in them, an image devastated in every aspect by the effects of The Fall.

Hellenization found its enduring influence in Greek philosophy. Although by the time of the New Testament, the great philosophers had long since lived, taught and died, their influence remained.¹⁴⁶

There were three great eras of Greek philosophy and its subsequent influence: first, the pre-Socratic Era.

Note: The Presocratic era (586–399 BC) began with Thales and ended with Socrates himself (c. 470–399 BC). This was the age of the Ionians or Milesians, Pythagoreans, Atomists, Sophists, of Thales, Parmenides and Socrates. In this era some of the basic tenets and forms of Greek philosophy were formed. Major issues that would influence Christian thought included: speculative pantheistic and polytheistic theories concerning the gods, the origin of the universe, the nature of the universe or κόσμος with its unifying principle or Λόγος, the evolution of human life, the principles of speculative science, theories of relativism and pragmatism, and the transmigration and immortality of the soul.

Second, the era of Plato and Aristotle (c. 450–322 BC) marked the high point in the development of Greek philosophy. The influence of these two great thinkers would constantly re-surface in Christian thought through the centuries to and including the Modern Era.

Note: The influence of Plato (c. 427–347 BC) may be noted in: the theory of "forms," or "ideas," which reject a materialistic

¹⁴⁶ Greek philosophy may be historically divided into eras: the pre-Socratic Era (585–399 BC), the Era of Plato and Aristotle (c. 450–323 BC) and the Hellenistic Era (300 BC–529 AD).

concept of the universe; a cosmological argument for the existence of the gods; the immortality of the soul and a life after death associated with rewards and punishments; the refutation of atheism; and a political philosophy in his *Republic*, which anticipated socialism, or a welfare state, with statist education, wives in common, a military class, artisan class, and a ruling class of philosopher-kings.

The influence of Aristotle (384–322 BC) is seen in: the classification of knowledge, the science of logic or “Analytics,” his works on physics, metaphysics, a form of cosmological argument for God as the transcendent ‘First Cause’ [“Unmoved Mover”], his studies on human nature and the soul [The human soul is distinguished from the animal soul by its rational capacity], and his system of ethics (i.e., habit and character more than behavior).

Third, the Hellenistic era was historically the longest and the most diverse, spanning over five centuries and encompassing historically most of the Intertestamental period (397 BC–6 BC), the Apostolic Christianity of the first century, the Era of Transition (100–313 AD), the Imperial Age (313–476 AD) and the beginning of the Middle Ages (476–529 AD).

Note: There were several prominent and competitive philosophical systems or schools of thought: first, the Epicureans, who were the ancient empiricists, and held that all knowledge derives from sensations or experience; the belief that everything in the universe is composed of atoms and constantly in motion; the theory of a materialistic universe and no life after death; the idea that pleasure is good and pain is evil. Epicureanism emphasized the need for practical wisdom in securing pleasure, which was not necessarily synonymous with hedonism.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ The statement of Acts 17:16–18. Mark the designation given to Paul: τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν; i.e., an eclectic philosopher. Note the polytheistic mentality and presuppositions: “He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods,” (Gk. ξένων δαιμονίων, “alien or foreign deities.” Consider the words: “Jesus and the Resurrection,” (Gk. τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν), which they evidently took to be male and female gods because of gender of the words and their polytheistic presuppositions.

Second, the Stoics, deriving their name from the Painted Porch (Gk. ποικίλη στόα) in Athens, a colonnade where the founder, Zeno, began teaching. Stoicism went through several stages of development. Emphasis was upon the necessity of strength of character in personal ethics and politics; the Λόγος was the universal Word which sustained all things; a peculiar pantheism that equated Reason with God and a spark of Divinity in every human being.

The idea that Stoicism means the attempt to make one's self immune to the joys or trials of life derived from later Stoicism. Some later Stoics, whose lives or influence affected Christianity were Seneca (c. 4 BC–65 AD) and Marcus Aurelius (121–180 AD), a Roman Emperor, who, because of his pagan philosophical mentality became a persecutor of Christians. Cf. Acts 17:18 for their reaction to the Apostle Paul (see above under "Epicureanism.").

Third, the Cynics, so called from the nickname given to their founder, Diogenes (c. 400–325 BC). The name is from the Greek κύνικος, or "dog-like," and given to him by Plato, who questioned his ability to think abstractly. The Cynics taught that virtue is the only good (not moral virtue in the Scriptural or Christian sense, but virtue as self-realization brought about by an awareness of the natural as opposed to artificial values.). The best life was one of simple self-sufficiency and so Cynics were prone to asceticism. They were unconventional and believed their mission in life was to criticize all that was conventional and to uncover the illusionary.

Fourth, the Skeptics (Gk. σκέπτικός, an "inquirer") or Pyrrhoneans began with Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360–270 BC). His method of questioning and casting doubt on claims to knowledge gave rise to the current meaning of the term "skeptical." The goal of this inherently futile school of thought was to attain ἀτάρξεια, or the state of being unperturbed. A governing principle was the suspension of judgment in conflicting arguments.

Fifth, Neopythagoreanism, a first-century revival of certain tenets of older Pythagoreanism (which had all but disappeared by the fourth century BC), mixed with an eclecticism borrowed from Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic philosophies.

This eclectic system helped form the basic tenets of Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. It was a philosophico-religious

system that stressed the One or Divine Reality from which all other realities emanate; personal religion, and a direct intuition of the Divine or a type of direct revelation to the extent that its followers were sometimes depicted as philosopher–prophets; a return to asceticism, and a dualistic concept of the universe.

Sixth, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism,¹⁴⁸ which are considered separately as having the greatest influence upon Christian thought. Middle Platonism was predominant in the first and second centuries (80 BC–220 AD) and Neoplatonism was the final attempt of paganism to challenge Christianity from the third to the sixth centuries (c. 250–529 AD).

The era of Greek philosophy properly ended in 529 AD when Emperor Justinian closed the last pagan philosophical school at Athens. Further, in 642 AD the Arabs conquered Alexandria, the intellectual center of Greek philosophy, and brought their Islamic religion and philosophy into Northern Africa. These historical incidents marked the end of formal pagan philosophy.

Although the sixth century properly marked the end of Greek philosophy, it continued to be a major influence in Christian thought and theology. Neoplatonism surfaced in the early tendencies toward asceticism and monasticism with its contempt for the body, deriving from a dualism between and separation of the material and the spiritual. Elements of Greek philosophy greatly influenced the thought of the greatest Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Augustine. The influence of Aristotle and Plato overshadowed Medieval Scholastic theology and the Protestant Reformers. Elements of Neoplatonism lived on in the Renaissance, the

¹⁴⁸ The pervading religious character of Neopythagoreanism, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism must be noted. These to a great extent became or were a reaction to Christianity. All had elements of religion, mysticism and even some even magic as an attempted answer to the power and influence of the Christian religion and its claims.

Protestant Reformation, Puritanism, and is evidenced in aspects of modern evangelical Christianity.¹⁴⁹

The philosophic schools of thought prevalent in the New Testament Era were Epicureanism, Stoicism and Cynicism. Each had its peculiar world-and-life view. The Apostle Paul faced the Epicureans and Stoics at Athens (Acts 17:16–18) and delivered his astute address before the Athenian Council (Acts 17:22–34), the first recorded confrontation between Christianity and Greek philosophy.

Gnosticism

The influence of Greek philosophy had a direct impact on the development of Gnosticism, which became the greatest internal threat to Christianity during the first three centuries.¹⁵⁰ Gnosticism was an eclectic or syncretic religio-philosophical system with varied beliefs and schools of thought which infiltrated the early churches.

Note: for a thorough study of Gnosticism, see the following church histories: Schaff, *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 442–496; Newman, *Church History.*, I, pp. 180–193; Gwatkin, *Early Church History to 313.*, II, pp. 19–72; J. H. Kurtz, *Church History.*, I, pp. 98–119; Neander, *History of the Christian Church.*, I, pp. 366–478; Mosheim, *Commentaries on the First Three Centuries.*, I, pp. 405–496; F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, pp. 245–252. Cf. the following dictionaries: McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, III, pp. 890–896; Everett Ferguson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 371–376; J. D. Douglas, *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 416–418; James, Orr, Ed., *International*

¹⁴⁹ For a full discussion of the relation between theology and philosophy and the effects of Greek philosophy upon early Christianity and the Church Fathers, etc., see the author's *Historiography and Early Church History to 325 AD*, pp. 197–223.

¹⁵⁰ There are probable references to an incipient Gnosticism in Col. 2 with its warnings against a religious asceticism; 2 Pet. 2; and Jude. The Gospel of John was evidently written in part as an apology against Cerinthian Gnosticism which denied the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the First Epistle of John against Docetic Gnosticism, which denied his true humanity and his physical body.

Standard Bible Encyclopedia, II, pp. 1240–1248. Cf. the following histories of doctrine: Louis Berkhof, *History of Doctrines*, pp. 49–55 and Reinhold Seeburg, *The History of Doctrines*, pp. 91–104. See also the following standard works: Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*; and Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*.

The term “Gnosticism” derived from the Gk. γνῶσις or “knowledge,” that allegedly derived from direct Divine revelation. As a religio–philosophical system, it substituted an esoteric knowledge for faith, and sought to transform the truth of Christianity into a religious philosophy and mystic wisdom or theosophy.¹⁵¹

The beginning of the Christian era was a time of religious and intellectual ferment, with various systems vying for the increasing void left by the demise of the old pagan religions. Gnosticism and Biblical Christianity were the major contenders. Reinhold Seeburg notes:

In order to understand Gnosticism, it is necessary above all to bear in mind the syncretism of that period in the church. The religious unrest of the age eagerly absorbed all possible religious ideas and sought to generalize and harmonize them. Preference was given in this process especially to the oriental wisdom. It was by no means the aim merely to satisfy the thirst for knowledge, but it was sought to realize the upper world in personal experience through religious revelation and through the formulas and forms of the mysteries, and at the same time to secure a sure path for the soul in its ascent to the upper world at death.

As the Gnostic religion addressed itself to this undertaking, so Christianity seemed to be seeking—in parallel lines and successfully—to accomplish the same task. And this tendency found support in the universality of Christianity, in the idea that

¹⁵¹ Theosophy, fr. Gk: θεοσοφία, lit: “knowledge or wisdom of divine matters,” is a philosophical, autosoteriological approach to a mystical contact with the divine principle [the knowledge of God] achieved through spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition or revelation. Theosophical systems deny, among other truths, the need for personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the objective revelation of the Scriptures.

the latter as the absolute religion was to be everything to all men and bring all religions to their consummation. This Gnosticism sought to achieve. It sought to elevate Christianity to the position of the universal religion, by combining in it all the tendencies and energies of the age, thus adapting it to the comprehension of all and satisfying the needs of all. Thus, revelation was to be combined with the wisdom of the world, and Christianity by this means become a modern religion. It was the first attempt...to bring the world into subjection to the church by interpreting Christianity in harmony with the wisdom of the world.¹⁵²

H. M. Gwatkin writes along the same lines:

...the movement as a whole is older than the Gospel, and has no necessary connection with Christianity. It is the sort of eclecticism which grows up in every age of religious ferment ...Ancient Eclecticism was at first heathen or Jewish and only takes the particular form of Gnosticism at the point where it begins to be influenced by the Christian belief that the redemption is through Christ. Gnosticism may therefore be provisionally described as a number of schools of philosophy, Oriental in general character, but taking in the idea of a redemption through Christ, and further modified in different sects by a third element which may be Judaism, Hellenism or Christianity.

Here it is to be noted that the Gnostics took over only the idea of a redemption through Christ, not the full Christian doctrine, for they made it rather a redemption of the philosophers from matter than a redemption of mankind from sin.¹⁵³

Philip Schaff describes Gnosticism as follows:

Gnosticism is...the grandest and most comprehensive form of speculative religious syncretism known to history. It consists of Oriental mysticism, Greek philosophy, Alexandrian, Philonic, and Cabalistic Judaism, and Christian ideas of salvation, not merely mechanically complied, but, as it were, chemically combined...

Gnosticism is a heretical philosophy of religion, or, more exactly, a mythological theosophy, which reflects intellectually

¹⁵² Reinhold Seeberg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 93–94.

¹⁵³ H. M. Gwatkin, *Op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

the peculiar, fermenting state of that remarkable age of transition from the heathen to the Christian order of things.¹⁵⁴

K. S. Latourette also describes the Gnostic system, adding a word about its infiltration into Christianity:

This pagan Gnosticism was protean, taking many forms and drawing from a wide variety of sources. Into one or another of its varieties entered contributions from Orphic and Platonic dualism, other schools of Greek thought, Syrian conceptions, Persian dualism, the mystery cults, Mesopotamian astrology, and Egyptian religion. It was highly syncretistic. When combined with elements of Christianity, Gnosticism proved so attractive that, while no accurate figures are obtainable, the suggestion has been made that for a time the majority of those who regarded themselves as Christians adhered to one or another of its many forms.¹⁵⁵

Thus, as Christianity was defending itself from outward assaults in the forms of Judaism, pagan philosophy and state persecution, it also had to defend itself from Gnostic influence and tendencies within which sought to modify its character, pervert its doctrine, and strangle its life.

According to the early Church Fathers and tradition, Simon Magus was the father of Gnosticism (Acts 8:5–24). Whatever its historical origin, a form of incipient Gnosticism did exist by the middle of the Apostolic era.

Note: The “Colossian Heresy” was evidently an early form with a possible Judaic emphasis. See the Christology of the Colossian Epistle in chapters one and two and esp. 2:9 in the context of philosophy and wisdom, 2:8–9, 23; See the references to the worship of angels and asceticism in 2:15–23; Cf. the reference to true holiness and full knowledge, ἐπίγνωσις, in the context of licentiousness in 3:1–10.

Gnostic tendencies and licentiousness are the probable subjects in 2 Peter 2:1–22 and in Jude. It seems certain that the Gospel according to John was written later than the other Gospels and is in part an apology against Cerinthian Gnosticism which denied the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵⁴ Schaff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 448–450.

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, p. 123.

Cf. especially the Prologue in 1:1–18 and the terms Λόγος and πληρῶμα borrowed from Platonic thought.

From the second to the fourth centuries Gnosticism infiltrated the churches in its more fully developed forms. By the sixth century only a few distinct traces remained. Gnostic teaching and influence would linger on in Manichaeism and in certain aspects of traditional Christianity.

Many modern movements, such as Theosophy and the New Age movement with its radical environmentalism, feminism, and autosoteriology, are in part the revival of Gnostic teachings.¹⁵⁶

The General Teachings of Gnosticism: there were various schools of thought within the Gnostic systems. There were, however, certain general or common elements: the search for a system and the attempt to synthesize all truth into one religio-philosophical system for the world: first, an ontological dualism between spirit and matter, and between eternal male and female principles. Matter was viewed as inherently evil.

A dualism also existed between the one true God and the God of the Old Testament, or the *Demiurge*. God was considered remote and inaccessible, separate from creation. The *Demiurge*, a subordinate deity, angel or *aeon* created the universe or matter, which was inherently evil. Between God and the material universe were intermediary beings or *aeons*, one of which was the “Christ” or Λόγος. The combined powers or energies of these *aeons* comprised the “Fullness” or πληρῶμα.

Second, Christologically, the Gnostics were generally divided: The Cerinthians and others held that Jesus was a mere man. The Christ or Logos came upon him at his baptism and left before the crucifixion. He then died as a mere man [Dynamic Monarchianism]. Doceticism [Gk: δοκέω, “seem”],

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Peter Jones, *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back*, for a description of the New Age movement as a revival of ancient Gnosticism.

holding that all matter was inherently evil, denied the true humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and held that he only had the appearance of a man.

Third, mankind was divided into three classes: “carnal” (σάρκικοί), “soulish” or “natural (ψυχικοί), and “spiritual” (πνευματικοί). The “spiritual,” or πνευματικοί had within them a Divine spark that must be redeemed from the evil of matter and returned to the πληρωμα.

Fourth, Gnosticism consistently and necessarily denied the resurrection of the dead, as redemption was from matter, which necessarily included the body. Reality was guided by an impersonal determinism; none but the “spiritual” were to be redeemed.¹⁵⁷

Fifth, salvation or redemption was through esoteric knowledge (γνῶσις), which existed beyond mere faith and derived from Divine revelation. Associated with such knowledge or mysteries were symbolic rituals, mystic ceremonies, magic incantations, visions and revelations. Many volumes of Gnostic literature circulated throughout the Greco-Roman world of the second to fourth century to attract the popular, educated mind. Gnosticism rejected Judaism and the Old Testament, and the New Testament, except for some Gospel fragments and the Pauline Epistles.

The morality and ethic of Gnosticism produced two opposing tendencies: first, presupposing the inherent evil of matter, one tendency was toward an extreme asceticism, abstinence from marriage and sex. Second, presupposing the ontological dualism between spirit and matter, licentiousness was held to have no effect upon the “spiritual” and sexual

¹⁵⁷ It was against such Gnostic determinism or fatalism that the early Church Fathers reacted with a tendency toward a strong belief in free will. The doctrine of saving grace was not an issue until the Augustinian—Pelagian debate of the fifth century. The whole compass of salvation by grace with its attendant doctrines was not openly an issue until the Sixteenth Century Protestant Reformation.

orgies were often practiced as a liberating or purifying rite. Both of these tendencies may be found in the warnings issued in the later Epistles of Paul, 2 Peter, Jude and John's Epistles.

Sixth, schools of Gnostic systems. Because of the eclectic and syncretic nature of the Gnostic systems, any attempt to consistently classify them proves difficult. They have been classified according to geographical locality as the Egyptian or Alexandrian and the Syrian; according to their relatively predominant doctrines into three forms: Heathen, Jewish, and Christian; or from an ethical and moral perspective into three: the speculative and theosophical, the ascetic and practical and the antinomian and libertine.

The major schools and characteristics may be summarized as follows: the Simonians (named after Simon Magus) held to an early, crude, form of Gnosticism and were immoral in principles and practice. The Nicolaitans, mentioned in the Book of Revelation, were a licentious sect (Rev. 2:6, 15). The Cerinthians of the late first and early second centuries derived from Ebionism and Alexandrian Gnosticism. Basilides (c. 117–138 AD) was an Alexandrian Gnostic adherent and produced the first well-developed system. Valentinus of Alexandria (d. 160 AD) was the founder of the most profound and influential of the Gnostic systems. He established a formal school which exerted a wide influence throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Marcion (c. 144–160 AD) was a gnostic reformer of the second century who allegedly sought to restore the truth to Christianity. He became the most practical and dangerous among the Gnostics. His dualism was concentrated more on the contrast between God and the devil, law and grace, Judaism and Christianity. Marcion was antinomian in doctrine, but personally practiced a rigorous asceticism. His Christology was docetic. He rejected the entire Old Testament and developed his own modified New Testament canon, consisting of eleven books. He was the first destructive biblical critic. His followers practiced a baptism for the dead. Some Marcionites existed to the seventh century.

Tatian of Assyria (c. 120–180), a disciple of Justin Martyr and an apologist for the Christian faith, turned to ascetic and Gnostic tendencies in his later life after Justin’s martyrdom. His followers, existing to the fifth century, were known as Encratites, Hydroparastatae, or Aquarians, because they abstained from wine and used water in their observance of the Lord’s Supper, and practiced a rigid asceticism.

Various other Gnostic schools or sects included the: *Ophites*, or serpent-worshippers; the *Sethites*, who considered Seth as the first “spiritual” man; the *Peratae*, or transcendentalists, who were astrologists and mystic tri-theists; the *Cainites*, who took the name of Cain and honored all the infamous in history; the followers of *Saturninus*, who held to a dualism between God and Satan and were docetic in their Christology; the followers of *Carpocrates*, who were given to the practice of magical arts and licentiousness; the followers of *Justin* the Gnostic, whose distinctives were founded on an sexually-based allegory of the book of Genesis. There were in addition to these many other minor sects among the Gnostics.

The Gnostic Influence on Christianity. Although varied, corruptive and insidious in its influence, Gnosticism failed to overcome and engulf biblical Christianity and synthesize it into an syncretic world religion. The lasting effects were both negative and positive. Negatively, there was a continuing subtle influence which tainted Christianity. Positively, Christianity was forced to define the canonicity of the true biblical writings, defend itself by apologetic writers and the development of a consistent theology.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Berkhof, *Loc. cit.*; Gwatkin, *Op. cit.*, p. 68; Newman, *Loc. cit.* For a full discussion of the lasting changes wrought by Gnosticism upon the Christian religion from its early days to the present, see the author’s *Historiography and Early Church History to 325 AD*, pp. 278–288.

The Religious Setting

The New Testament era or the first century AD marked the beginning of the end of the ancient pagan world and the dawn of Christianity, which by the fourth century AD would become the dominant and official religion of the Roman Empire and Western World. Judaism, despite its religious and cultural exclusiveness, had for centuries remained the repository for the truth of God in Divine revelation through the Scriptures [The Hebrew Scriptures or the Old Testament].

Now, through the Christian religion, with its world-wide mandate (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15–16; Lk. 24:44–48; Acts 1:8) this completed Divine revelation [Old and New Testaments], centering on the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ—his virgin birth, life, ministry, suffering, death, burial, resurrection and ascension (1 Tim. 3:16)]¹⁵⁹—would spread throughout the world in the providence and power of God through preaching and personal witness

Christianity, however, did not appear in a historical or religious vacuum. Several religious and philosophical entities had an extensive existence and pervading influence in the pagan Greco–Roman era. Merrill C. Tenney explores five types of influence: The Greco–Roman pantheon with its hierarchy of gods, Emperor worship, the Mystery religions, the worship of

¹⁵⁹ Although it is common to express the redemptive work of our Lord by the cross and its centrality, the impeccable earthly life of Christ [his active obedience whereby he kept the Moral Law perfectly], his suffering and death [his passive obedience whereby he paid its penalty to the full] wrought a perfect righteousness which is imputed to the believer whose faith rests in Christ at the point of his righteousness. His resurrection remains manifest proof to his redemptive work and his ascension into glory as the God–Man, Great High Priest and Lord witnesses to his present ministry for believers and his sovereign dominion over all creation.

the occult and the philosophies for those who had turned from most religious traditions.¹⁶⁰

Note: Man was created as the image-bearer of God. The Fall did not end this reality, but horribly perverted it. (Acts 17:23–29; Rom. 1:18–32; Eph. 4:17–19). Fallen, sinful mankind remains incurably religious and still retains an innate though relative sense of right and wrong (Rom. 2:11–16).

Pagan religions were the expressions of man's fallen, sinful subjective misrepresentations of God and created reality. Pagans could not conceive of all the Divine attributes in one person, so were inevitably polytheistic. The Divine power, moral character and purpose were greatly distorted. Pagan soteriology was reminiscent with blood sacrifice, ritualistic and based upon a works-righteousness. Its eschatology usually included a perverted concept of future bliss or torment. In paganism can be seen the truth of God terribly perverted by the fallen, sinful mindset and wilfull blindness of lost mankind.

Tenney discerns this when he writes: Paganism is a parody of God's original revelation to man. It retained many basic elements of truth but twists them into practical falsehood. Divine sovereignty becomes fatalism; grace becomes indulgence; righteousness becomes conformity to arbitrary rules; worship becomes empty ritual; prayer becomes selfish begging; the supernatural degenerates into superstition. The light of God is clouded by fanciful legend and by downright falsehood. The consequent confusion of beliefs and of values left men wandering in a maze of uncertainties.¹⁶¹

Religion for the Greeks was essentially a personal matter that stressed religion as related to the affairs of daily life and was characterized by polytheism and superstitious beliefs. For the Romans, religion was more corporate and legal, centering

¹⁶⁰ Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, pp. 65–78. For a thorough discussion of the Greek and Roman religions and their histories and several bibliographies, see Everett Ferguson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 137–299.

¹⁶¹ Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times*, p. 108.

in the state. This would find its ultimate expression in Emperor worship.¹⁶²

Although there was not an exact correspondence between the Greek and Roman gods, there was a general correspondence and some general characteristics in common.¹⁶³ first, Greco–Roman paganism was non–exclusive or polytheistic. There was a multiplicity of gods and every city had its patron deity or deities. The monotheism of both Judaism and Christianity were unique and a cause of civil, social and religious unrest, resistance and aggravation.

Second, Greco–Roman paganism, with its cross–identification of many gods from Grecian to Roman, tended to reduce their number. The emphasis moved from personalities to the worship of power and the occult.

Third, the mystery religions, some indigenous to ancient Greece [the Eleusinian Mysteries], others from Egypt [the Serapis cult], Syria [Atargatis] and Asia Minor [cult of Mithra with only male worshippers] and astrology were very influential among the peoples of the Greco–Roman world. There was a decided Eastern superstitious influence which flavored the religious consciousness of paganism.¹⁶⁴ This was evidently true in the Eastern part of the empire, which bordered the Middle East.

Fourth, there was a deification of virtues, benefits and abstract ideas. The names of various gods were associated with such characteristics and ideas. It is said that at Athens, almost every virtue and vice were defied and had altars and shrines built for their recognition.

¹⁶² The Greeks deified some of their leaders and rulers. The Romans adopted this practice and applied it to Julius Caesar and those emperors who followed him.

¹⁶³ This list has been adapted from Everett Ferguson, *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ See Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times*, pp. 117–124.

Note: Xenophon, an Athenian Greek historian of the fourth century BC, stated that Athens was “all altar, all sacrifice and offering to the gods.” Petronius, a first century Roman satirist, stated that that it was “easier to find a god than a man in Athens.” Pausanias, a second century Greek traveler and geographer in his multi-volume work, *Description of Greece*, comments that Athens had more images than the rest of Greece put together.

Pliny the Younger wrote that in the first century, Athens had more than 30,000 public statues in addition to the many private ones.¹⁶⁵ The Athenians deified not only every “god” of the Greco-Roman imagination, but also abstractions and characteristics. Every human passion, infirmity and desire was deified. There were shrines and altars to such entities as “Shame,” “Pity,” “Modesty,” “Fame,” “Energy,” “Persuasion,” etc.,¹⁶⁶ and even some to “unknown gods” as recorded by ancient travelers and referred to by Paul himself (Acts 17:23). This was the Athens that Paul carefully and painfully observed from a consistent Christian perspective.¹⁶⁷

Fifth, lesser gods were referred to as “demons” [δαίμόνια].¹⁶⁸ This designation was not entirely negative, as in biblical accounts, but both positive and negative as expressions

¹⁶⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, III, p. 278.

¹⁶⁶ R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, “Acts,” p. 708; Thomas Walker, *Acts*, p. 375; G. T. Stokes, “Acts,” *The Expositor’s Bible*, p. 475. Thought: “Persuasion” would not be deified and worshipped again until Charles G. Finney in the nineteenth century made it a substitute for the sovereign, effectual grace of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶⁷ The serious student will find ample descriptions of Athens by both ancient and modern travelers, in the following: Augustus Neander, *The Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*, pp. 186–188; Coneybeare & Howson, *The Life and Labors of St. Paul*, pp. 264–287f; F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, pp. 295–307f; and William Ramsay, *St. Paul, The Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 237–249f.

¹⁶⁸ δαίμόνια, A divine power existing between the gods and men. “Demons” are often referred to in some Bible versions as “devils” (1 Cor. 10:20–21).

of intermediate beings and forces which were responsible for otherwise inexplicable events. As an example, the serpent was considered the embodiment of a favorable spirit-being (Rom. 1:23).

Sixth, belief in the idea of fate was a strong force in both religion and philosophy. This was closely connected with the practice of astrology. Both Judaism and Christianity were characterized by the belief in Divine providence (Acts 15:18; Rom. 8:28ff; 1 Cor. 4:19; Jas. 4:13–15), which asserted the absolute control of God over the affairs of this world and put all of the issues of life in the hands of a universally sovereign yet personal God.

Seventh, magic and the occult were popular expressions of the individual's relation to the universe and the gods, especially among the mystery cults. Superstition and use of sorcery were common. The average person in this pagan environment was familiar with amulets, potions, drugs, curses, formulas, witches and sorcerers. Such superstitions and witchcraft pertained to every possible aspect of the social and religious life, from sexual potency to causing romantic feelings to animism and werewolves.¹⁶⁹ An example of this is clearly noted in the Apostle Paul's ministry at Ephesus and his approach to the believer's spiritual warfare (Acts 19:11–20; Eph. 1:21; 2:2; 5:11–12; 6:10–18).¹⁷⁰

Eighth, the corporate and civil nature of religion found expression in the civic cult. Each city had its own patron deity or deities. These were represented by priests, civic leaders and temples. For example, we find that Diana was the patron

¹⁶⁹ See Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. 353 pp. and Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 400 pp.

¹⁷⁰ See Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of its Historical Setting*.

goddess of Ephesus and the major goddess of the province of Asia Minor (Acts 19:23–38).

Finally, morality, as expressed in the Law of God, was not closely associated with religion. The rules of purity were ritual and ceremonial, not moral. Homosexuality and transsexuality were common (Rom. 1:21–32; 1 Cor. 6:9–11),¹⁷¹ as was Cultic prostitution. The temple of the *Akro-Corinthus* was served by a thousand cultic prostitutes. Christianity in opposition to this amoral paganism maintained a moral purity.

Judaism and later, Christianity, stood alone in a polytheistic, pluralistic, idolatrous society. Jews and Christians were strict monotheists. The Lord God of Israel and of Christianity was the only true God and He was not seen with human eyes or touched with human hands. He was to be approached by faith. This made both Jews and Christians “atheists” by default because these did not worship the gods of the empire and refused emperor worship. In addition, Christians worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ as the very Son of God, the only Savior and Redeemer.

Judaism was culturally, racially and religiously exclusive. The orthodox Jew could not and would not defile himself unnecessarily by associating with a Gentile. This included certain foods, clothing and any unnecessary social association. This religious, ceremonial separation even clave to early Jewish Christianity for a time (Acts 10:9–17, 28; 11:1–18). Ritual bathing and washings were practiced daily to remove any ceremonial uncleanness (Mk. 7:1–9; Jn. 2:6).

Jewish worship centered around the Temple of Jerusalem, where alone sacrifices were offered and the priestly ministry

¹⁷¹ Rom. 1:21–32. Note that immorality and perversion follows the desecration and perverting of the reality of the one true God. 1 Cor. 6:9. The Apostle uses the exact terms for the homosexuals of his day: “effeminate” [μαλακοὶ], passive homosexuals and male prostitutes. “Abusers of themselves with mankind” [ἀρσενοκοῖται], open, aggressive homosexuals.

was observed. Throughout the Diaspora and on the local level, Judaism was centered in the synagogue, which handled all religious and minor civil issues and judgments within the larger context of the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem and Roman law.

It is very important to note that persecution against the Christians until the Neronian Roman State persecution (c. 64–68 AD) was of Jewish origin (Jn. 20:19; Acts 4:1–3, 15–21; 5:17–33, 46; 6:8–15; 7:54–59; 8:1–3; 9:1–2, 23; 12:3, 11; 13:45–51; 14:2, 4–6, 19; 17:5–9, 13; 18:12–17; 19:29–33; 20:1–3, 17–19, 22–23; 21:10–14, 27–31; 22:21–23, 30; 23:12–13, 20–21, 30; 24:5–9, 27; 25:1–3, 7, 14–16, 24–25; 26:2, 21; 28:19, 22; 2 Cor. 11:24; 1 Thess. 2:14–16). There was very little pagan opposition until the episode at Ephesus (Acts 19:23–41).¹⁷²

To the Jews, Jesus had been an imposter, a false messiah and blasphemer who deserved to die the death, in spite of his credentialed ministry through signs and wonders (Matt. 26:59–66; 27:11–14, 22, 39–43; Mk. 14:55–66; 15:3, 12–13, 29–32; Lk. 22:63–71; 23:4–5, 21–23; Jn. 18:29–31, 35; 19:6–8, 12). Jewish Christians were thus apostates, followers of “the sect of the Nazarene” [followers of Jesus of Nazareth] or “The Way,” who should be put to death without mercy. The evangelistic success in the synagogues, and the signs and wonders done by the Apostles and others, who were all Jews, only infuriated the Jewish leaders.

Christianity soon shed its Jewishness and became the one true religion for all mankind, while retaining its scriptural distinctives and morality. It was quickly opposed by both Jews and pagans and misrepresented by both (Acts 17:1–9; 28:17–22).

¹⁷² See The Acts of the Apostles, “Persecution by the Jews,” pp. 452–453.

The Herodian Dynasty

The Herodian dynasty is mentioned in the New Testament only as it touches upon the redemptive purpose of God in Judaism and primitive Christianity. The following survey of the Herods is an overview of their dynasty without entering into many of the particulars of the various military campaigns, rivalries, massacres and intrigues which the Scriptures omit for the greater part. It should be sufficient to reveal the strategic position the various Herods had in the history of this unique era with the major issues in their lives.

The Herodian Dynasty reached from Antipater the Idumaeen (c. 93–43 BC) to Herod Agrippa II (d. c. 100 AD), and thus extended through two strategic centuries—the first century BC and the first century AD—of world, Roman, Near and Middle Eastern history and the beginning of the Christian era.

This era marked the incarnation of the eternal Son of God and his redemptive work in time and history: his impeccable life, earthly ministry, vicarious suffering, death, resurrection and ascension into glory. These centuries marked the end of the old, ancient pagan world and the emergence of Christianity on the world's scene; the end of the Jewish Old Covenant and economy and the establishment of the New or Gospel Covenant and economy; the end of the Jewish Hasmonaean independence and the beginning of Roman rule. This short time witnessed the great transition from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire, the final destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersing of the Jewish race and the end of their national identity.

The Herodian family history was intertwined with the Hasmonaean Jewish line through politics and marriage. The Herods ruled over the Jews as governors and client kings under Rome, were intimate with several of the greatest Roman generals and Caesars through being reared in Rome, military action and political appointments and maneuvering, and

interacted with such notable historical figures as Mark Antony and Cleopatra. The leaders of this dynasty also had significant interactions with the personalities, elements and truths of both Judaism and primitive, Apostolic Christianity.

Herod the Great himself was ruling when our Lord was born and had the infants in the region of Bethlehem murdered after finding the birthplace and time of the promised Messiah (Matt. 2:1–18). His sons held power during our Lord's earthly life and ministry. Herod Archelaus succeeded his father as Ethnarch in Judea, so Joseph took Mary and Jesus north to Nazareth in Galilee (Matt. 2:19–23).

Herod Antipas the Tetrarch had John the Baptist killed (Matt. 14:1–12) and questioned our Lord during his trial before his crucifixion, then he and his officers abused and mocked him (Lk. 23:6–12). A grandson, King Herod Agrippa I, was the first monarch to persecute Christianity, putting James to the sword and imprisoning Peter (Acts 12). His daughter, Drusilla, younger sister to Berenice and Herod Agrippa II, was married to the Roman governor Felix (Acts 24:24). She perished in the eruption of Vesuvius (79 AD). The final descendent, Herod Agrippa II, a great-grandson, heard the defense and testimony of the Apostle Paul (Acts 25:13–26:32) and witnessed the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Herod himself was in many ways a man of contradictions—the greatest architect of ancient times, an astute, shrewd politician, a public leader who gave of his own wealth at times to relieve the poor, one who desired to be identified as Israel's promised Messiah through his family's professed but forced Judaism—and also a seditious, conniving, character adept at playing one force and leader against another for his own gain, and a brutal, ruthless murderer who killed both religious leaders and family members—and finally died at age seventy insane and literally consumed by diseases.

Antipater the Idumaeen (c. 93–43 BC)

Antipater, a cunning, seditious and astute politician, one to take advantage of every opportunity to advance himself, laid the foundation for the Herodian dynasty. Herod, his most famous son, was often a mirror–image of his father in abilities, cunningness, fierceness, bravery and change of loyalties. Both knew Rome to be the ultimate seat of power and so had an allegiance to whichever Caesar was dominant.

Antipater was the son of Antipas I of Idumaea, an Edomite leader who, with his countrymen, had been forcibly converted to Judaism and circumcised under John Hyrcanus I, the great Hasmonaean king (c. 164–104 BC). Thus, Antipater was of Edomite and Arabian descent. His wife was Kupros [Cypros], a Nabataean Arab. He had four sons: Phasael, Herod, Joseph and Phroras and one daughter: Salome. Herod's ancestry, Edomite [Idumaeen] and Arab, would forever cause him to be held in contempt by the Pharisaic Judean Jews, despite the alleged conversion of his father and family to Judaism (Deut. 17:14–15).

Antipater succeeded his father as governor of Idumaea during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, the Hasmonaean king and High Priest (c. 107–76 BC) and Queen Salome Alexandra.

When the two warring sons of Alexander, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II, fought over the kingship and high priesthood, Hyrcanus was defeated and retired from public life. Antipater's influence and cunning set the weak-willed Hyrcanus against his brother, and, with military support from Antipater, Aristobulus was defeated. Antipater then assumed great power in Judea as tax collector and became the virtual ruler overshadowing the weak Hyrcanus II.

The situation eventually brought the Roman General Pompey to Jerusalem, which was conquered in 63 BC and brought under Roman rule. Hyrcanus was retained as Ethnarch, but deposed of the crown. Pompey carried Aristobulus and his family and other leaders to Rome for the greatest Roman

Triumphal procession it had ever witnessed. None, however, were killed or retained, except two, and the remaining captives began the later influential Jewish colony and settlement in Rome until the reign of Claudius Caesar (Acts 18:2).

The first Roman Triumverate (60–53 BC) was comprised of Gaius Julius Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus, and Gnaeus Pompey. Crassus was eventually killed in battle with the Parthians. Pompey was assassinated in Egypt. Julius Caesar was defeated in Egypt, but rescued by Antipater who arrived with a large army, changing his allegiance from Pompey to Caesar. For this heroic action, Antipater was elevated to Roman citizenship, exempted from all taxation and received many high honors and holdings.

Antipater was favored by Caesar and made the first Roman Procurator of Judea. He then made Phasael, his oldest son, Governor of Jerusalem and Herod, his second son, Governor of Galilee (c. 49 BC).

After the assassination of Julius Caesar (44 BC), Antipater was forced to side with Crassus against Mark Antony. The political situation, with its heavy taxation due to the on-going war, alienated Malchus, a Jewish Aristocrat who, though delivered from death twice by Antipater, arranged his death by poison through bribing a cup-bearer.

Herod the Great (c. 74–4 BC)

Introduction

Herod was in some ways born to greatness. His very name means “Hero-like” [Gk: Ἡρώδης]. But he was a man of great contradictions and was often brutal, impulsive and pragmatic in his relationships and values. His life has been called “a life of gilded misery, while the fires of hell burned on his hearth, and his palace was haunted by the shadows of murdered victims.”¹⁷³ As his father, Antipater, reigned under the first Roman Triumverate, Herod reigned under the second,

¹⁷³ F. W. Farrar, *The Herods*, p. 79.

comprised of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, (also known as Caesar Augustus) the great nephew of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. This Triumverate formally ended the days of Rome as a Republic.

Physically, Herod was an imposing figure and highly skilled in the art of war and weaponry. He was appointed governor of a Roman Province at age twenty-five and was immediately bold in action. Mentally, he was shrewd and calculating, but evidently prone to narcissism and paranoia. Politically, he was astute, knew how to play one person against another and take full advantage of the weakness of others to fulfill his own ends.

He was immensely wealthy in his holdings, yet magnanimous to the people when a great crisis arose in the form of a famine and in lowering taxes in a time of need. Culturally, he was Hellenistic and sought to hellenize much of his territories with Greek institutions. He has been described as a lover of the Greeks [*Graecophile*] and of the Caesars. Historically, he has been called “Herod the Great,” although he never used such a title of himself. Some have suggested that later historians used this designation because of his skill and fame as the greatest architect of ancient history:

...history has appended the title “the Great” to this Herod’s name. Why? Because no single king, Pharaoh, Emperor or any ruler in the ancient world or in history has ever built more impressive structures than Herod the Great Builder. A complete list of Herod’s building projects would [be] exhaust[ing]...¹⁷⁴

A description and partial listing is given in a following section. Domestically, He was contradictory, murdering both wives, a mother-in-law, a brother-in-law and several sons because of the falsehoods, intrigues and agendas among his

¹⁷⁴ Sandra S. Silver, *The Rise and Fall of the House of Herod*, pp. 16ff. For another view, see Michael Grant, *Herod the Great*, p. 231. Cf. also F. W. Farrar, *The Herods*, p.p. 151–152.

several wives and their many children. He evidently did not hesitate to have the male infants in the area of Bethlehem murdered in an attempt to destroy Jesus, the infant Messiah (Matt. 2). Religiously, as many rulers, statesmen and politicians, he held to a general state religion without serious personal commitment.

The Family of Herod

There was at times a great difference between Herod's public and private life. The family brought out the dark side of his personality with its suspicions, brutality, narcissism and paranoia. Herod had ten wives and fourteen children. His first wife, Doris, bore him Antipater II. Both mother and son were banished for years after her divorce from Herod. Antipater was finally executed only five days before Herod's own death by the very poison Antipater had sought to give him.

Mariamne I, the beautiful Hasmonaean princess was his second wife. She had two sons, Alexander and Aristobolus IV and two daughters, Salampsio and Cypros. Mariamne and her mother, Alexandra, held Herod responsible for the drowning death of the young Aristobolus II, who was to be the high priest.

Herod's mother-in-law connived with Cleopatra and Mark Athony to punish Herod. He was called to Egypt, but gave instructions that if he were killed, then his servants would kill Mariamne. She found out and was furious. Further trouble developed between Salome and Mariamne. Finally, because of family intrigue and alleged infidelity on the part of Mariamne, Herod had both Mariamne and her mother executed. He preserved Mariamne's body in a vat of honey for several years and would view her at night in a strange necromancive grief. He later had her two sons, whom he had sent to Rome to be educated, executed for treason.

Herod's third wife was Mariamne II, daughter of Simon the high priest. Not only was she beautiful, but the marriage would bind together the power of the Jewish priesthood with

Herod's rule. She gave him one son, Herod II [Herod Boethus]. She was implicated in a plot against him, so he divorced her. Herod's fourth wife was Malthrace, a Samaritan, who bore him two sons, Herod Archelaus and Herod Antipas and a daughter, Olympias. This marriage was primarily political and sealed the relations with the Samaritans. These two sons Herod also sent to Rome for their education.

The fifth wife was Cleopatra of Jerusalem, who gave him two sons, Herod Philip who became a tetrarch and Herod. These were also sent to Rome for education. His other wives were Pallas, who bore a son, Phasaël, named after Herod's older brother, and Phaidra, who bore a daughter, Roxanne; Elpis, who had a daughter, Salome. Two other wives remain unnamed, although one was a cousin and the other a niece.

Herod the Architect

Herod was the greatest architect of the ancient world. His love for buildings was unmatched by any king, ruler or Caesar. His major projects were numerous and included various fortresses, palaces and temples throughout his dominion, including Masada, which became the last stronghold of the Jewish revolt in 73 AD, Machaerus beyond the Dead Sea where John the Baptist was later imprisoned and beheaded and Herodium where he was finally buried.

He designed and built the first artificial harbor in history—the Caesarea Maritima, which demonstrated the architectural genius of Herod and brought commerce and prosperity to the shores of Palestine. In addition to such works, he built theaters, hippodromes and various palaces in the area of Jerusalem, including the Tower of Antonia, which housed the Roman garrison and stood adjacent to the Temple. He rebuilt the great Hasmonaean palace, then his own magnificent palace in Jerusalem.

He even built pagan temples, gymnasiums and palaces outside his dominion for the sake of others in Chalcis [Lebanon], Damascus and as far north as Armenia [Modern

Turkey]. Out of his own wealth he once financed the Olympic Games when the cost exceeded the means. His greatest project was the enlargement of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, which was indescribable in its richness, statliness and glory.¹⁷⁵

Herod and the Jews

Herod's relation to the Jews is a study of contrasts. They refused and hated him for his usurpation of the throne as a foreigner, especially an Edomite and Arab. He had murdered most of their Sanhedrin upon becoming King. At times he sought to pacify the Jews through marriage and even through the rebuilding of the Second Temple and freely giving of his own substance to help them during a time of great famine. Yet he also aggravated them beyond measure by his hellenization, building grecian institutions and shortly before his death, in putting up a huge Roman Eagle at the door of the Temple, which was considered blasphemy and caused an insurrection when two teachers and forty students chopped it down with axes. Herod put down this insurrection and had the teachers and students burned to death.

Herod and Rome

As his father Antipater before him, Herod early realized the center of power in the ancient world. His ultimate allegiance was to Rome. He sent his sons to be educated there, and did what he could to solidify this relationship. Mark Antony was his friend for life. Only at his death did Herod change his allegiance to Octavius [Caesar Augustus]. As a client king under the Empire, he and his armies were strategic for the defense of the eastern border of the Empire as a buffer against the Parthians and the Arabs and to help in keeping the Jews from uprising.

¹⁷⁵ See a partial list of Herod's architectual projects in Silver, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16–23.

The Early Life of Herod

At age twenty-five his father, Antipater, made Herod governor of Galilee. He immediately pursued the task of ridding the country of bandits, led by one, Ezekias, which had plagued the area. He captured and killed them with great courage and cunning tactics, proving himself to be astute in warfare. But only the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem could impose the death penalty. The Jews also viewed these “bandits” as patriots and freedom fighters. Herod was summoned before the Great Sanhedrin to answer for his crimes. Sextus Caesar, the Governor of Syria ordered him to be acquitted, and Herod fled to him for protection.

Some time later (41 BC), Antony arrived at Antioch and the Jews once again made accusations against Herod. Hyrcanus stood for Herod and Antony made Herod and Phasael tetrarchs of Judea. Ten years later, when Herod returned as King, he murdered forty-five members of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem after the city was conquered by military force.

The Parthians invaded Syria and Pacorus their prince allied himself with Antigonus the Hasmonaean, seeking to dethrone Hyrcanus II, the ally of Herod. Jerusalem was laid under seige and both Phasael, Herod’s brother and Hyrcanus were captured. The Parthians by intrigue sought to take Herod, but he escaped. Phasael was either killed or committed suicide. Antigonus mutilated Hyrcanus by cutting off his ears to disqualify him for the priesthood, he was then taken to Parthia in chains.

Herod fled first to Masada, then to Arabia where King Malchus commanded him to leave. He fled to Egypt and finally to Rome, where he was well-received by Antony and Octavius. The Roman Senate conferred on him the title “King of the Jews.” Part of this action concerned the Parthians, who were a constant threat to the northeast of Palestine. Herod had fled as a refugee and wanted man and would return to Judea as king. After two years the armies were raised, Jerusalem was taken and Herod was established as King.

The Reign of Herod

Many historians divide the reign of Herod (37–4 BC) into three periods: consolidation (37–25 BC), prosperity (25–14 BC) and the time of domestic troubles (14–4 BC).

In the early years of his reign, he had to deal with the Hasmonaean family, the Sadducees and Pharisees, the Jewish aristocracy, who favored Antigonos, and with Costobarus, his brother-in-law whom he had made governor of Idumaea and had subsequently executed c. 25 BC for seditious behavior. He also had Mariamne and her mother executed.

Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt, the last of the Ptolemaic royalty, convinced Antony to give her the rich bitumen fields of the Dead Sea area and the palm and balsam groves of Jericho and their revenue, some of the richest and most desirable products of the Empire. These had formerly belonged to Herod. During this period the civil war between Antony and Octavius occurred, and, at the former's defeat and death with Cleopatra, Herod gave his allegiance to Octavius. He recovered his holdings.

The period of prosperity witnessed some of his greatest architectural accomplishments, a trip to Rome to get his sons who had been educated there, and the lowering of taxes for the Jewish people.

The final period was dominated by domestic discord, family intrigues and plots vying for power which brought out the dark, brutal side of Herod's personality and fed his paranoia. Family members—mothers and their offspring vying for control and eyeing succession, some claiming Hasmonaean privilege—brought the House of Herod to the brink of destruction. The two sons of Mariamne I, Alexander and Aristobolus, were convicted of treason and strangled, permission for their deaths being granted by Augustus, who

sagely remarked that “It was better to be Herod’s pig than Herod’s son.”¹⁷⁶

The Slaughter of the Infants

It was during this period of suspicion, intrigue and rivalry that the wisemen [magi] from the East approached Herod in Jerusalem, searching for the infant Messiah. Herod’s reaction, deception and desperation were simply characteristic of the man, now grown old and mentally unbalanced. He sought to make as certain as possible the perpetuity of his kingdom and the death of the promised Messiah. Some estimate that between one to two dozen male infants were murdered.

The Final Days and Death of Herod

Herod was now seventy years of age, racked with various diseases and mentally unstable. According to modern medical researchers, who have sifted the ancient records and symptoms, Herod suffered from acute kidney failure, advanced colorectal cancer and Fournier’s gangrene. This caused the intense irritations and led to the prolapse of his bowels and the rotting, maggot infestation of his genitals. His putrid breath and breathing problems were probably due to the cancer, kidney failure and pulmonary emphysema. It was a horrible death.

During the final five days of his life, he had his eldest son, Antipater II, killed, as this son had sought to have Herod poisoned. He was in turn poisoned with the same poison he had had prepared for his father. Herod’s will was re-written for the sixth time on his deathbed and the kingdom divided among three of his sons—Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas and Philip.

Herod commanded the leading Jewish nobles and citizens to be brought to Jerusalem and detained. He ordered them to be

¹⁷⁶ The clever remark of Augustus was significant: Herod, for the sake of the Jews, would not eat pork. Further, the statement itself is a play on words, a *paronomasia*, in which words of same sounds but different meanings are rhymed: Gk: “pig” is ὕς and “son” is υἱός. Lat: “pig” is *porcum* and “son” is *filium*. See F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp.127–128.

killed on the day of his death so there would be mourning rather than celebration. His family instead wisely released these men at Herod's death.

So died Herod the Great, a man of strange contrasts, but one who had the tenacity and personal strength, though at times brutal, to keep the troublesome kingdom in relative order against all odds and undue Roman influence until the final crises of the Jewish Wars (66–135 AD) which brought national Judaism to an end.

Herod Archelaus the Ethnarch (c. 23 BC–18 AD)

None of Herod the Great's progeny had his public persona or power. This was certainly true of Herod Archelaus whose public life was short-lived due to his abusiveness and intolerance. Archelaus was the first-born son of Herod and Malthrace the Samaritan.

As the principal heir to Herod's rule, he presumed that he would be crowned "King of the Jews." While waiting for Caesar's approval, the Jews assembled, wanting retribution for the final public act of Herod in killing the teachers and students after they had torn down the great bronze Roman Eagle from the door of the Temple, and they also petitioned for Herod's appointed high priest to be replaced. The situation escalated until there was a riot and Archelaus, taking the prerogative of a king, ordered an army into the city during the night. Some 3,000 Jews were massacred. He furthered canceled the Feast of Pentecost that year. The situation grew tense to the point of an insurrection.

Archelaus was established as Ethnarch,¹⁷⁷ not king, in 4 BC by Caesar and was given the territories of Judea, Samaria and Idumaea. His Edomite–Arabian–Samaritan lineage and his violations of the Mosaic Law in divorcing his first wife,

¹⁷⁷ "Ethnarch," a lesser position than a client king under Rome. From the Gk: ἔθναρχης: from ἔθνος, "nation" and ἀρχῆς, "ruling."

Mariamne II, and marrying Glaphyra, a Samaritan and the widow of Alexander, Archelaus' brother, though her second husband, Juba, King of Mauretania was still alive, caused increased agitation among the Jews. His reactions were ever in terms of cruelty and brutality.

In 6 AD, the Jews made a formal complaint in Rome against Archelaus, arguing for direct rule under a Roman Procurator. In addition, his brother Antipas and half-brother Philip also made formal complaints against him and his arbitrariness. Caesar banished him to the Roman Province of Gaul. He died c. 18 AD in banishment.

Herod Antipas the Tetrarch (c. 20 BC-39 AD)

Herod Antipas was the second son of Herod and Malthrace the Samaritan and named after his grandfather, Antipater [Ἑρωδῆς Ἀντίπατρος]. He was the younger brother of Archelaus and half-brother of Herod II and Philip, with whom he bore the title “Tetrarch” [“ruler of a fourth”]. He ruled Galilee and Perea as a client under Rome.

Herod Antipas was reared in Rome and, as his older brother, Archelaus, sought to walk in his father's footsteps, having little sympathy for or understanding of the Jews. They hated him for his hellenization, building his capital city, Tiberias [formerly Sepphoris and renamed after his Roman mentor, Caesar Tiberius], on an old graveyard along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and his living in incest with his second wife, Herodias, who was divorced from his half-brother, Philip, and was also his niece. Herod Antipas is the “Herod” often mentioned in connection with John the Baptist, his imprisonment and death and our Lord's ministry and final trial.

Like his father, Herod Antipas was a builder. He restored a city in Perea and had several projects in Galilee. He built a stadium adorned with the figures of animals, which to the Jews was a violation of the Second Commandment. To populate Tiberias, he built a large synagogue and opened the city to

freed slaves, forced migrants, foreigners, poor people and others, as the orthodox Jews at first considered it an unclean city and refused to enter it.

If entered by necessity, a Jew was considered unclean for seven days upon departing. It is never recorded in the Gospel Records that our Lord ever entered Tiberias, although it was at the very center of his Galilean ministry. Tiberias later became a center for rabbinical studies and the center for the Massora, the Jewish scholars of the fifth to ninth centuries AD.

Herod Antipas married his first wife [name unknown], the daughter of King Aretas of Nabatea. This union was desirable as it formed a political alliance for the Romans and a barrier to the Parthian and Arab powers.

During a trip to Rome, however, when visiting a coastal city, he met and fell in love with Herodias, his half-brother Philip's wife and his own niece. The love was mutual. When Antipas returned from Rome, Herodias forced the divorce of his first wife, who escaped back to her father. This was an insult to King Aretas and a breach of their political alliance. In 36 AD, years after the incidents of John the Baptist's imprisonment and beheading and our Lord's trial, King Aretas attacked and defeated the army of Antipas. The Jews saw this as Divine retribution.

Tiberius ordered Vitellius, Governor of Syria to come to the aid of Antipas, but his death caused Vitellius to call off the military expedition. Upon the ascension of Caligula as emperor, he gave Herod Agrippa I, brother of Herodias, the territory of Philip and also the title of king. Herodias urged Antipas to travel to Rome and gain the same title. To Rome, however, Agrippa sent an envoy who made grievous charges against Antipas. As a result, Herod Antipas was banished to Gaul. Herodias voluntarily followed her husband into exile. Antipas died under banishment c. 39 AD.

Philip the Tetrarch (c. 22 BC–34 AD)

Somewhat of an anomaly among the Herods, Philip was the son of Herod and his fifth wife, Cleopatra of Jerusalem, and so half-brother to both Herod Archelaus and Herod Antipas. After Herod the Great's death he was given by Augustus several small countries and territories to the north of Galilee: Gaulantis, Batanea, Trachonitis, Paneas and Iturea, territories east of Phoenicia on the Mediterranean coast and part of Decapolis [modern eastern Lebanon and southwestern Syria]. His reign was relatively peaceful, and his subjects, being non-Jewish, viewed him favorably. He was the only family member not to use the hereditary name "Herod" in his title.

He was married to Salome, the daughter of Herod Philip and Herodias, his niece. They had no progeny. Like his father, he was a builder, though on a much smaller scale. He built the city of Bethsaida and renamed it Julia, after Caesar's daughter.

He rebuilt and greatly enlarged the small village of Panea, calling it Caesera Philippi after both Caesar and himself. This city, beautifully situated, became his capitol. Upon his death, Tiberius ordered his domain to be added to the Province of Syria. Caligula later restored Philip's territories to his nephew, King Herod Agrippa I.

The mountainous area of Caesarea Philippi was the scene of our Lord's final teaching of the disciples before their final pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Matt. 16) and also the area of his transfiguration (Matt. 16:13ff–17:1ff; Mk. 8:27ff–9:1ff). There is no record that Philip ever met our Lord.

Philip the Tetrarch is not to be confused with Herod II [sometimes called Herod Philip I, son of Herod the Great and the second Mariamne], though some modern historians refer to him as Herod Philip II.

Herod Agrippa I (c. 12 BC–44 AD)

Julius Herod Agrippa I [Ἰουλιὸς Ἡρώδης Ἀγρίππας], named after Marcus Vispanius Agrippa, a Roman statesman, general and the great Roman architect, was the grandson of Herod the

Great and the second Mariamne, the son of Aristobolus IV and Berenice. His wife was Cypros, daughter of Phaesael II and Salampsio, a princess of Judea. They were the parents of Herod Agrippa II and both Berenice¹⁷⁸ and Drusilla, wife of the Roman Procurator, Antonius Felix (Acts 24:24). He was "...the son of two first cousins, married to another cousin, the daughter of his own aunt, who had married her uncle."¹⁷⁹ Josephus refers to him as "Agrippa the Great."

Like his grandfather, Herod the Great, he was adroit, politically closely connected with the Caesars, was at times a refugee but finally emerged as a king and was called by the historian Josephus, "the Great." He was reared at Rome in Tiberius Caesar's household with his own son, Drusus and the younger Claudius, who would later become Claudius Caesar. He was used to luxury and extravagance, and was constantly in debt and involved in various intrigues.

After fleeing Rome and horribly in debt, Agrippa remained at Malatha, one of his grandfather's fortresses, where he contemplated suicide. His debts were paid by his uncle, Herod Antipas, at the urging of his wife, but this was short-lived. He was involved in various intrigues, finally sailed to Rome and was imprisoned for speaking against Tiberias Caesar, who had befriended him. He was freed by Caligula and given the territories once held by his uncle, Philip the Tetrarch. He was given the title *amicus caesaris*, "Friend of Caesar."

Caligula also gave him a gold chain equal in weight to the iron chains he had worn in prison. He was implicated in the banishment of his uncle, Herod Antipas, and was subsequently granted his territories—Galilee and Judea—as well. At the death of Caligula, Agrippa assisted Claudius in becoming

¹⁷⁸ Julia Berenice, who was reputed to have had a long incestual relationship with Herod Agrippa II her brother and was also a lover to General Titus Flavius Vespasianus before his elevation to Caesar.

¹⁷⁹ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

emperor. Claudius Caesar then gave him dominion of over Samaria and Judea, and so his client kingdom equaled that of his grandfather, Herod the Great. He had become one of the most powerful client kings of the east.

Agrippa was a faithful devotee to Judaism when he was among the Jews, whose favor he gained and retained. He kept Caligula from putting his statute in the Temple at Jerusalem, which would have created a great insurrection among the Jews. In other circles, he was a Herod in life and character, building gymnasiums, amphitheatres and public baths—all Hellenizing influences and projects.

He is mentioned in Acts 12, where, to gain favor with the Jews, he killed James and had Peter imprisoned, intending to execute him after the Passover season. In 44 AD, after Peter's miraculous deliverance, he was suddenly smitten with disease and died. The Scripture states that he was "eaten of worms" because he did not give God the glory the people had heaped upon him after an oration (Acts 12:20–25).

Herod Agrippa II (27–100 AD)

Marcus Julius Agrippa, or Herod Agrippa II, usually referred to as "Agrippa" or "King Agrippa" was the seventh and final descendent of the Herodian dynasty. He was the son of Herod Agrippa I and Cypros, daughter of Phasael and brother to Mariamne and Drusilla. He was only seventeen when his father died, so he was reared and educated at Rome in the house of Claudius Caesar, his father's best friend.

He was the only Herod to have an intimate acquaintance with six Caesars—Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian and Titus. He may have even become acquainted with Domitian, who exiled the Apostle John to the Isle of Patmos.

When in Rome in the early part of his life, he was able to intercede for the Jews concerning the priest's garments being kept by them rather than kept in the Tower of Antonia under Roman jurisdiction.

At age twenty-three he inherited the small kingdom of his uncle, Herod of Chalcis, who had married Berenice. He also had the Roman Procurator Antonius Felix as his brother-in-law, married to his beautiful sister, Drusilla. The kingdom of Judea, however, was kept from him and remained under Roman rule. He was, however, in charge of the Temple and treasury in Jerusalem, and there was constant strife between him and the priests and rabbis as he changed priests at will and received bribes for various religious positions. The title “King” was only nominal.

Agrippa was also given the former tetrarchy of his great uncle Philip, but the territory was full of brigands and disorder. Indeed, lawlessness was on the rise throughout the whole of Palestine with riots, insurrections and false messiahs leading their followers. The *sicarii* or “dagger men” [assassins] roamed about Jerusalem and even murdered a high priest in the Temple. During this time it became common gossip at Rome and elsewhere that he and Berenice were living together in an incestual relationship. She was married again for a short time to Polemo of Cilicia, then returned to her brother for the remainder of their lives.

The first Jewish War erupted in 66 AD across Palestine, and Agrippa was unable to stop the carnage. After the suicide of Nero in 68 AD, Agrippa accompanied Titus to Rome for the new Emperor Galba’s inauguration, but Galba was murdered. Agrippa continued with Titus, siding with the Romans throughout the conflict.

After Jerusalem was conquered and the Temple destroyed, the new Emperor, Vespasian, gave to Agrippa his former territories and added new territories. In 75 AD he and Berenice returned to Rome where Berenice once again became mistress to Titus until he was forced to give her up due to public scandal. Little is known of Agrippa and Berenice after this time, except that they returned to Palestine. Agrippa died c. 100 AD.

It was before Antonius Felix and Drusilla that Paul “reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come” (Acts 24:24), and before Porcius Festus, Herod Agrippa II and Berenice that the Apostle Paul defended himself, revealing himself to be their superior in answers and argumentation (Acts 25:1–26:32).¹⁸⁰

Antipater and Herod were bold, cunning and often ruthless men. Antipater was a king-maker and prepared his sons to rule. Herod was in many ways a great man, but his ruthlessness, cruelty and paranoia destroyed him and marked his family.

As the Herodian dynasty progressed, the sons were reared in Rome, among royalty and guided by affluence and privilege. They were also even more distanced from the Jews they sought to rule. The downfall of the Herods and the final Jewish Wars were almost assured by such a situation.

The rise and fall of the House of Herod mirrors the rise and fall of countries and civilizations....Often history mourns the fall of a civilization or country or dynasty. No one mourns the fall of the House of Herod.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ The exchange between Paul and Festus and then between Paul and Agrippa in the Greek demonstrates Paul's keen mind and superior intelligence.

¹⁸¹ Sandra Silver, *Op. cit.*, p. xiv.

An Introduction to the Gospels

The life of our Lord Jesus Christ may be divided biblically into his pre-incarnate state of glory which he shared with the Father from eternity (Phil. 2:5–6; Jn. 1:1; 17:5), his state of humiliation, which began with his incarnation and included his conception, birth, earthly life and ministry, suffering and death (Phil. 2:6–8; 1 Tim. 3:16), and his state of exaltation forever as the God–Man, beginning at his resurrection and ascension into heaven (Matt. 28:18; Acts 1:9–11; Phil. 2:9–11; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3).

At his incarnation, the eternal Son of God entered into the realm of time, laid aside his glory and took to himself a true and viable human nature and body as Representative Man—the “Last Adam” and “Second Man” (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:45; Phil. 2:5–8).

In his state of humiliation, he became subject to the Father as Representative Man. By his impeccable life (Jn. 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5) he fulfilled the demands of God’s Law [his active obedience] and by his suffering and death [the culmination of his passive obedience] he paid its penalty (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:7–8). Both the active and passive obedience of Christ are thus imputed to the believer through saving faith.

Having completed his redemptive work, he was raised from the dead and entered into his everlasting state of glory and exaltation as the God–Man, the believer’s Great High Priest (Jn. 17:1ff; Heb. 4:15ff), the Sovereign of the Universe (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9–11; Heb. 1:3) and Final Judge (Matt. 7:21–23; Jn. 5:22–27; Rev. 20:11–15). Every demand and need of redemption has been satisfied in his person and work.

The Gospel records center on the person and earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ. They form the full, final realization of the promised “seed of the woman” who would crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:8), the culmination of the Messianic prophecies, the promised Son of David whose kingdom would be without end (Lk. 1:26–33).

Our Lord was the fulfillment of the perfect and long-anticipated ideal Prophet (Deut. 18:15–18), Priest (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 4:14–16; 5:6ff) and King (Psa. 2:6–12; Isa. 9:6–7; Lk. 1:30–33) and the glorious fulfillment of the sacrificial system from Adam and Eve’s coats of skins (Gen. 3:21) to Abel’s lamb (Gen. 4:4) to the Levitical sacrificial system ordained by God to the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29).

The Person of the Christ

“The true doctrine of the person of Christ is the most momentous in the whole realm of thought, for on it everything else depends.”¹⁸² Jesus Christ is the key to all history, the very center of God’s eternal creative and redemptive purpose. Biblical Christology embraces and dominates the whole realm of Divine revelation, the nature of the triune Godhead and the eternal redemptive purpose in its inception (Eph. 1:3–7), implementation, fulfillment (Lk. 24:24–27, 45–47) and consummation (Eph. 1:10).

Christian Theology centers on the Gospel records which reveal the person of our Lord, his teaching and his redemptive work. The New Testament Epistles are exegetical or explanatory and a further enlargement of the truth set forth in the Gospels.

The Gospel records reveal that our Lord in his incarnate state was truly and fully both God and Man, that the Divine and human were united in one person and neither comingled nor confused. Any error, misunderstanding, departure from or misinterpretation of the Christ of the Gospels is absolutely fatal biblically, theologically, historically and salvifically—and also morally, ethically, socially and politically, as his Lordship is to dominate in every sphere of reality (Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36; Heb. 1:3).

¹⁸² W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, p. 525.

As the person of our Lord is the key to Divine revelation and centers on redemptive truth, any misconstruing of his person greatly affects or even negates one's salvation. Unless one rests in the imputed righteousness of the Christ of the Gospels by faith, he is fatally resting in a fictitious "Jesus," the "Historical Jesus" of modern radical criticism or the "Jesus" of his own imagination.

The "Historical Jesus"

The Eighteenth Century Enlightenment brought with it a major shift in world-views. This shift was from *scriptura mensura* to *homo mensura*.¹⁸³ English Deism, French Skepticism and German Rationalism produced a rationalistic, antisupernaturalistic approach to Scripture. This was characterized by the idea of a "closed universe," i.e., a universe contained within naturalistic phenomena with no place for an "intrusion" of the supernatural. Divine inspiration, biblical authority and inerrancy were denied and discarded.

The result in biblical studies was radical or "Destructive Higher Criticism."¹⁸⁴ In such a naturalistic approach, which denies the supernatural, the Gospel records were reconstructed. Jesus was a mere human being. The resultant Gospel records were thus oral traditions, legends and fabrications which evolved into written form in the early centuries of Christianity. The miracles were mere legends or could be explained in terms of naturalistic phenomena.

The latest attempt is known as "Form Criticism," which seeks to trace their final written forms back to their alleged oral traditions. It attempts to determine literary patterns in

¹⁸³ *Homo mensura*, "man the measure [of all things]," was first pronounced by Protagoras (480–410 BC). *Scriptura mensura* signifies that "Scripture is the measure [of all things]."

¹⁸⁴ This radical or naturalistic approach to Scripture is discussed in a preceeding section, "The Necessity for and Importance of One's Presuppositions," pp. 28–34.

Scripture, isolate units of text, and trace each unit to its “origin” in oral tradition.

Christologically, the result has been the “Historical Jesus,” stripped of the supernatural, his teachings changed and his miracles denied. Much New Testament “scholarship” has been either given over to or tainted by such views. But if our Lord claimed to be and the Gospel records portray him as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, The eternal Word incarnate, the whole of Scripture—both Old and New Testaments—must be denied or Jesus was an impostor and fraud. To make him a mere well-meaning or intentioned person and moral teacher who accommodated himself to the religious superstitions of the people of his day simply does not and cannot fit.

The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ

The doctrine of the Trinity and the Deity of our Lord are inseparable.¹⁸⁵ Biblical Christianity, as it derives from the Scriptures, is instinctively Trinitarian. All orthodox Christians believe in one God. We are not only monotheists, we are Christian Theists, i.e., we believe in the triune, self-disclosing God of Scripture—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all Three Persons of the Godhead of the same substance or essence [ὁμοούσιον], co-equal and co-eternal. This separates biblical Christianity from both Judaism and Islam, which are also monotheistic.

The truth of the Trinity can be seen as it is set forth from the Scriptures in four statements: God the Father is God (Matt.

¹⁸⁵ The person of Christ and the question concerning his Deity initiated the great Trinitarian Controversies which raged in the state church from the second to the fourth centuries: Dynamic Monarchianism, Modalistic Monarchianism, Arianism and Sabellianism, and gave rise to the Homousians and Homoiousians. See W. R. Downing, *Historiography and Early Church History to 325 AD*.

11:25). God the Son [the Lord Jesus Christ] is God (Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:1–3, 14, 18; Col. 2:9; Tit. 2:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jude 4). God the Holy Spirit is God (Gen. 1:1–2; Acts 5:3–4; 2 Cor. 3:17). There is only One God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6–8; 1 Cor. 8:4–6).¹⁸⁶

Note: The doctrine of the Trinity is a revealed truth, i.e., it is perceived and believed by faith in the Scriptures alone as Divinely inspired, fully authoritative, self–attesting and inerrant, and is without analogy in creation. It must be noted that true, saving faith is not mere human trust or religious conviction, but an enabling, transforming gift of God in free and sovereign grace which unquestionably and intelligently embraces the Divine inspiration and self–attesting nature of Scripture.

Biblical Christians thus scripturally and instinctively through faith believe in one God. We also believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is both Divine [Deity] and human. We further hold that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person with the powers, properties and prerogatives of a distinct personality.

Note: the two basic Christian presuppositions deriving from the Scriptures that there is but one true God and the Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit are also fully God instinctively necessitates the doctrine of the Trinity.

Note: The Holy Spirit possesses the pronouns of personality. The word “Spirit” [τὸ πνεῦμα] is grammatically neut. Our Lord purposely uses the masc. pron. when referring to the Holy Spirit in Jn. 15:26 [ἐκεῖνος], 16:7 [αὐτὸν], 16:8 [ἐκεῖνος],¹⁸⁷ 16:13–14 [ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας], emph. his personality.

He possesses the powers of personality. The Holy Spirit creates (Gen. 1:2), speaks (Acts 10:18–20; 13:2; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:7–11; Rev. 3:7, 13, 20), teaches (Lk. 12:12), quickens (Jn. 6:63), possesses intelligent judgment and prerogative (Acts 15:28; 20:28), commands (Acts 13:2, 4), intercedes

¹⁸⁶ See A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 304.

¹⁸⁷ If it be argued that “Comforter” [παράκλητος] is masc., and thus takes the masc. pron., the term also had both fem. [παράκλητα] and neut. forms [παράκλητον]. Our Lord purposely used the masc. form and pron. See Liddell–Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon*, p. 1313.

(Rom. 8:26–27), prohibits (Acts 16:6), can be tempted and lied to (Acts 5:3–4, 9), grieved (Eph. 4:30) and sinned against (Mk. 3:28–30).

He possesses the properties of personality. Intellect (Acts 15:28; Rom. 8:26–27; 1 Cor. 2:10–13), emotion (Isa. 63:10, vexed; Eph. 4:30, grieved; Rom. 15:30, loves), Volition (Acts 13:2; 16:6–7; 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:7–11).

The truth of the triunity of God is pervasive in Scripture. It is intimated and anticipated in the Old Testament in the use of plural names for God [אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, and אֲדֹנָי, *Adonai*], the use of plural pronouns by God (eg., Gen. 1:26ff), the term “one” [אֶחָד] in Deut. 6:4, which may signify “unity” as well as “one,” the Deity of the promised Messiah (Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6–7; Mic. 5:2), the Angel of the Lord, a theophany which Christians hold to be the pre-incarnate Christ, and who received worship due only to God (Josh. 5:13–15), etc.

In the New Testament, there is a clear revelation of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word or eternal Λόγος, and therefore Deity (Jn. 1:1–3, 14, 18), that he relinquished his Divine prerogative of equality with God¹⁸⁸ and became subservient to the Father as the ideal “Servant of the Lord” and “the last Adam” to provide a complete redemption and then was exalted to the highest as such in his Lordship over all creation (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:45; Phil. 2:5–11; Heb. 1:3).

The Christ of the Gospels

The Lord Jesus Christ was the son of Mary through the miracle of the Virgin Birth (Lk. 1:26–38). Joseph was his legal

¹⁸⁸ Phil. 2:5–7, ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων... μορφῇ signifies what is true of the inner being and not merely in appearance. ὑπάρχων “subsisting” ... οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ... ἄρπαγμὸν, something seized or clutched. Our Lord did not selfishly cling to this Divine prerogative of equality with God, but relinquished it for his state of humiliation and emptied himself [ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν] of this prerogative and external glory for the work of effecting our redemption.

guardian and “father,” not his natural father (Matt. 1:18–25). The two genealogies (Matt. 1:1–17; Lk. 3:23–38) are important to establish our Lord as the “Son of David.” Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of the Davidic line and the Tribe of Judah. Evidently, Matthew’s genealogy is that of Joseph, and gives the legal descent from David and Luke’s genealogy is the natural descent through Mary.

Two issues clarify the genealogies: first, Mary’s father evidently had no son, so the inheritance would pass onto Mary and Joseph would be counted as the “son” of Heli. This relationship was settled by the Lord through Moses in the matter of the daughters of Zelophehad (Numb. 26:33; 27:1–11; 36:6–12).

Second, Joseph’s Davidic lineage came through Solomon, but a curse rested upon this lineage through Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, excluding any of his descendants from the throne of David (Jer. 22:24–30). Mary’s Davidic lineage came through Nathan, and was not under a curse. Had our Lord been Joseph’s natural son, he would have had no legitimate claim to the Davidic throne. According to Divine providence, the Virgin Birth and these technicalities, Our Lord had a valid claim to the throne of his father David.

The immediate issue is: how do the Gospel records present the person of Christ? These historical records are foundational for the later Lucan, Pauline, Petrine and Johannine Epistles, and those of James and Jude in their Christologies.

The following is a brief summary of the biblical, historical Christ as presented in the Gospels: he is revealed as the eternal *Λόγος*, the “Word,” fully God and thus co-equal and co-eternal with the Father (Jn. 1:1–3, 14, 18). He had a full perception of his Divine nature (Jn. 8:23–25) and pre-incarnate state with the Father in glory (Jn. 17:5). He is presented as the fulfillment of the Messianic promises of the Old Testament, the Son of David (Isa. 7:14; 9:6–7; 53:1–12; 61:1ff; Dan. 7:13–14; Mic. 5:2; Lk. 24:25–27, 44–48; Jn. 4:26; 5:38–47). The title he most often

used for himself was “The Son of Man,” referring not to his humanity, but a distinct Messianic claim from Dan. 7:13–14, which the Jews rightly held to be a claim to Deity (Matt. 26:63–65).

Our Lord declared that he and the Father were one, which was a claim to Deity (Jn. 10:26–33). Our Lord’s miracles credentialed his Messianic claim (Jn. 3:1–2; Jn. 7:31). He is held in equality with the Father and Holy Spirit in the “Great Commission” (Matt. 28:18–20).

He himself claimed to be the very Son of God and that God was his Father in a unique sense, a claim to Deity (Matt. 11:27; 26:62–64; Jn. 8:56–59; Jn. 20:17). He received the acknowledgement and worship due only to God (Matt. 16:16; Jn. 20:25–28). He exercised the Divine prerogative to forgive sins (Matt. 9:1–7; Mk. 2:1–12; Lk. 5:17–25).

He constantly referred to the Father as “the one having sent me” (Jn. 4:34; 5:24, 30, 36–37; 6:38–40, 44, 57; 7:16, 28, 29–30, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 11:42, etc.), acknowledging his subservience or subordination to the Father in his state of humiliation as the “Second Man,” the “Last Adam” for the work of redemption. This subordination was neither ontological nor eternal (1 Cor. 15:45; Phil. 2:5–8).

Note: John’s Prologue (1:1–18) was written against the rise and influence of Cerinthian Gnosticism an early form of Dynamic Monarchianism which denied the full Deity of our Lord. The passage must be read in this context.

Jn. 1:1, Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. The word θεὸς in the final clause is not indefinite, i.e., “a god,” but anarth., i.e., the def. art. is omitted to stress character or quality.¹⁸⁹ It is further emphatic by position. “The Word as to his essence was Deity.”

¹⁸⁹ Jn. 1:1. The Gk. has no indefinite article. The cults seek to insert the rules of English grammar into the Gk. and thus misconstrue the very emphasis of John and his argument for the full and complete Deity of Christ.

In Jn. 1:1, there is a syllogistic progression by phrase: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, the Eternity of the Word, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, the Equality of the Word and καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, the Deity of the Word.

Note: Jn. 1:14. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο. The eternal, co-equal, Divine Word of v. 1–3 became flesh. The const. is emph. by pos. Further, God’s personal, incommunicable glory was his (Isa. 42:8; 48:11)!

Note: Jn. 1:18. ...ὁ μονογενῆς υἱὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς... Some ancient texts read μονογενῆς θεός, an even stronger argument for the Deity of our Lord, using the anarth. const. and emph. the “eternal generation” of the Son. ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. “that one exegeted him.” This requires the original as to both its revelation and explanation.

Note: Jn. 10:30, ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν. The term “one” [ἓν] is neut., not masc. and emph. by pos. This is a unity of purpose in the context, not a confusion of identity or one Person [Modalistic Monarchianism, Sabellianism].

He manifestly and literally fulfilled the Scriptures in his suffering and death (Psa. 22; Isa. 53:1–12; Matt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 22–23; Jn. 18–19). His resurrection from the dead was proof of his identity and Deity, signaled the beginning of his state of exaltation (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 20:19; Heb. 1:3), and became one of the great themes of Apostolic preaching (Acts 1:21; 2:31; 3:15; 4:2, 10, 33; 13:30, 34; 17:18, 31–32) and the Christology of the Epistles (Rom. 4:24; 6:4–5, 9; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:12–13, 15–16, 35; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Phil. 3:10; Col. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Pet. 1:3, 21; 3:10, 21).

Note: Matt. 11:27. Mark carefully the two occurrences of ἐπιγινώσκει for “knoweth.” This is an emph. form for, “truly, completely know in terms of relationship.” Our Lord declared that he alone knows the Father, and the Father alone knows him—a claim to equality and thus the Deity of the Son.

Note: Jn. 8:23–25, 58. Our Lord was conscious of his being “from above,” and not of the earth, and that he was and is the “I am” in the most emphatic sense: ἂν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν. v. 58. εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν

Ἄβραάμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἶμι. Our Lord emphatically declared [ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν] that before Abraham came into being, [γενέσθαι] he existed in the eternal present tense, using the double ἐγὼ εἶμι. A clear claim to Deity.

Note: Jn. 20:28. ἀπεκρίθη Θωμᾶς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου. Blasphemously, some modern radical critics say that this was an oath or exclamation on the part of Thomas! It is a declaration of an astounded Disciple whose worship and word of praise our Lord accepted.

As the God–Man, our Lord is revealed in the Gospel records as the true and complete, godly, righteous and industrious God–Man who exhibited righteous indignation and anger (Jn. 2:12–16; Mk. 3:2–5; Matt. 21:12–13) and yet was compassionate, sympathetic and kind (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:23; 20:34; Mk. 1:40–41; 5:18–19; 6:34; 9:22; Lk. 7:12–14; 19:41–44; Jn. 11:33–36).

He was constantly opposed and maligned by the religious leaders of that generation (Matt. 16:21; 26:46–68; Mk. 8:31; 9:12; Lk. 9:22; 17:5; Jn. 7:1; 8:36–59), and his followers would and do suffer in like manner, holding him as their example (Acts 9:16; 2 Tim. 3:12; 4:10; 1 Pet. 2:20–21; 3:17–18; 4:15–19). As the God–Man he was complete in every way as both the revealer of the Father and a true and genuine man in his priorities, sympathies and his love of and faithfulness to the truth.

The Gospel records form the foundation in historical truth and fact for the Lucan (Acts 9:3–6), Pauline (Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13), Petrine (1 Pet. 1: 18–20) and Johannine (1 Jn. 5:20) Christologies and those of James (1:1; 2:1) and Jude (1, 4, 17, 21, 25).

Note: 9:3–6. The Lord of Glory appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road in sovereign power and blinding light, with the words, “Saul, Saul why Me are you persecuting!?” [Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις;]. Saul’s response as a strict Jew was that he addressed our Lord as “Yahweh” [Gk. κύριος], and continued to do so, even after he knew assuredly that he was addressing the Lord Jesus. The title “Lord”

[κύριος] is used by the Apostle Paul 215 times of our Lord in his Epistles. After our Lord's resurrection, it is reserved exclusively for the Lord Jesus alone, an acknowledgment of his Deity.

Note: Rom. 9:5. ...καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. Christ is the necessary antecedent of "God blessed forever." The context demands that "Christ" and "God" refer to the same Person.

Note: 1 Tim. 3:16. "God was manifest in the flesh..." [Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί]. Some ancient texts read "Who was manifest..." [ὃς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί]. The immediate context (v. 15–16) demands that the antecedent is "God," the only Person stated. This is yet another instance of the Scriptures declaring the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: Titus 2:13. "...τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The arth. "the great God" and the anarth. "our Savior Jesus Christ" refer to one and the same Person. This is yet another witness to the absolute Deity of the Lord Jesus.¹⁹⁰

Note: Jas. 1:1. James, who was a younger brother of our Lord in the flesh and family, designates himself as a willing bondslave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, holding them to be equal: θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος. 2:1, James calls the Lord Jesus, "The Lord of glory" [τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης], which is equivalent to declaring his Deity.

Note: 1 Jn. 5:20. "...in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὐ

¹⁹⁰ The Gk. const. of one def. art conjoining two substantives of the same case ["Granville Sharp rule"]:

When the copulative καί connects two nouns of the same case, if the article ὁ or any of its cases precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle; i.e., it denotes a further description of the first-named person. Dana & Mantey, *A Manual of The Greek New Testament*, p. 147.

τός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος. The antecedent of οὗτός is Ἰησοῦ Χριστῶ, once again affirming the Deity of Jesus Christ as the one true God.

Note: Jude 4, ...τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι. Again, the arth. and anarth. const. of two substantives of the same case conjoined by καὶ, signifying the two describe one Person.¹⁹¹ Here Jude, his half-brother in the flesh, calls our Lord “the only Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” A clear realization and declaration of his Deity.

The Names and Titles of the Lord Jesus Christ

In the Gospel records, there are no less than forty–six different names, titles, descriptions and metaphors attributed to our Lord.¹⁹² As these not only identify, but are also revelatory, these are of the greatest importance and form in themselves a basic theology of the Person of Christ as presented in the Gospels.

1. “Bread.” The Bread of life, the Bread of God, the Bread from heaven. Our Lord as the antitype of the manna. Occurs 10 times, only in chapter 6 of John’s Gospel, e.g., Jn. 6:34–35, 48.
2. “Beloved Son.” This refers to the uniqueness of the Son with the Father. Occurs only in the Synoptics: 2 times in Matthew (3:17; 13:5), 2 times in Mark (1:11; 9:7) and 3 times in Luke (3:22; 9:35; 20:13).
3. “Bridegroom.” The emphasis is upon watchfulness and relationships. This metaphor occurs 14 times in the Gospels: 6 times in Matthew (9:15; 25:1, 5, 6, 10), 3 times in Mark (2:19–20), 2 times in Luke (5:34–35) and 3 times in John (2:9; 3:29).

¹⁹¹ See the preceding footnote and quotation concerning this Gk. const.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 519–24, 33 for complete charts and study of these titles and names. Some errors have been corrected in this list.

4. “Christ.” The emphasis is upon the truth of Jesus being the promised Messiah, Anointed One or Christ,¹⁹³ with his position and power. This title occurs 41 times: 9 times in Matthew (e.g., 1:16), 5 times in Mark (e.g., 8:29), 11 times in Luke (e.g., 2:11) and 16 times in John (e.g., Jn. 1:41).
5. “Consolation.” This metaphor, which means “comfort” [παράκλησις], views our Lord as the promised rest and comfort for Israel in the fulfillment of prophecy. This metaphor occurs 1 time, only in Luke (2:25). See “Paraclete.”
6. “Dayspring.” This metaphor refers to the early dawn [ἀνατολή], and signifies the realization of the long-anticipated fulfillment of the Messianic promise. Occurs 1 time, only in Luke (1:78).
7. “Door.” This metaphor points to our Lord as the only way and entrance to God and life under the figure of the door of the sheepfold of God. Occurs 1 time, only in John (10:17).
8. “Emmanuel.” This title derives from Isa. 7:14 and signifies “Equally with us is God.” It occurs only 1 time, in Matthew (1:23).¹⁹⁴
9. “God.” This title signifies that the Lord Jesus Christ is considered in the Gospel records as very God, i.e., fully Deity. Occurs 3 to 4 times, only in John (1:1, 18;¹⁹⁵ 10:33; 20:28).

¹⁹³ Both “Messiah” [מָשִׁיחַ, Heb.] and “Christ” [χριστός, Gk.] signify “The Anointed One.”

¹⁹⁴ Matt. 1:23. אֵל עִמָּנוּ. The Heb. prep. עִם signifies “equally with,” or of the closest relationship. Note that the Heb. [הַעֲלָמָה], LXX [ἡ παρθένος] and Gk NT [ἡ παρθένος] use the arth. const, i.e., “The Virgin,” not “a virgin.”

¹⁹⁵ Jn. 1:18. Crit. Gk. Text reads “only begotten God” [μονογενὴς θεός], which strengthens the trinitarian reality.

10. “God my Savior.” Our Lord is referred to as both “God” and “Savior” by Mary herself. Occurs but 1 time, in Luke (1:47).
11. “Governor.” This title derives from the prophecy of Micah 5:2, the term “ruler” interpreted as “governor” or “shepherd” by the scribes. Occurs 1 time in Matthew (2:6).¹⁹⁶
12. “Head.” This metaphor refers to the saying of our Lord that the stone which was rejected should become the headstone or cornerstone, a prophetic reference to Psa. 118:22–23. Occurs in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 21:42ff; Mk. 12:10–11; Lk. 20:17–18).
13. “Heir.” This reference derives from the Parable of the Husbandmen who murdered the only son and heir, our Lord making reference to himself and prophetically to his death by the Jewish leaders. Occurs 3 times in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 21:38; Mk. 12:7; Lk. 20:14).
14. “Holy One.” Occurs 2 times. 1 time each in Mark (1:24) and Luke (4:34). In both cases demon or demons cry out and acknowledge his Deity.
15. “I Am.” Occurs 2 time as a solitary title of Deity (Jn. 8:24, 58), but occurs often in the context of various metaphors or relationships, e.g., “I am the Bread of life” (Jn. 6:48), “I am the Good Shepherd” (Jn. 10:11, 14), “I am the way the truth and the life” (Jn. 14:6), etc.¹⁹⁷
16. “Jesus.” This is our Lord’s human and earthly name, Ἰησοῦς being the Gk. equivalent of the Heb. “Joshua” [יְהוֹשֻׁעַ]. It signifies “Yahweh is salvation,” and is intrinsically related to our Lord’s redemptive work (Matt. 1:21).

¹⁹⁶ Matt. 2:6, “Governor” [πολιμανεῖ], “to shepherd.” Micah 5:2: Heb. [יְהוֹשֻׁעַ] and LXX [ἄρχοντα].

¹⁹⁷ See pp. 398–405 of this volume for a full exposition of the “I AMs” of John’s Gospel.

17. “Jesus Christ.” This title combines his human name and his Messianic title. In form it varies from “Jesus Christ” to “Jesus the Christ.” It occurs 10 times in the Gospels: 6 times in Matthew (1:1, 16, 18; 16:20; 27:17, 22), 1 time in Mark (1:1) and 3 times in John (1:17; 17:3; 20:31).
18. “Jesus of Nazareth,” “The Nazarene.” This stresses his identification with Nazareth¹⁹⁸ in Galilee, and was a constant source of deprecation among the Jews, as Galileans were considered to be less orthodox than Judeans. It must be noted that our Lord spoke with a Galilean accent, which greatly prejudiced the Jews against him.

This designation occurs 13 times: 2 times in Matthew (Matt. 21:11; 27:61), 4 times in Mark (1:24; 10:27; 14:67; 16:6), 3 times in Luke (14:4; 18:37; 24:19) and 4 times in John (1:45; 18:5, 7; 19:19). Reference to the Branch (Isa. 11:1, etc.): נֹצֵר becomes “Nazareth” [Ναζαρέτ] i.e., the city of branches, and so “Nazarene,” i.e., from נֹצֵר.

19. “Lamb.” This metaphor occurs 2 times and only in John (1:29, 36). This is highly significant. John the Baptist presents and identifies our Lord as the fulfillment of all the sacrificial lambs from Abel to our Lord. This metaphor points to his suffering and sacrificial death for sinners.

The term “world,” as in Jn. 3:16–17, refers to the Gentiles in addition to the Jews, as noted in the context. Both the metaphor and the term “world” were astounding to the Jews and to Nicodemus, who held that salvation was only for Israel; God’s action toward the Gentiles was only judgment in their traditional, exclusive belief.

¹⁹⁸ Nazareth was settled by the Jews in the second century BC as a Jewish outpost in a predominantly Gentile area, so the community was strictly Jewish. See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, p. 152. This is not related to the law of the Nazarite in the religious sense (Numb. 6:2ff).

20. “Life.” This metaphor, which is peculiar to John, and occurs 2 times (11:25; 14:6), reveals the uniqueness of our Lord’s Person and cannot be understood apart from his Divine nature. As the Son, our Lord had life in himself, i.e., he was the source of life (1:4; 5:26; 11:25; 20:31). See “resurrection.”
21. “Light.” This metaphor is also peculiar to John, occurring 8 times (1:8–10, 8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36, 46). This figure is concerned with the light of truth, of Divine revelation. As God dwells in absolute light (1 Tim. 6:16), so the Son is light as the Revealer of the Father and truth. John the Baptist was a derived light [λάμπρος], but our Lord was original light [φῶς].
22. “Lord.” This is a Divine title. The Gk. term κύριος, “Lord,” is used at times in the Gospel records as a title of respect (e.g., Jn. 4:11, 19, 49) among men, equivalent and translated in the English as “Sir.” In a given context, it refers to Deity and is the Gk. equivalent to *Yahweh* (e.g., Matt. 1:20, 22, 24; 7:22; Matt. 22:44; Mk. 1:3; 2:28; 11:9–10; Lk. 1:9–17, 46; 2:39; Jn. 1:23; 11:27; 20:28).
- This is one of the most common references to our Lord in the context of his position as the God–Man throughout all four Gospel records. This term is never used in Scripture after our Lord’s resurrection except to refer to our Lord as Deity. It is so used 215 times in the Pauline Epistles (e.g., Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 1:15, etc.).
23. “Man.” Our Lord was often referred to by this designation by those who did not recognize his position as the God–Man or God come in the flesh (e.g., Matt. 13:54). Our Lord’s self–designation was “The Son of Man,” a Messianic claim which to the Jews was tantamount to claiming Deity. See “Son of Man” subsequently in this list.
24. “Master.” This designation or title was often used by others concerning our Lord. There are several terms translated “Master” in our English Bible: ἐπιστάτης, “superintendent,

overseer, commander” (used by the disciples of our Lord 6 times: Lk. 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:3); διδάσκαλος, “teacher” (the most used title for our Lord of himself and by the disciples and others).

Further, καθηγήτης, “guide, teacher” (used 2 times by our Lord, Matt. 23:8–10); οἰκοδεσπότης, “the head or manager of a household;” κύριος, “Lord;” ῥάββι, “my master,” a title of respect for Jewish teachers, e.g., Jn. 3:2 (Used by the disciples of our Lord 2 times: Jn. 9:2; 1:38); κυβερνήτης, “steersman, captain of a vessel,” metaphorically, a guide or governor. On occasion he used this title of himself (e.g., Matt. 10:25; 23:8, 10; 26:18; Jn. 13:13). Note that Judas addressed him as “Master” [ῥάββί], never as “Lord” (Matt. 26:25, 49; Mk. 14:45).

25. “Messiah.” The Gk. translation of the Heb. [מָשִׁיחַ] is *Messias*. The Gk. equivalent is χρίστος, “anointed, Christ.” Our Lord was the Anointed One, the fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. This term occurs 2 times, both in John (1:41; 4:25).
26. “My Beloved.” Occurs 1 time in Matthew (12:17–18) with reference to Isa. 5:1.
27. “Only Begotten.” A term of endearment, also emphasizing the uniqueness of the Lord Jesus and his relation to the Father. Occurring 4 times, all in John (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18).
28. “Paraclete.” Occurs 1 time, in John and translated “Comforter” [παράκλητος]. This title is inferred from the truth of the his sending “another comforter,” i.e., the Holy Spirit, whose ministry is to replace that of our Lord (14:16. See also 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). See “Consolation.” Also used of our Lord in 1 Jn. 2:1.
29. “Prophet.” A prophet was one who both foretold and told forth the truth of God. Our Lord is associated with this title 15 times in the Gospel records: 4 times in Matthew (13:57; 14:5; 21:11, 46), 2 times in Mark (6:4, 15), 5 times in Luke (4:24; 7:16, 39; 13:33; 24:19) and 4 times in John (4:19;

- 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). Our Lord was, indeed, the ideal and ultimate prophet promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15–19).
30. “Rabbi.” ῥαββι, “my master,” a title of respect for Jewish teachers (e.g., Jn. 3:2). See under “Master.” Used by the disciples of our Lord 2 times (Jn. 9:2; 1:38).
 31. “Resurrection.” Used 1 time in John (11:25); when our Lord distinguished between the resurrection as a doctrine and himself as having the source and power of life.
 32. “Righteous Man.” Lk. 23:47. The declaration of the centurion, after witnessing the suffering, words and death of our Lord and the resounding effects as expressed in the darkness and earthquake.
 33. “Rock.” This metaphor is associated with our Lord 2 times by implication (Matt. 7:24–25;). He designated himself as “this rock” in Matt. 16:18 (Note: Peter was a pebble [Πέτρος]; our Lord is the great slab of bedrock [ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ] upon which the church is built. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:11).
 34. “Savior, Christ the Lord.” Occurs 1 time in Lk. 2:11. This gathering of titles expresses the epitome of our Lord’s person and work.
 35. Savior of the world.” Occurs 1 time in John’s Gospel (4:42). It is noteworthy that this was declared by the Samaritans who had no claim to the Messiah through Israel, but were deprecated by the Jews. These evidently, better understood the term “world.”
 36. “Servant.” This title occurs one time in the Gospels in Matt. 12:18, appropriated as a prophecy from Isa. 42:1ff. Matthew in several instances appropriates references to Jacob or Israel as a nation and refers these prophetically to our Lord under Divine inspiration (e.g., Matt. 2:15 appropriated from Hos. 11:1).

This title belongs to our Lord as the ideal and ultimate “Servant of Yahweh” [Heb.: עֶבֶד־יְהוָה, LXX: ὁ δούλος κυρίου], of which Moses was a type: Deut. 34:5; Josh. 1:1f; 8:31; 11:12; 12:6; 2 Chron. 1:3; Psa. 18:1; Isa. 42:1; 49:5.

37. In his state of humiliation, our Lord took upon himself the form and reality of a servant and became subordinate to the Father as the God–Man.

Note that there are 7 different words for “servant” in the Gk. NT. The term used in Matt. 12:18 is *παῖς*, not *δούλος*, and the connotation is one of subordination. Phil. 2:7, however, reads, *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*, using the terminology for the reality of complete subordination and obedience, which was “unto death, even such a death as a cross” [*ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ, anarth.*].

38. “Shepherd.” This metaphor has become predominant throughout church history in its artistic representations. 2 times it refers to the prophecy of Zech. 13:7 in Matt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27. 1 time it refers to our Lord as the final Judge of men (Matt. 25:31ff). Our Lord refers to himself emphatically as “the Good Shepherd” [*Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός*] in Jn. 10:11–16).
39. “Son.” A common designation for our Lord, occurring 36 times in the Gospels. Used for the familial relationship with Mary and Joseph (e.g., Matt. 1:21, 25; Lk. 2:48), appropriated as the fulfillment of prophecy (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15), of our Lord as the promised Messianic King and “Son of David” (e.g., Matt. 9:27) and used of that unique, eternal relation with the Father (Matt. 3:17) and often in the context of “the Son of Man” (Matt. 10:23) and “the Son of God” (Matt. 8:29). See following entries.
40. “Son of God.” This title, revealing our Lord as the Son in relation [eternal generation] to the Father, occurs 27 times in the Gospels: 9 times in Matthew (4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54), 4 times in Mark (1:1; 3:11; 5:7; 15:39), 6 times in Luke (1:35; 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70) and 11 times in John (1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 6:69; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31). Extended or similar titles, such as “The Son of the Living God” (Jn. 6:69) and “Son of the Highest” (Lk. 1:32) are included.

41. Son of David.” This designation and title reveal our Lord as the ideal King of the Davidic line and the Messiah (Lk. 1:35). It was a profession of faith on the lips of those who uttered it in their extremity. This title occurs 8 times in Matthew (9:27; 9:23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9, 15; 22:42), 3 times in Mark (10:47–48; 12:35) and 2 times in Luke (18:38–39).
42. “Son of Man.” Occurring 84 times in the Gospel records. The most common self-designation of our Lord (81 times). This title does not refer to his human nature, as suggested in some hymns, but is a distinct Messianic claim which the Jews correctly discerned was a claim to Deity (Dan. 7:13–14; Matt. 26:63–65).
43. “Stone.” This metaphor is used by our Lord as a reference to the prophecy of the stone rejected by the builder which becomes the headstone of the corner, referring to his rejection by the nation and its leaders and to their judgment and his exaltation (Psa. 118:22–23; Matt. 21:42–46; Mk. 12:1–12; Lk. 20:9–19). Note the Apostolic references in Acts 4:6–12; Eph. 2:20 and 1 Pet. 2:6–8.
44. “Teacher.” This has been considered under “Master,” which is often the translation of διδάσκαλος, and translated as “teacher” in Jn. 3:2. Also note ἐπιστάτης, “superintendent, overseer” (used by the disciples of our Lord 6 times: Lk. 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:3); καθηγῆτης, “guide, teacher” (used 2 times by our Lord, Matt. 23:8–10).
45. “True Vine.” This metaphor occurs 1 time (Jn. 15:1–6). Israel as a nation was designated as a goodly vine brought out of Egypt and planted in the Land of Promise by God in the Old Testament, but it became degenerate and was brought under judgment (Psa. 80:7–18; Isa. 5:1ff; Jer. 2:21; 6:8–9; Ezk. 15:6–8; 17:1ff; Hos. 10:1).

By contrast, our Lord emphatically called himself “The true vine” [Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή], yet the principle of judgment remains for mere professors.

46. “Truth.” This metaphor occurs 1 time, in John (14:6), and is emphatic [ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ], revealing our Lord as the only way, the only truth and the only life, and so the only way to the Father, revealing his exclusive claim salvifically.
47. “Way.” This metaphor also occurs but 1 time, emphatically, and in John (14:6). Our Lord declares that he alone is the way to the Father.
48. “Word.” This title occurs 4 times, only in John (1:1, 14). The “Word” is the eternal “Logos” [Λόγος], co-eternal [Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος], co-equal [καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν] with the Father and fully Deity [καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος....Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο....μονογενῆς θεὸς [υἱός] ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο].¹⁹⁹

The One Gospel and the Four Gospels

There is only one Gospel—one message of salvation for sinners through the blood of the cross, one message or tidings which reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior, one message which details his incarnation, humiliation, life [active obedience], suffering, death [passive obedience], resurrection and ascension into heaven with all its salvific ramifications—but there are four Gospel accounts. This interrelationship must be understood in the context of the New Testament canon.

The Significance of the Term “Gospel”

The English word “gospel” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *god-spell*, i.e., “God-story,” i.e., the story concerning God. The New Testament Greek term is τὸ

¹⁹⁹ See the note on Jn. 1:1; 1:14, 18 in the previous text under “The Christ of the Gospels.” The very context and anarth, const. demand this in John’s prologue (1:1–18), as he wrote against Cerinthian Gnosticism, a form of Dynamic Monarchianism.

εὐαγγέλιον, “the good news” or “the glad tidings.” To preach the gospel is εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, “to evangelize” and one who preaches the gospel is an εὐαγγελιστής or an “evangelist.”

The basic idea has its background in the Old Testament with “good tidings” [בִּשְׂרָרָה] of various sorts (e.g., 2 Sam. 18:26–27), and also in pagan Greek and Roman usage to denote a message of victory after a battle and the birth or accession of a Roman Emperor to the throne. The unique feature of the biblical Gospel is its message of salvation through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lk. 2:10, εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην). The term “Gospel” was first used by Mark, the first among the Synoptic Gospels, in his account (Mk. 1:1, 14–15; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15).

This realization of the good news of salvation was aptly stated by William Tyndale, the English Reformer and martyr, who first translated the New Testament from Greek into English. In the introduction to this great work, Tyndale wrote that the gospel signifies “good, mery, glad and joyfull tydinge, that maketh a mannes hert glad, and maketh him synge, daunce, and leepe for joye!” The word “gospel” occurs 101 times in the KJV of the English Bible, all in the New Testament.

The Gospel considered Scripturally, Doctrinally and Historically

Scripturally and inclusively, the “gospel” is the record of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole of his teachings concerning salvation, his miracles as credentialing his person and message, the salvific significance of his person and redemptive work [incarnation, life, suffering, vicarious death, resurrection and ascension into heaven], and the resultant message proclaimed by the Apostles concerning forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through him. All of these facts, gathered together as saving truth, comprises the gospel message.

The emphasis of the gospel message in the New Testament is on the vicarious life, death [active and passive obedience]²⁰⁰ and the resurrection and ascension of Christ as final proof of his person and message. It is the message of forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his imputed righteousness. It is the glorious truth of salvation by grace through faith.

The New Testament contains references to the gospel with various designations: “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mk. 1:14), “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24), “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Tim. 1:11), “the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7, etc.), “the gospel of his son” (Rom. 1:9), “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16; 15:19, 29; 1 Cor. 9:12, etc.), “the gospel of peace” (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15), “Christ’s gospel” (2 Cor. 2:12), “the glorious gospel of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4), “the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13), “the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:8) and “the everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6). These all refer to one and the same gospel. There is also “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6), “the gospel of the circumcision...the gospel of the uncircumcision” (Gal. 2:7).

Is there, then, more than one gospel? The “gospel of the circumcision” and “uncircumcision” is figurative language referring to the respective gospel ministries of Peter to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles. Their ministries differed; their message was the same.

The reference to “another gospel [ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, of a different kind] which is not another [ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, of the same kind]” is to the perversion of the gospel by the Judaizers

²⁰⁰ This traditional terminology views the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ with reference to the Moral Law. By his active obedience [impeccable or sinless life], he completely fulfilled the requirements of the law, by his passive obedience [culminating in his suffering and death], he fully paid its penalty. Both the active and passive obedience of our Lord is imputed to believing sinners by faith alone.

who had seduced the Galatian Christians into a form of Judaism which substituted works, especially circumcision, for grace (Gal. 1:6–9; Acts 15:1). There has always been “another gospel” which either omits or perverts the truth of God and seduces sinners into a false security through either denying God’s grace or mixing it with works.

The gospel in its full theological sense is the good news of deliverance from self, from the reigning power of sin, and from Divine wrath and condemnation, through faith in the person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1ff). In other words, the gospel, when considered in its full biblical and theological context, is inclusive of all the doctrines associated with salvation, and necessarily set in the context of God’s moral self-consistency [an imputed righteousness which answers to his Moral Law], immutability and Divine sovereignty; the fallen, sinful state of mankind, the impending doom of eternal condemnation and punishment, the essence and nature of Divine grace, the centrality of the person, work and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and the necessity and gift of saving faith.

The Gospel is the power of God which actually brings the believing sinner into the sphere of deliverance [δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν] (Rom. 1:16). Its purpose and goal is to reproduce the life of God in the soul of man, i.e., redeem his image in man (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:17–18). The aim of the Gospel is to produce a holy people (Titus 2:11–14; 1 Pet. 1:15–16; 2:9) and prepare them for eternity with God (1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Pet. 3:13).

Neither the principle nor the content of the gospel originated in the mind or heart of fallen, sinful mankind. When left to himself, being inescapably and incurably religious as the image-bearer of God, man by nature conjures his own religion. Paganism has always been inherently and often intensely religious. It is only in the modern secularized society that man has sought to disguise religion by forming it into a materialistic, statist, psychological, educational or environmentalist shape.

Paganism was polytheistic and overtly idolatrous (Rom. 1:23); modern secularism worships man, materialism, education, science, the state and the environment. *Homo mensura* [“man the measure (of all things)”] as manifest by the Enlightenment and modern Secular Humanism, is idolatry as surely as bowing down to sticks, stones and graven metal.

In principle, anthropogenic [man-originated] religion has historically been a religion of self-righteousness and human ability, and manifested in a legalistic works-mentality. History reveals that the principle of grace is alien to fallen, sinful man. Even the true religion derived from Divine revelation was perverted by the Jews into the Judaistic religious system of self-righteousness and works (Acts 15:1; Rom. 9:32–10:3).

Mere traditional Christianity, although the culmination of revealed religion [Christian theistic belief] has suffered the same, rapidly degenerating into a mere outward sacerdotal religious system of rites, rituals and ceremonies which are idolatrous. Modern Christianity largely tends toward either the ceremonial or the irrational. Neither seems to adequately comprehend the grace of God in principle or in practice.

God took several millennia to prepare the world for the fullness and finality of the gospel (Gal. 4:4–5). He first promised it in the *Protevangelium* of Gen. 3:15; the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent.

Later, God sovereignly chose and revealed himself savingly to Abraham (Acts 7:2–3), and, in Abraham, the Hebrew nation, the physical “seed of Abraham,” and in that nation his true “Seed of Abraham,” the Messiah—and in the Messiah, he chose a spiritual “seed,” all true believers. He promised to Abraham that in him all families of the earth would be blessed, a gospel promise centering in the Lord Jesus, the true “Seed of Abraham” (Gen. 12:1–3; Gal. 3:6–9, 16) [τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, sing.].

Under Moses that nation was delivered from Egypt by blood [the Passover lamb] and power [the plagues, the dividing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh’s army] (Ex. 20:1–2). The

Book of Leviticus details the Levitical system of offerings and sacrifices ordained by God. Each of these anticipates, or is a type of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Later, Israel demanded a king, and after Saul, the Davidic dynasty was established. Thus, through promise, covenant, government and the religious system of Israel, God established the principles for the priestly, prophetic and kingly [Lordship] offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. The nation of Israel was, then, an incubator for the preparation of the gospel.

From Moses to Malachi, the Word of God was given and inscripturated. Israel would remain the repository for the inscripturated Word of God until the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4–5). Through the Incarnation, Virgin Birth, perfect, sinless life, vicarious suffering and death, and the glorious resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, the historical facts of the gospel were bound together as saving truth (1 Cor. 15:1–4). At Pentecost, the church, already formed and commissioned as the God-ordained institution for this gospel economy (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46–49), was empowered by the Holy Spirit to publish the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8; 2:1ff).²⁰¹

The Nature and Number of the Gospels

If there is but one Gospel, why are there four Gospel Records? Indeed, there may have been many more (Lk. 1:1–4) in the first century, and there was certainly a multitude of various attempts by the second through the fourth centuries, both orthodox and heterodox, but all considered non-canonical, as noted in several “Jewish-Christian Gospels,” “Infancy Gospels,” the alleged “Gnostic Gospels” and various “fragmentary Gospels,” etc.

²⁰¹ See the full exposition of the Gospel and its several determining principles in W. R. Downing, *A Catechism on Bible Doctrine*, Question 134, pp. 260–267.

These non-canonical writings comprise the New Testament Pseudopigrapha or Apocrypha.²⁰² The four Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were held as inspired Scripture by the end of the Apostolic era and were termed “Gospels” by the middle of the second century.

The New Testament canon is not chronologically, but logically arranged into the Historical [Gospels], Doctrinal [Epistles] and Prophetical [Revelation]. The Four Gospels comprise almost half of its volume. As there is only one Gospel, the titles of the four records begin with *κατὰ*, “according to,” followed by the given author’s name, e.g., *κατὰ Μαθθαίου*, etc., i.e., the [one] Gospel according to that particular author.

Almost all of the Epistles were written before the Gospels.²⁰³ The primary need of Apostolic Christianity was evangelistic, didactic and functional, i.e., the preaching of the gospel, the doctrinal truths of the Christian faith and the organization, life of and relationships within the early churches.

By about 60 AD, some of the eye-witnesses to the life of our Lord had died, and there was a need to commit the important aspects of his life, teaching, ministry and passion to writing. In Divine providence, the great Neronian persecution of 64–68 AD would witness the death of most of the original Disciples or inspired Apostles. An authoritative, Divinely-inspired record was absolutely necessary; this is the purpose of the four Gospel accounts.

²⁰² See M. R. James, *The New Testament Apocrypha*. Berkeley: Apocryphille Press, 2004. 594 pp. These writings number in the hundreds.

²⁰³ Here the traditional view is taken that the Johannine writings, The Gospel John, his Epistles and Revelation, were written in the final decade of the first century when Gnosticism was becoming entrenched.

We must consider the Divine design and purpose of revelation and inspiration. These four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—are neither biographies nor histories in the accepted sense, as they are incomplete and omit many things, especially in our Lord’s early life. They concentrate on his birth and its circumstances as vital to his person and lineage as the promised Messiah, on his earthly ministry with its teaching and miracles as credentialing his person and mission in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

They all anticipate and concentrate on his final days in which our Lord brought to culmination the glorious work of redemption through the cross and the empty tomb.

These are, in reality, portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ—thematic presentations—each from a different perspective and each with its own particular emphasis. “As portraits they present four different poses of one unique personality. Matthew by the Holy Spirit presents Christ as King, Mark as Servant, Luke as Man and John as God.”²⁰⁴ Some suggest that Matthew was written primarily for the Jews, Mark for the Roman mind, Luke for the Greek and John essentially for the Christian.

Considered synthetically, the four Gospel records must be studied together to form a composite portrait of our Lord:

There are Four Records, but only One Gospel
 There are Four Biographies, but only One Life
 There are Four Witnesses, but only One Person
 There are Four Histories, but only One Hero
 There are Four Sketches, but only One Portrait

These four Gospel records present a unity in their central theme:

Matthew: Sovereignty: Our Lord came to Rule and to Reign
 Mark: Humility: Our Lord came to Serve and to Suffer
 Luke: Humanity: Our Lord came to Share and to Sympathize
 John: Deity: Our Lord came to Reveal and Redeem

²⁰⁴ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Bible Handbook*, p. 465.

Matthew: presenting Christ as “The King of the Jews” begins his genealogy with “Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham...”

Mark: presenting Christ as the Perfect Servant gives no genealogy; a servant needs none to serve.

Luke: presenting Christ as the Perfect Man traces his lineage back to Adam.

John: presenting Christ as “The Son of God” gives no genealogy, for God has none. He rather commences his record with the eternal, pre-incarnate Christ.

Each Gospel record culminates with a central aspect:

Matthew: *The Gospel of the Head*: Key-verse: “...not come to destroy but to fulfill...” (5:17). Reasoning to the Jewish mind the Messianic fulfillment in Jesus as the Christ.

Mark: *The Gospel of the Hand*: Key-verse: “...came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...” (Mk. 10:45). The key-word is “straightway,” marking our Lord as the Servant of Yahweh.

Luke: *The Gospel for Humanity*: Key-verse: “...come to seek and to save...” (Lk. 19:10). The miracles, parables and ministry emphasize seeking and saving.

John: *The Gospel of the Heart*: Key-verse: “...come to give life...abundantly...” (Jn. 10:10). John stresses the redemptive love of our covenant God.

The emphasis of each Gospel record coincides with the major need of the world to which they were written:

Matthew is essentially National—for the Jews

Mark is essentially Practical—for the Romans

Luke is essentially Universal—for the world of the Greeks

John is essentially Theological—for Sinners and Saints

Genre and Interpretation of the Gospels

The Gospel records are unique in ancient literature. They are biographical, but not biographies, as they are partial, emphasizing only those realities which point to our Lord's Deity, the fulfillment of prophecy, his Messianic credentialing

through his ministry, his teaching and his passion [death, burial and resurrection]. His early life, childhood, family relations and other incidentals are almost unknown. The emphasis and bulk of the writing falls upon our Lord's final months, weeks or days and culminates with his trial, death and resurrection.

Within these gospel narratives the genre is varied: there are narratives of miracles, travels, teachings and incidents essential to the gospel message. Within our Lord's teaching there are exhortations, warnings, interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, parables, stories, illustrations, sermons and prophecies.²⁰⁵ The Divine inspiration of these gospel records is presupposed and therefore they are considered unique.

The Synoptic Gospels and the Strategic Gospel

Three of the four Gospel records—Matthew, Mark and Luke—are termed the Synoptic Gospels as they approach the earthly life and ministry of Christ from the same essential perspective and were written within the same time period.²⁰⁶

The Gospel according to John—the Strategic or Supplementary Gospel record—was traditionally written in the final decade of the first century, with a more focused purpose on the Deity of our Lord and the rise of Cerinthian (Jn. 1:1–18; 20:30–31) and Docetic Gnosticism (1 Jn. 1:1–4; 4:3; 2 Jn.1:7) and giving more details concern our Lord's earthly ministry. All four together form a composite portrait of our Lord.

²⁰⁵ Genre, from the Fr: *genre*, from the Lat: *genus, generis*, a distinct kind or type of literature such as historical narrative, personal correspondence, parables, sayings, illustrative stories, doctrinal formulas, prophecies, etc. See p. 52 in this volume.

²⁰⁶ "Synoptic," from the Gk. συνόπτικος, from σύν, "together with" and ὀπίζομαι, "theory of sight, view." Thus, from the same view. This term was first used by Johann J. Griesbach (1745–1812) in his *Synopsis*.

The differences between the Synoptics and John's Gospel may be very generally noted as follows: the Synoptics emphasize the Galilean ministry with close parallels; John emphasizes the Judean ministry. The Synoptics are concerned more with the outer facts of our Lord's life and ministry; John's Gospel with the inner facts. The Synoptics emphasize the kingdom; John places more emphasis upon the person of our Lord.

The Synoptics emphasize our Lord as the Son of David, the Son of Man; John emphasizes his Divine nature as the Son of God. The Synoptics deal with many of the shorter and public discourses of Jesus; John deals more with the extended and private discourses. John contains more commentary on our Lord and the given situation than the Synoptics. These also mention the final Passover, whereas John mentions four Passovers.

The Synoptic Problem

The following section is more of an issue for biblical scholars and serious students than for average devotional readers. Yet it is vitally important for the following reasons: first, it is concerned with the Divine inspiration and veracity of the Gospel records. We must take great care not to indulge in or be unduly influenced by matters which may undermine our faith, yet we must be able to intelligently face all critical issues consistently according to our presuppositions.²⁰⁷

Second, most commentaries on the Gospels necessarily deal with the Synoptic Problem. Thus, the student must be informed about the given terminology and proposed solutions to this problem.

Third, the discerning reader or student can evaluate a given commentator by his approach to and proposed solution to these issues.

²⁰⁷ See the section on "The Necessity for and Importance of One's Presuppositions," pp. 28–32 in this volume.

The passing of time in biblical studies should result not only in greater spiritual maturity, but also in a given amount of discernment in evaluating the authors of theological and biblical works. Finally, conservative biblical scholars have been influenced to a given degree by some of the proposed solutions.

The Synoptic Problem has always existed, and was first considered in Tatian's *Diatessaron* in 160 AD as he sought to harmonize the Gospel records. Since the eighteenth century and the rise of modern biblical criticism, this problem has remained a major concern for the study of the Gospel records.

The Synoptic problem may be introduced by a series of questions: How can we account for the similarities and differences among the Synoptic Gospels and harmonize them? These issues were worked out by the Greek, textual and biblical scholar, B. F. Wescott (1825–1901). Working from the Greek text, the following table was formed:²⁰⁸

Gospel	Differences	Agreements
Matthew	42%	58%
Mark	7%	93%
Luke	59%	41%
John	92%	8%

How were these writings constructed? Did these authors communicate or talk with one another? Were these independent writings or did one or more authors read or copy from the others? Did they incorporate materials from the others into their own works? Did they have access to common written

²⁰⁸ This table has been reproduced in many standard works on the Gospels, e.g., Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, p. 54; D. Edmond Hiebert, *Introduction to the New Testament*, I, p. 162, *et. al.*

earlier sources? Why is there material distinct to each author yet much that is common among them?

The similarities are often so exact that grammatical constructions are identical. How does one account for the differences when describing the same events, discourses or incidents? In what order were these Gospel records written?

Two Gospel records, Matthew and John, were written by original Disciples or Apostles; Mark was written by John Mark, who was a companion to both Peter and Paul, and might have been a personal witness to some later facts in his Gospel record. Luke, commonly called the first church historian, wrote his Gospel after detailed research. John outlived all the rest of the original disciples and probably all of the Christians of that first generation. His Gospel record seems to be very focused on certain issues and was largely supplementary to the Synoptics.

The proposed solutions to the Synoptic Problem vary with the presuppositions and approach of a given school of thought. Radical biblical criticism has played a major role. The various reactions or solutions are generally as follows:

- *The Primitive Gospel Theory*. This assumed that behind the present Gospel records there existed one or more early documents in Aramaic. This was termed the *Urevangelium*. This theory has fallen into oblivion.
- *The Interdependence Theory*. This assumed a mutual literary dependence wherein the later two writers were dependent upon the first. In an early form of this view, Matthew held the position of priority. The more modern view is that Mark's Gospel holds chronological priority.
- *The Oral Tradition Theory*. This assumed that behind the Gospel records was an oral tradition which formed their basis. Form Criticism would later be molded on a like assumption.
- *The Documentary Source Theory*. This general view held sway during the nineteen and early twentieth centuries. The sources were named *Q* for the German *Quelle*, or "source,"

and the *Logia* of Matthew, an alleged early Aramaic source. Some have held to a two–document theory; others to a four–document theory, which included an earlier form of Mark. Many conservative scholars of this era assumed the validity of this view. In this context, it was assumed that Mark had precedence over Matthew in the chronological order.

- *The Theory of Form Criticism.* This proposed solution assumed that oral traditions were the source of early narratives, sayings and stories in isolated units and eventually became the Gospel records, collected and arranged in written form. Emphasis was given to the *Sitz im Leben* or life–situation of each individual literary unit.
- *The Theory of Redaction Criticism.* This proposed solution built upon Form Criticism, but placed much more emphasis, not upon the writings so much as the writers and the distinctions within each Gospel record. Each author, it was assumed, had his own motives, intentions and views for his record and contributed this to the theological outlook of the given writing.

After three centuries of Synoptic conjecture and theories, scholars are no closer to fully solving the Synoptic Problem. The order of writing was probably Mark, Matthew and Luke. From external and internal evidence we can assume that the influence of Peter and possibly Paul are seen in Mark’s Gospel (Mk. 14:51–52;²⁰⁹ Acts 12:12, 25; 2 Tim. 4:11), unless Mark’s account was much earlier.

Matthew’s Gospel was probably written with Jewish readers in mind. Luke’s Gospel was the product, not only of Divine inspiration, but of intense research (Lk. 1:1–4). Luke had many months while Paul was incarcerated at Caesarea (Acts 22:24–27:1) to travel and possibly interview most of the

²⁰⁹ Mk. 14:51–52. Many conjecture that this incident, found only in Mark’s account, refers to John Mark himself.

original Disciples, our Lord's earthly family, including His half-brothers James and Jude and His mother, Mary. He would have had access to many of the first generation believers in the Jerusalem church who had witnessed our Lord's earthly life and ministry.

True evangelical, conservative scholars, holding to the presuppositions of Divine inspiration which included the given personality, style and purpose of each author, and the infallible superintendence of the Holy Spirit, see the glory and veracity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the written accounts of both the Synoptic Gospels and the supplementary Gospel record of John.

The Use of the Old Testament in the Gospels

The vital importance of the use of the Old Testament in and by the New Testament has previously been established.²¹⁰ In the Gospels there is a two-fold importance: first, the truth of the progressive revelation of the Divine redemptive purpose which binds together both Old and New Testaments—one unified, revealed, redemptive purpose which culminates in the Lord Jesus in both his person and his redemptive work.

Second, the great importance which our Lord placed upon the veracity and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures as the very Word of God inscripturated in his use of and interpretation of them, especially the prophecies concerning himself.

The quotations and allusions to the Old Testament Scriptures in the Gospels are usually introduced by such formulas as: "It is written" (e.g., Matt. 4:4, 7, 10),²¹¹ "that it

²¹⁰ See the section "The New Testament in relation to the Old Testament," pp. 43–47 of this volume.

²¹¹ "It is written," γεγραπται, perf., "It stands written with undiminishing authority." This formula occurs 71 times in the New Testament concerning the Old Testament.

might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet” (e.g., Matt. 1:22–23), “then was the Scripture fulfilled” (e.g., Mk. 15:28), “It hath been said” (e.g., Matt. 5:33), or the reference is made with regard to an Old Testament author, e.g., to a particular prophet (e.g., Matt. 8:17) or to the prophets in general (e.g., Matt. 2:23; Mk. 1:2), or to Moses (e.g., Mk. 7:10) or David (e.g., Matt. 24:33) specifically.

The language of the common people of the Gospel era was Κοινή Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Roman Empire, and their “Bible” [the Old Testament Scriptures] was the LXX. The official language of the state and government was Latin. Among the Palestinian Jews, the common tongue was Aramaic, evidently mixed with Hebrew expressions and sayings. The Scribes studied the Hebrew text and the LXX. Many, as our Lord, were evidently to a given degree trilingual (Lk. 23:38; Jn. 17:5; 19:20; Acts 21:37; Acts 22:2²¹²).

The exact number of Old Testament quotations and allusions remains uncertain. W. Graham Scroggie writes:

...we find in these Gospels numerous citations and allusions to the Old Testament. The figures are: in Matthew, 128; in Mark, 63; in Luke, 96; and in John, 43. The grand total being 330 citations and allusions; and these are from at least twenty-four of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. Absolute accuracy is not possible, because many of the references are so fused that separation is difficult....

When these references are examined, it will be found that most of them relate to the Messiah, and affirm, first, that He is

²¹² The New Testament references to the “Hebrew” language often refer to the Aramaic or Chaldean tongue, which had been the *lingua franca* for centuries in the Near and Middle East. For further study, see Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 443 pp.; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Dayton, OH: Center for Judaic Christian Studies, 2001. 130 pp., and *New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Holland, MI: En-Gedi Resource Center, 2007. 180 pp.

predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures, and, second, that these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.²¹³

Scroggie further comments on our Lord's quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament Scriptures:

It is both interesting and important to note what Old Testament Writings our Lord quotes. Of the 39 books which compose the Old Testament He directly quotes 14: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Kings, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Zechariah and Malachi; and He makes many allusions to other writings. Of those quoted from, He refers most often to Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah.²¹⁴

The Geography of the Gospels

Note: One needs a series of detailed topographical and historico-political maps to adequately understand the geography of the Gospels. The physiography determined the routes of travel, the political districts and the location of towns and cities. These in turn would determine the ministry and travels of our Lord. The serious student must possess a suitable Bible atlas for reference. The maps normally located at the end of Bibles are insufficient for an adequate study.

Nothing exists or occurs apart from or contrary to the eternal purpose of the self-disclosing, triune God of Scripture. There is no place for chance or randomness. The eternal creative and redemptive purpose of God is inscrutable, immutable, infallible and minute (Rom. 11:33–36; Eph. 1:11). Every nation and people have been placed and situated by God on this earth at a given time in a given place to fulfill his Divine purpose (Isa. 45:18; Ezk. 5:5). He has ordained the rise and fall of succeeding civilizations and both their might, influence and decline (Acts 17:26–27). Divine purpose and providence reign over every aspect of human history.

The land of Palestine was Divinely prepared and situated geographically—each trade route, town, river, mountain,

²¹³ W. Graham Scroggie, *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

valley, sea, synagogue and political district, Jerusalem and the Temple—to be the Divine theater for the outworking of the eternal redemptive purpose.

In ancient times, Palestine was situated strategically in relation to the great empires of Egypt to the south and Assyria, then Babylon to the North and East. During the Gospel Era, it formed the eastern border of the Roman Empire and served as a buffer state against the Parthians to the east.

All of the great historical and redemptive events which would determine world history were played out in this small country: the promise to Abraham, the journey of Jacob and his family into Egypt, the Exodus under Moses, the conquest of Canaan [later called Palestine], the rise, invasion and captivity of the north by Assyria, the Babylonian Captivity of Judea, the Restoration Era, the Egyptian Ptolemaic and Syrian Seleucid eras, the conquest by Rome and the rule of the Herodian family.

The small country of Palestine would witness the earthly life and ministry of our Lord and his suffering, death and resurrection. All of human history either leads up to the life and ministry of our Lord, the cross and the empty tomb, or derives from these; they form the focal-point of the Divine redemptive purpose.

The Jewish land, race, culture and religion, originally based on Divine revelation but slowly giving way to tradition which greatly obscured the truth, would be the Divinely-ordained incubator and context for coming of the promised Messiah and his earthly sojourn, ministry, rejection, trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection. From Jerusalem the gospel would go forth throughout the world.

- Geographically, Palestine was bordered to the west by the Mediterranean Sea, to the south and east by the Nabataean or Arab Kingdom [renamed by the Romans as Arabia Petrea], which includes the Sinai desert and the high

plateau country east of the Dead Sea; and to the north by Syria.

- The physiography of Palestine from the west and the Mediterranean Sea extends eastward to the coastal plain along its southern shores to the central mountain range which extends throughout the country. Jerusalem stands at the top of this central mountain range.
- Moving east, the Jordan Valley rift²¹⁵ and River form the natural boundaries of the various western and eastern districts.
- Further east, along the entire country, is the high plateau region, stretching north from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee and beyond. The Jordan River runs from its source in the north and the Mountains of Lebanon to the south and the Sea of Galilee [Sea of Tiberius]²¹⁶ then finally down through the Valley of Jericho and into the Dead Sea.
- The political districts in the first century AD after the death of Herod the Great: to the west of the Jordan River were Judea²¹⁷ under the control of Herod Archelaus as Ethnarch, who himself was under the higher power of a Roman Governor or Procurator.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ The rift describes the very steep eastern slope of the central range dropping steeply from Jerusalem at 2,500 feet elevation above sea level down to Jericho at 1,000 feet below sea level. The ancient, winding route between these was but eighteen miles.

²¹⁶ The Sea with four names: "Chinnereth," the ancient Heb. name (Numb. 34:11); "Galilee," from its location in the district of Galilee (Matt. 4:18); "Gennesaret," a later derivative of the Heb. (Matt. 14:34); and "Tiberias," from the town built on its shore by Herod Antipas (Jn. 21:1). A large fresh water lake 8 miles wide and 13 miles long with a maximum depth of 141 feet. The second lowest lake in altitude the world; the first is the Salt or Dead Sea.

²¹⁷ The Jews of Judea considered themselves as more orthodox than those of Galilee and other districts.

²¹⁸ The Roman Procurators during the Gospel Era were Annias Rufus (12–15), Valarius Gratus (15–26) and Pontius Pilate (26–36).

- To the southwest, Samaria, to the west, bordering Judea to the south and Galilee²¹⁹ and Phoenicia to the northwest.

Note: Samaria was largely occupied by a people of mixed origin. After the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, the Assyrians deported most of the population and repopulated the region with people from northeastern Assyria, known as the *Cuthim* or *Cuthubim* [כּוּתוּבִים, from the region of Cutha]. These intermarried with the remaining Jewish remnant to produce a mongrel race known as the Samaritans, which had a syncretism of Yahwehistic and pagan worship (2 Kgs. 17:24–41). The Samaritans [Heb: שְׁמֶרֹנִי, Gk: Σαμαρειττης] were then a mixed race who were constant adversaries to the returning Jewish remnant and opposed the rebuilding of the Temple and city walls (Ezra 4:1–24; Neh. 6:17–19; 13:28).

The Samaritans later built a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria, which was destroyed in 106 BC by John Hyrcanus (Jn. 4:20). They held to the Mosaic Law and Pentateuch only. This animosity between Jews and Samaritans lasted throughout Jewish national history (c. 722 BC–135 AD) (Jn. 4:9; 8:48). Jewish pilgrims from Galilee to Judea would cross the Jordan River and travel the ancient trade route on the eastern side down past Decapolis and through Perea, then to Jericho and up to Jerusalem to avoid Samaria.

- East of the Jordan River were Perea to the east and south. Galilee and Perea were ruled by Herod Antipas the Tetrarch.
- Decapolis to the east of Galilee, and Gaulanitis, Ulatha and Iтуреa to the east and north. These latter districts were ruled

²¹⁹ Known as “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matt. 4:15). Though predominately Jewish through occupation settlements from Judea, the Galileans were looked upon as less orthodox than the Judean Jews.

by Philip the Tetrarch, Iturea by Pilate, Governor of Judea.²²⁰

Two main trade routes ran through the country. The ancient “King’s Highway” ran northward from the Gulf of Aquiba along the eastern side of the Jordan River to the east of the Sea of Galilee and northward to Damascus. The other trade route began in Egypt and ran either north along the coast to Tyre or north to Jerusalem, then to Caesarea, the only Mediterranean port in Palestine.

The Geography of Christ’s Ministry

Our Lord’s early earthly life and ministry were centered in Galilee. The Synoptic Gospels emphasize this locality more than John, who emphasized his pilgrimages to Jerusalem with the attendant confrontations with the Jewish leaders. Our Lord journeyed to Judea on a regular basis, especially during the festivals [Passover, Feast of Dedication, Pentecost]. During his three and a half year ministry, the confrontations with the Jewish leaders increased dramatically and culminated in his arrest, trials crucifixion, death and resurrection.

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee on several occasions into the region of Decapolis, the scene of the healing of the demoniac of Gadera and a later evangelistic journey. He journeyed to the northwest into Phoenicia where he healed the demon-possessed daughter of the Canaanitish woman. On at least the occasion of his final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus went through Samaria, then followed the usual pilgrim path across to the eastern side of Jordan south of the Sea of Galilee, through Decapolis and Perea, where he met Zachaeus at Jericho before his ascent to Jerusalem.

Apart from flight of Joseph, Mary and the infant Christ into Egypt during the final years of Herod the Great’s attempt to murder him, our Lord’s travels never took him more than 75

²²⁰ For a discussion of the Herodian Dynasty, see pp. 132–151 of this volume.

miles from his headquarters at Capernaum in Galilee: from his journey to Phoenicia, to his travel up to Caesarea Philippi, east to Decapolis and Galilee, and south to Perea and Jerusalem. During his earthly ministry, our Lord's world was some 60 miles from west to east and 120 miles at the very most from north to south. Yet in this amazingly small geographical compass and within a span of three and a half years, God worked out the central reality of his eternal redemptive purpose!

The Twelve Disciples and the Gospels

A "disciple" [Gk: μαθητής. Lat: *discipulus*, a scholar] is a learner, a pupil, a student of a given teacher [διδάσκαλος]. In ancient times, it was common for religious teachers and philosophers to have such disciples. These often lived with their teachers who taught by both their religious or philosophical views or oratorical skills and their lives. Becoming a disciple meant giving one's life, experience and learning over to the teacher and adopting both his world-view and lifestyle. The goal of the disciple was to become like his teacher (Matt. 10:24–26; Lk. 6:40).

The Gospel records reveal our Lord's choice and instruction of his disciples was meant to free them from their religious traditions and expectations, and prepare them for his passion, then send them forth to herald the gospel after the empowerment at Pentecost, beginning at Jerusalem and reaching out to the world (Acts 1:8). What a strange group—Galilean fishermen, a tax collector, a nationalist and a thief and betrayer—yet such are the ways of God in the fulfillment of his inscrutable redemptive purpose!

The three and a half years of preparation are a study of patient, repetitious teaching, correction and testing to prepare them to be witnesses to the person of Christ, of the truth of the gospel and his resurrection (Lk. 24:48; Acts 1:21–22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:30–33). Only the empowerment and descent of the Spirit finally and fully prepared the Disciples to

evangelize the world (Jn. 20:19–23; Lk. 24:44–49; Acts 1:1–8; 2:1ff).

These men would have received at least the elementary teaching from their fathers concerning the Law of God and the history of Israel with its biblical promises and prophecies. From their synagogue schools, they would have gained a rudimentary education. A perusal of their writings reveals men who could converse and write in good Greek. Matthew, at least, was an educated man.

Information about the Twelve Disciples extends from the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter ten through Acts chapter one, where Matthias was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. There are four lists (Matt. 10:2–4; Mk. 3:14–19; Lk. 6:13–16; Acts 1:13), and each gives various names to some individuals, creating conjecture among biblical scholars as to the identity of several of the Disciples. It must be noted that some designations were from the person's alleged hometown, e.g., "Jesus of Nazareth" and "Judas Iscariot;" or one's patrimony, e.g., "Bartholomew," "Simon son of Jonas"; or one's personality or physical characteristics, e.g., "James the Less" and "Peter;" or one's political adherence, e.g., "Simon Zelotes."

Linguistic differences meant name changes, and most Jewish men living in that Hellenistic society had two names, e.g., "Saul who was also called Paul," "Peter" being Greek and "Cephas" being Aramaic. Our Lord himself gave names to some, e.g., "Peter," a "rock," and to James and John the sons of Zebedee, "Boanerges," "the Sons of Thunder."

Several of the Disciples were probably related to our Lord's family. James and John were cousins, their mother, Salome, being a sister to Mary, the mother of our Lord. Simon Zelotes, James the Less and Judas Lebbaeus were evidently close relatives through their father Alphaeus [Cleophas], who

was probably brother to Joseph, our Lord's legal guardian and husband of Mary (Matt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; 16:1; Jn. 19:25).²²¹

The earliest Disciples had two calls. The first was to become acquainted with our Lord and to believe in his Messiahship—their conversion; the second was to commit themselves to him as his Disciples (e.g., Jn. 1:35–42; Matt. 4:18–22). The lives of the Apostles subsequent to the Gospel records are scattered throughout the Epistles and the Book of Revelation.

What is known apart from the New Testament concerning their subsequent ministries, deaths or martyrdom, exists in the realm of tradition and legend, which are often contradictory and questionable. The sources are the spurious apocryphal legends, the “Gospels” and “Acts” of the various Apostles,²²² the writings of the early Church Fathers and some early church historians, all of whom relied on existing and often contradictory traditions and legends.

Note that the following list and references indicate the conjectures and consensus of biblical scholarship and some traditions concerning the Twelve Disciples or Apostles:

Simon Peter

The son of Jonas. “Simon” [Σίμων] derives from “Simeon” [Heb: שִׁמְעוֹן, “heard”] whom our Lord named “Peter,” [Gk: Πέτρος] or “Cephas” [Aram: כֶּפֶס], “rock, stone, pebble.” He, with his brother, Andrew, and James and John the sons of Zebedee, was a fisherman and part of their fishing partnership on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum. He evidently left his share of the business with his family and even his own wife when he became a Disciple.

²²¹ See Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, pp. 521–523.

²²² See Montague Rhodes James, *The New Testament Apocrypha*. Berkeley, CA: The Apocryphile Press, 2004, 594 pp.

After Our Lord's resurrection, he evidently took his wife with him on at least some of his missionary journeys (1 Cor. 9:5).²²³

By nature, he was transparent, bold (Matt. 14:25–32),²²⁴ impetuous (e.g., Jn. 13:4–10), at times very courageous to the point of irrationality,²²⁵ at other times cowardly (Jn. 18:16–27), usually the first to speak out, vehement in repentance (Matt. 26:69–75; Lk. 22:31–34, 54–62), and manifesting a great devotion to our Lord (Matt. 16:13–23).²²⁶

There are many more references to Simon Peter in the Gospels than any other Disciple.²²⁷ Our Lord often addressed him as “Simon” (e.g., Lk. 22:31–32; Jn. 21:15–17) He was the natural leader among the Disciples and often their spokesman.²²⁸

Peter, together with James and John, formed the inner circle of our Lord's Disciples. They alone were with him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–9; Mk. 9:1–9; Lk. 9:28–36), at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk. 5:36–43; Lk. 8:46–53), and closest to him during his garden agony (Mk. 14:32–35).

²²³ ...ἔχομεν ἔξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι...καὶ Κηφᾶς; The language implies that some of the Apostles in their later ministry took their wives with them.

²²⁴ Matt. 14:28, the Eng. “Bid me” seems weak. The word was a vehement “command” or “order me!...” [κέλευσόν με, aor. imp.].

²²⁵ At the end of the Garden agony, Judas came with a small Roman army of 480 men [a Roman cohort (σπεῖρα), comprised of a commanding officer and 6 centurions], besides the Temple guard. Peter immediately drew a sword and sought to defend our Lord to the death, cutting off the ear of Malchus, which our Lord healed (Jn. 18:3–12).

²²⁶ It is noteworthy that Satan seduced Peter at the height of his fervent concern for his Lord.

²²⁷ There are over 113 references to Simon Peter in the Gospel records.

²²⁸ Peter's name always occurs first in the four lists of the Disciples.

Peter wrote two Epistles: I & II Peter. The Gospel according to Mark was probably written by John Mark (Acts 12:12, 15; 15:37–39; Col. 4:10–11; 2 Tim. 4:11), who put in writing the inspired reminiscences of Peter concerning the life and ministry of our Lord (Jn. 14:26; 16:13–15). In later life he evangelized in Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13). Tradition has him in Rome as the first Pontif, and crucified there upside down, c. 68 AD. The reference to his crucifixion has biblical support (Jn. 21:17–19).

Note: The church is not built upon Peter or his profession, but upon the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The play on words is from “Peter” [σὸ ἐῖ Πέτρος] a rock or pebble to “this rock” [ταύτη τῆ πέτρα], referring to a great slab of bedrock (Matt. 16:13–19). Paul reinforces this latter meaning (1 Cor. 3:11).

Note: Romish tradition has Peter in Rome for 25 years before his martyrdom c. 68 AD. Paul, however, in his Epistle to the Romans (c. 58 AD) never mentions him, which would have been incomprehensible (Rom. 16:3–16). The attempt to have Peter in Rome by spiritualizing “Babylon” would make Rome the harlot of the earth, and would hardly fit the Romish tradition (Rev. 17:5; 18:2,10, 21).

James the Son of Zebedee

James is the Eng. of the Gk. Ἰάκωβος or “Jacob” [Heb. יַעֲקֹב]. With his younger brother, John, named “Boanerges” [“Sons of Thunder”] by our Lord. They with their father, Zebedee, were in the fishing trade with the family of Jonas.

This James is not to be confused with either James the son of Alphaeus or James the Lord’s half-brother, who became the leading figure in the Jerusalem church and wrote the Epistle which bears his name. His mother was probably Salome, the aunt of Mary, the mother of our Lord (Matt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; 16:1). He was a member of our Lord’s inner circle with Peter and John. He was by nature bold, courageous and at times impetuous (Lk. 9:51–56; Mk. 10:35–40). James was beheaded by Julius Herod Agrippa I, c. 44 AD, the first martyr among the Twelve Disciples.

John the Son of Zebedee

John [Gk: Ἰωάννης], from the Heb. [יְהוָה יִרְחֵם] “to whom YHWH is gracious.” He was the second most prominent among the Disciples. John was also known as “the Beloved Disciple” (Jn. 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), and the one who intimately leaned on our Lord’s breast at supper (Jn. 21:20).²²⁹ He was the younger brother of James and son of Zebedee, and so a cousin to our Lord. He and Andrew were at first disciples of John the Baptist (Jn. 1:35ff). He was the third member of the inner circle of our Lord’s Disciples and the only Disciple who witnessed the crucifixion when the others had fled.

Our Lord delivered his mother into John’s keeping just before he died (Jn. 19:26–27), an understandable act if they were close relatives. John was the first Disciple to truly believe in our Lord’s resurrection (Jn. 20:1–10). He later became a pillar of the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9). John’s brother James was the first Apostle to die and John was the last, living to the end of the first century AD, and acting as the inspired apologist against Cerinthian and Docetic Gnosticism. Tradition states that John died at Ephesus of natural causes.

John penned five books of the New Testament canon: The Gospel record which bears his name, three Epistles [I, II and III John] and the Book of Revelation.

Andrew the Brother of Simon Peter

Andrew had a Greek name [Ἀνδρέας, “manly”], which was common in that culture. He was a disciple of John the Baptist and, witnessing his testimony, immediately sought out his brother, Simon, and brought him to Jesus (Jn. 1:36–42). The Greeks sought him out in their desire to see Jesus (Jn. 12:20–22). Thus, he has been called “not only the first home missionary, but the first foreign missionary.”

²²⁹ The Roman form of dining was for two intimate friends to sit facing one another, reclining on their sides on couches. John was our Lord’s closest dining companion.

The Orthodox Church calls Andrew “The First–Called” [Πρωτόκλητος] as the very first Disciple whom our Lord called. Among the Disciples, Andrew stands out as positive, sensible and faithful in his character. Tradition has him crucified upside down on a cross in the form of an “X,” which has ever since been termed “St. Andrew’s Cross.”

Philip

Philip always occurs fifth in the lists of the Disciples. He, with Andrew, evidently only possessed a Greek name [Φίλιππος, “lover of horses,” but a common name]. He was of the town of Bethsaida and may have been a disciple of John the Baptist (Jn. 1:43–46). He is only listed in the Synoptics, but his character is revealed more in John’s Gospel. He is seen as somewhat shy and questioning, and even timid at times, yet remained serious–minded and faithful. Tradition states that he was from the Tribe of Zebulun, and that he died as a martyr at Hierapolis in Phrygia.

Bartholomew also called Nathanel

The consensus of biblical scholarship and tradition is that Bartholomew, a patronymic name, [Gk: Βαρθολομαῖος, Heb: בֶּר טַלְמַי, “son of Talmai”] and Nathanael [Gk: Ναθαναήλ, Aram: נְתַנְיָאֵל, “gift of God”] are the same person. He is referred to as “Bartholomew” in the Synoptic lists and in Acts 1:13, and as “Nathanael” in John’s Gospel. He was a native of Cana in Galilee. John’s Gospel portrays him as a serious and devout believer. Tradition states that he was from the Tribe of Naphthali, and that he preached the gospel as far as India before he was martyred by being tied in a sack and drowned in the sea in Armenia, or was flayed to death.

James the Son of Alphaeus

Gk. Ἰάκωβος, “Jacob.” Not to be confused with James, our Lord’s half–brother. He heads the third group of four in each of the four lists of the Disciples. Known as “James the Less” [Ἰακώβου τοῦ μικροῦ] (Mk. 15:40), probably referring to his

smallness of stature or to his age as a younger brother. His putative father's name was either Alphaeus [Gk: Ἀλφάιος] or Cleophas [Aram: Κλωπᾶς], and his mother's name was Mary (Matt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; Jn. 19:25), so he was possibly a relative of our Lord and perhaps the brother of Matthew. One tradition states that he was stoned to death by the Jews at Jerusalem; another, that he was crucified in Egypt.

Judas of James

Either the “brother” or “son” of James [Ἰούδαν Ἰακώβου], and a possible relative of our Lord.²³⁰ This Judas [Gk: Ἰούδας, from the Heb [יהודה], shortened form, יהודא] “praise” was also called Lebbeus [Gk: Λεββαῖος, from the Heb: לב, inner man, heart] and Thaddaeus “a man of heart,” i.e., courageous, great-hearted, [Gk: Θαδδαῖος, Heb: תדי].²³¹ Once he is designated as “Judas, not Iscariot” to distinguish him from the Betrayer (Jn. 14:22).

The Scripture focuses personally on Judas only once—when he questioned our Lord concerning his revelation to his own and not to the world (Jn. 14:22). Some regard him as the author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1:1), rather than Jude, the brother of James, and half-brother to our Lord. Traditions concerning this Judas are varied and confusing. There is some connection with Edessa in Mesopotamia, and his traditional burialplace was either in Beirut or Egypt. Another tradition states that he was martyred in Persia.

Matthew called Levi

This disciple, as was the prevailing custom, bore two names: “Matthew” [Μαθθαῖος, shortened form of Μαιτταθαίας, Aram: מתי, “gift of YHWH.” Gk. & Eng. “Theodore”] and “Levi the son of Alphaeus” [Λεὺν τὸν τοῦ Ἀλφαίου] (Matt. 9:9; Mk. 2:14). If this Alphaeus were the same as the father of

²³⁰ See Alfred Edersheim, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 603.

²³¹ This Judas has been called “the thrice-named Disciple.” A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 34. Tertullian (160–220) stated that he was *triominus*.

James the Less, then he was also a relative of our Lord (Jn. 19:25). Some conjecture that, as he is mentioned together with Thomas in the Synoptics, he was his twin. He was a customs officer [*portitore*] in the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas.

Note: The publicans [Gk: τελώνης, Lat: *publican*] were the collectors of the Roman revenue. This revenue was two-fold: *vectigalia* [direct taxes] and *porotora* [customs, including transported goods]. This office was farmed out at public auction to the highest bidder, who paid a given sum to the Roman treasury [*in publicum*, hence the name “publican”].

In the New Testament, the term “publican” is used solely of the *portitores*, or customs officials, not *publicani*, who often levied arbitrary sums upon trade goods. The Jews despised these men as extortioners for Rome while enriching themselves, and classified them with prostitutes (Matt. 21:31–32). Matthew was such (Matt. 9:9); Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1–10) was a customs commissioner [ἀρχιτελώνης] for the rich balsam trade in the area of Jericho.²³²

As a customs official he was an educated person, as demonstrated in his writing. Unlike the first Disciples, he was not a disciple of John the Baptist. Matthew is the author of the Gospel record which bears his name. One tradition states that he remained in Jerusalem for fifteen years, another that he evangelized in the surrounding countries and died of natural causes; another that he died as a martyr in Ethiopia.

Simon Zelotes

Simon [Σίμων derives from “Simeon,” Heb: שִׁמְעוֹן, “heard”] Zelotes [ζηλωτής], not be be confused with Simon Peter. He is incorrectly termed “Simon the Canaanite” (Matt. 10:4; Mk. 34:18). The proper term is Καναανίος [not Καναανίτης, “Canaanite”], the Aram: ܣܝܡܘܢ, equivalent to ζηλωτής. He is thus designated as a nationalist or patriot of the Zealot Party which was extremely orthodox and opposed to

²³² See McClintock & Strong, *Op. cit.*, VIII, pp. 768–770; Lewis M. Sweet, “Tax, Taxing,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, V, pp. 2918–2020.

Rome. These eventually precipitated the final conflict which resulted in the Jewish War and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Some have conjectured because of the order in the lists of the Disciples and the tradition of Heggesipus (c. 150–180) that he was also a relative of our Lord, another son of Alphaeus.²³³ Questionable tradition has him martyred by crucifixion in Judea.

Thomas

Thomas [Gk: Θωμάς, Heb: תאם, “twin”] was named “Didymus” [Gk: δίδυμος, “double”]. Some conjecture that, as he is always mentioned with Matthew, they were twins. He was from Galilee and a fisherman (Jn. 21:1–3). His personality seems to reveal at times a negativism (Jn. 11:8–16),²³⁴ questioning attitude (Jn. 14:1–6) and slowness to believe, and so doubters to this day are often labelled with being a “Doubting Thomas” (Jn. 20:24–29), yet he had an ardent love for our Lord. Ancient tradition states that he evangelized in Parthia, Persia and India, and was martyred by being speared.

Judas Iscariot

Judas Iscariot is always last in the four lists of the Disciples. He was evidently the only Judean among the Galileans of our Lord’s Disciples. “Iscariot” [Heb: אִישׁ קֵרְיֹוֹת, “man from Kerioth,” a village in Judea (Josh. 15:25)]. No mention is made of his call to Discipleship or of his occupation. He must have demonstrated some ability and seemed trustworthy, as he was treasurer for the entire company

²³³ See John Peter Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ*, II, pp. 176.–177; Alfred Edersheim, *Loc.cit.*

²³⁴ Thomas evidently thought that if our Lord returned to Judea, he would be killed, and so was immediately willing to go and die with him as a martyr.

of Disciples (Jn. 11:1–6).²³⁵ He was never suspected, except by our Lord, who had chosen him “that the Scripture might be fulfilled” through his treachery and betrayal (Jn. 13:18; 17:12; Acts 1:15–16).

We may assume that when the Disciples were sent forth to preach and heal that Judas performed these tasks without and above suspicion (Lk. 10:1–20). Even when our Lord pointed him out personally, the Disciples did not suspect him (Matt. 26:20–25; Mk. 14:17–21; Jn. 13:21–30).

The Gospel records reveal that our Lord evidently chose Judas, knowing his inherent dishonesty, hypocrisy and his covetous, evil heart from the very beginning (Jn. 6:63–65) “that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (Psa. 41:9; Jn. 13:18). Judas’ end had been foreordained as surely as the betrayal, arrest, trial and death of our Lord (Psa. 109:6–8; Acts 1:15–20; 2:23; 4:24–28). The first revelation of an unbeliever and betrayer among the Disciples referred to one very pointedly as a devil [ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς διάβολός ἐστιν] (Jn. 6:64, 70–71).

John comments in retrospect that Judas was a hypocrite and thief (Jn.12:3–6). His wicked apostasy reached its culmination as he covenanted with the Jewish rulers to betray our Lord for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14–15; Mk. 14:10–11). When Judas left the table at the final Passover meal at the command of our Lord, we are told that “Satan entered into him” (Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:27).

After his betrayal of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:47–50; Lk. 24:47–48; Jn. 18:2–5), he was overcome with remorse (Matt. 27:3–10)²³⁶ and hanged himself, evidently falling and disemboweling himself in the

²³⁵ Jn. 11:6, τὸ γλωσσόκομον ἔχων, “the money box had possession of.”

²³⁶ Matt. 27:3, “repented himself” is μεταμεληθεὶς, “was filled with remorse.” This was not evangelical repentance, which is μετανοία.

process (Acts 1:15–20). Such was the horrible end of the unconverted, devil–possessed Disciple. What a warning to unconverted ministers!

Jewish Sects

There were several Jewish sects or parties which existed during the Gospel Era which exercised great power over and influence upon the people: the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and to a lesser extent, the Zealots, Herodians and Essenes. These are all intertwined with our Lord’s ministry and passion.²³⁷

The Scribes

The biblical scribes [Heb: סֹפְרִים, “writers, administrators, secretaries;” Gk: γραμματεὺς, “writer”] were eventually known under several titles, including “Rabbi” [Gk: ῥαββί, fr. Heb: רַבִּי, “my Great One”] (Matt. 23:1–8), “Lawyer” [νομικός] (Matt. 22:34f; Lk. 10:25ff) and “Doctor (Teacher) of the Law” [νομοδιδάσκαλος] (Acts 5:34). The scribes held a necessary, high and honored position as copiers and interpreters of the Law.

The scribes predated the Pharisees and Sadducees by over two centuries. They developed the “fence about the Law,” i.e., the “Oral Law” or “Tradition of the Elders,” which sought to apply the Law to any given life–situation [casuistry] (Matt. 7:28–29). Most of the scribes were Pharisees and were often classed together with them (e.g., Matt. 5:20; 23:2–29). These joined with the Pharisees and Sadducees in their opposition to our Lord and his ministry.

The Pharisees

The Pharisees [Gk: Φαρισαῖοι, fr. the Persian פָּרְשֵׁי, “to separate”] were the separated ones, i.e., those who were orthodox and kept tenaciously to a very strict interpretation of

²³⁷ For a full discussion of these sects, see volume II of this *Bible Survey*, “An Introduction to The Intertestamental Era,” pp. 427–451.

the Mosaic Law and the “Tradition of the Elders” or the “Oral Law.” These arose in the later Maccabean Era as the orthodox party, succeeding the *Chasidim* [חֲסִידִים, “pious ones, saints,” fr. חֲסִיד, “kind”]. These believed in spirit-beings or angels and the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6–10), and so stood in opposition to the Sadducees, who were of the priestly aristocratic party, denied spirit-beings, the resurrection (Matt. 22:23), held to the Law, but not the Tradition of the Elders, and were very accommodating to the Hellenized culture. The Pharisees were more popular among the common people than the Sadducees, due to the latter’s religious strictness and aristocratic aloofness.

The Pharisees were the religious and orthodox elite,²³⁸ existing in four ascending orders, and appearing very self-righteous and arrogant; addicted to the minutiae of the Law in tithing and purifications and various traditions. The common people both revered and feared them and their judgmental attitude, yet they were the most popular party. They were the rulers and leaders in the synagogues, and so exercised great power over the common people.

The Sadducees

The Sadducees with the Pharisees rose to prominence during the Maccabean Era. The origin of their name is uncertain, but probably derived from either Zadok [זָדוֹק, “Zadokite”?], a priest, or from the term “righteous ones” [צַדִּיקִים].

Socially, they were of the priestly aristocracy and the affluent caste and nobility of Jewish society. Culturally, they were more affected by Hellenization than the Pharisees. Politically, they found it advantageous to support the *status quo* and so appeased the Roman authorities. Religiously, they were more conservative than the Pharisees, holding strictly to the

²³⁸ See Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, 342 pp.

Mosaic Law only, and denying the authority of the Oral Law and the Tradition of the Elders.

Theologically, these denied the resurrection of the body and angels or spirit beings, which the Pharisees believed (Matt. 22:23–33; Acts 4:1–2; 5:17, 27–40; 23:1–10). Ritualistically, they controlled the Temple worship, and were exact in matters of sacrifice and purification, yet were responsible for the moneychangers and sacrificial animals in the Temple Court of the Gentiles, from which they received a generous remuneration.

The Sadducees controlled the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem by a majority and its President was the High Priest, a Sadducee. They denied all Messianic expectation and Jewish eschatology, and thus were the foremost in condemning our Lord at his mock trial (Matt. 27:56–68; 27:1–8). Both John the Baptist and our Lord condemned them together with the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 3:7; 16:5–12). The Sadducees as a political entity passed into oblivion with the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.²³⁹

The Zealots, Herodians and Essenes

The Zealots [Ζηλωταί] or Nationalists were centered in Galilee and were in a sense a revival of the Maccabean Movement (c. 165–63 BC). This extremely patriotic party would eventually develop and precipitate the Jewish War and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Simon Zelotes, one of the Twelve Disciples, had been of this persuasion.

The Herodians (Matt. 22:16; Mk. 3:6; 12:13) were a political party that favored the Herodian Rulers for political advantage and power, and were favorable toward Rome. In opposition to our Lord, they sided with the Scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees.

²³⁹ See McClintock & Strong, *Op. cit.*, IX, pp. 234–241; J. E. H. Thomson, “Sadducees,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, IV, pp. 2658–2651.

The Essenes were an aesthetic sect, a relatively small group, which had little influence upon the Jewish people as a whole. Radical biblical critics have erroneously identified John the Baptist with this sect. The lasting value of their influence has been the Dead Sea Scrolls of biblical and other Jewish literature, which they had preserved (c. 200 BC–100 AD).

Jewish Institutions

There are three Jewish institutions which play an important part in the Gospel Era and in the ministry of our Lord: the Synagogue, the Temple and the Sanhedrin.

The Synagogue

The synagogue [συναγωγή, “meeting or gathering place”] was also known as “the house (place) of prayer” [Heb: תְּהִלָּה בַּיָּהוָה (Isa. 56:7), Gk: προσευχή or προσευκτήριον] (Acts 16:13), “assembly (congregation) of God” [מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים] (Ex. 33:7) and “Sabbath place” [σαββάτειον]. Historically, the origins of this institution are found in the Captivity and Diaspora, when local meeting places became the center of worship by necessity where there existed ten or more heads of families.

The emphasis was on the reading of the Law and prayer. Later, explanations or homilies (Lk. 4:16ff; Acts 13:15ff; 14:1ff) were given (the beginning of the *Targumim*) and schools for the religious education of the young were established. The synagogue thus became central to Jewish life, religious studies, discussion and the administration of justice (Jn. 9:34–35; Acts 9:1–2; 2 Cor. 11:24).

The leader or ruler was the ἀρχισυναγωγός (Mk. 5:36; Lk. 8:41; Acts 18:8). In addition, there were elders [πρεσβύτεροι] who comprised a “little Sanhedrin” for local religious government and justice. Other officers handled the finances and alms. The Pharisaic party was predominant, as was the promulgation of “the Tradition of the Elders.” Synagogues were, if possible, located near water sources for ease of ritual cleansing (Acts 16:13). According to tradition, there were 480 synagogues in the vicinity of Jerusalem during the Gospel Era.

The service began with the recitation of the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4–5), which was a declaration of faith,²⁴⁰ the reading and explanation of the Law, a homily and the formal prayer [the Eighteen Benedictions]. Gentile proselytes of the gate [God-fearers] were permitted to attend. The synagogues of the Diaspora became places of evangelism for the Apostle Paul (Acts 13:15ff; 14:1ff; 17:1ff).²⁴¹

The Temple

The Temple in Jerusalem was the center of Jewish worship and the only place where sacrifices could be offered. It was also the repository where all public funds were kept. The Temple retained its centrality, even though the institution of the synagogue throughout the Diaspora largely replaced it on the local level, giving prominence to the Law rather than the priesthood and sacrificial system. Jewish pilgrims throughout the Roman Empire sought to attend at least one of the major feasts at Jerusalem, mainly Pentecost, once a year.

The Second Temple was rebuilt and doubled in size (Jn. 2:20; 20 BC–26 AD) by Herod the Great through his desire to show favor to the Jews and his love of architecture.²⁴² The Temple precincts enclosed the first great Court of the Gentiles, containing the place for the money-changers and those who sold animals for sacrifices (Jn. 2:13–16). This was separated from the inner courts [the Court of the Women, the Court of

²⁴⁰ The *Shema*, from “Hear...” [שְׁמַע] is a declaration of faith in the one and only true God who is a unity [אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה | אֶחָד]. The *Kere* [what is spoken] is [שְׁמַע יְהוָה יְהוָה]. The *Kethubim* [what is written], is considered the Unpronounceable Name of the LORD.

²⁴¹ See McClintock & Strong, *Op. cit.*, X, pp. 71–84.

²⁴² See Oesterley & Robinson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 376–378. Herod had destroyed part of the Temple in 37 BC, with Roman assistance, when he conquered Jerusalem. He built palaces and fortresses throughout Palestine, including Masada, where the final Jewish resistance committed mass suicide in 72 AD.

Israel, the Court of the Priests, the holy Place and Holy of Holies] by “the middle wall of partition” (Eph. 2:14), which, at every entrance had written that no uncircumcised could pass through upon pain of death (Acts 21:26–31).

A continual burnt sacrifice was offered twice daily (Ex. 29:38–43), and the Court of Israel was the most sacred place of prayer for Jewish men (Matt. 21:10–13; Acts 3:1ff). The Temple was manned by its own guard [φύλακες τοῦ ἱεροῦ], and overseen by a captain [στρατηγός] taken from the Levites. 240 men, Levites and priests, were required to attend to and guard the Temple day and night. The order of service for priests, Levites and their functions were chosen by lot (Lk. 1:5ff).

Our Lord evidently taught in the Court of the Women, which contained the treasury, or in Solomon’s Porch, accessible to both men and women as his hearers (Mk. 12:41–43; Jn. 7:28ff; 10:23). The Apostles also later preached in Solomon’s Porch, a colonnade on the eastern side of the Temple (Acts 3:11; 5:12).²⁴³

The Sanhedrin

The “Great Sanhedrin” [Heb: סְנֵהֶדְרִין גְּדוֹלָה, Gk: συνέδριον, Lit: “a sitting together”]²⁴⁴ in Jerusalem was the Jewish High or Supreme Court, which claimed its traditional existence, legacy and right from the seventy elders appointed by Moses (Numb. 11:10–17). The existence of the Sanhedrin came during the Greek rule over Palestine. Both the Greeks

²⁴³ See Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple Its Ministry and Services*, 414 pp.; McClintock & Strong, *Op. cit.*, X, pp. 250–266; W. Shaw Caldecott and James Orr, “Temple,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, V, pp. 2930–2940; H. G. Stigers, “Temple, Jerusalem,” *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, Q–Z, pp. 622–656; and Emil Shürer, *Op. cit.*, Second Division Vol. I, pp. 207–299.

²⁴⁴ Usually referred to in the KJV as “the Council” (e.g., Matt. 5:22; 26:59; Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:66; Acts 4:15; 5:34; 22:30; 23:6; 24:20). The Jews also used the terms γερουσία, “Senate,” and πρεσβύτερον, “Council of Elders.”

and the Romans gave the Jews great control over their internal civic, criminal and religious affairs. Each of the five districts [συνέδρια] in Palestine had its own “Small Sanhedrin” or provincial council, comprised of twenty–three members to handle local affairs, but all great matters were brought before the “Great Sanhedrin” in Jerusalem.²⁴⁵ Only in the matter of capital punishment did the Sanhedrin consult the Roman Procurator.²⁴⁶

The President [נָשִׂיא, “prince”] of the Sanhedrin was the always the High Priest, a Sadducee. During our Lord’s ministry the President and High Priest was Joseph Caiaphas. The Vice President [אב בית דין, “father of the house of judgment”] handled internal affairs within the Council. Notaries worked as clerks with various cases.

The Pharisees often outnumbered the Sadducees, made the Council more amicable toward the common people and often divided its forces. The Sanhedrin convened in a large semi–circle in its own quarters [for a time, within the Temple precincts in its own room], with those addressed standing in the middle.

Our Lord and the Apostles stood before this august body. He was condemned to death (Matt. 26:57–68); they were tried and beaten (Acts 4:5–15; 5:21–33, 40–41). The biblical record reveals the division between the Pharisees and Sadducees in

²⁴⁵ The Jerusalem or Great Sanhedrin also had a lesser Sanhedrin of twenty–three members which arbitrated in minor matters.

²⁴⁶ The only exception was the immediate execution of an uncircumcised Gentile who unlawfully entered the Temple precinct through the “middle wall of partition,” which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Inner courts (Acts 21:26ff). Herod himself, before he was king, was brought before the Sanhedrin to answer for killing a Galilean brigand, Hezekiah, without their permission. Upon his accession to the throne, he murdered the majority of the Sanhedrin. Stephen (Acts 7:51–60) was lynched by the infuriated members of the Sanhedrin.

the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:33–40; 23:1–10). This institution, as known in the New Testament, passed away with the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD).

The Jewish Calendar

Roman and Jewish Reckoning of Time

Hourly time in the ancient Roman world was not exact. Within the Roman Empire, various cultures observed different hourly reckoning which differed from the Roman method. The Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset (Gen. 1:5, 8). The Jewish daytime itself was divided into twelve hours, from sunrise to sunset (Jn.11:9), with each hour being longer or shorter in either summer or winter. Thus, time was not exact.

The Roman day was twenty-four hours, extending from midnight to midnight. The Synoptics generally use the Jewish time and John, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem, generally uses the Roman time. Thus, there are no contradictions among the Gospel accounts, which used at times either the Roman or Jewish reckoning. The following table gives an approximate comparison of Roman and Jewish hourly time:

Roman Hourly Time	Jewish Hourly Time
12 midnight: Roman start of the day	Jewish 6th hour of the night
3:00am: Roman 3rd hour	Jewish 9th hour of night
6:00am: Roman 6th hour	Jewish start of day (sunrise)
9:00am: Roman 9th hour	Jewish 3rd hour day
12 noon: Roman 12th hour	Jewish 6th hour day
3:00pm: Roman 3rd hour	Jewish 9th hour day
6:00pm: Roman 6th hour	Jewish 12th hour (sunset)
9:00pm: Roman 9th hour	Jewish 3rd hour of night

There seems to be some contradiction concerning the day of our Lord's crucifixion. The answer is simply that three

“Sabbaths” occurred three days in succession: The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Day of the Passover and the weekly Sabbath, further, it must be remembered that in Jewish reckoning, the day began at sundown, so “the evening and the morning” were counted as one day (Gen. 1:5).

Two Calendars

The ancient attempts at telling and keeping time were varied. The Roman calendar was established on a solar basis for a 365 day year by Julius Caesar for the empire (c. 45 BC), though various other systems were observed among the conquered peoples. The Jewish calendar had been established on a lunar system of twelve to thirteen months, each month beginning with the new moon, and so of twenty–nine and thirty days alternately. As the Jews were an agricultural people, the calendar was arranged according to and the months named after the seasons.

There were two Jewish calendars:²⁴⁷ one for civil and governmental purposes, the other for religious purposes. The *am ha aretz*²⁴⁸ lived by the religious calendar with its various feasts and fasts, as well as by the seasons. The religious calendar is of importance in the Gospels, as our Lord and his Disciples journeyed to Jerusalem for the various feasts. The repeated journeys to Jerusalem, the ministry and miracles performed there, and the two cleansings of the Temple resulted

²⁴⁷ Three Jewish Calendars have existed historically: the first from Israel’s early history to the Babylonian Exile; the second, from the restoration through the New Testament or Second Temple Era; the third, from early centuries of Talmudic Judaism to the present.

²⁴⁸ The use of the terminology “the people of the land” [Heb: אֲמֹת הָאָרֶץ, *am ha-aretz*] or “the common people” Gk: ὁ πολλὸς ὄχλος] varied with time and historical circumstances. During the time of the New Testament, ὁ πολλὸς ὄχλος referred to the poor, common people—the ignorant masses who were often held in disdain by the religious leaders [ὄχλος, mob, multitude, not λάος, a distinct or covenant people] (Jn. 7:49). From this group came most of our Lord’s disciples and followers.

in increasing confrontations with the Jewish authorities, which finally led to our Lord's arrest, trial and crucifixion.

The table of the Religious and Civil Jewish Calendars

Number	Names and Times of Months		Seasons and Observances
1 (7)	Abib or Nisan	(Mar–Apr)	Beginning of barley harvest Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread
2 (8)	Ziph or Iyyar	(Apr–May)	Barley harvest
3 (9)	Sivan	(May–June)	Wheat harvest Feast of Pentecost
4 (10)	Tammuz	(June–July)	Summer months
5 (11)	Ab	(July–Aug)	Ripening of grapes, figs and olives
6 (12)	Elul	(Aug–Sept)	Vintage begins
7 (1)	Ethanim or Tishri	(Sept–Oct)	Time of the early rains, plowing fields Feast of Tabernacles, Yom Kippur
8 (2)	Marcheshvan or Bul	(Oct–Nov)	Sowing time for wheat and barley
9 (3)	Chesliv	(Nov–Dec)	Feast of Dedication [Chanukah]
10 (4)	Tebeth	(Dec–Jan)	Rainy winter months
11 (5)	Shebat	(Jan–Feb)	New Year for trees
12 (6)	Adar	(February–March)	Almond trees bloom Feast of Purim
13	Adar Sheni	(Intercalary) ²⁴⁹	

Note: Modified from the table found in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, I, p. 595 and the *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, I, p. 688. The numbers denote the religious

²⁴⁹ The term "Intercalary" refers to a day or month inserted to harmonize with the solar year. The modern calendar inserts one day every four years.

year and calendar, which began in the month Abib or Nisan in the spring with the Passover and extended to the next early spring. The numbers in parentheses refer to the civil year and calendar, which began in the month Ethanim or Tishri (September–October) and extended to the month of Elul (August–September), following the seasonal yearly pattern.

The Feasts

There were monthly feasts and fasts for various religious and historical purposes. The Gospel records mention the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matt. 26:2ff; Mk. 14:1ff; Lk. 2:41; Jn. 2:13, *et. al.*), the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:2) and the Feast of Dedication or Chanukah (Jn. 10:22ff). We must assume that our Lord and the Disciples journeyed to Jerusalem for the three major yearly feasts proscribed by Mosaic Law: Passover [Unleavened Bread], Pentecost [firstfruits of harvest] and the Feast of Tabernacles [full harvest] (Ex. 23:14–17).²⁵⁰

The Miracles of our Lord

To properly consider the miracles of our Lord in the Gospel records, it is necessary to enter into the realm of Christian Apologetics (1 Pet. 3:15; 2 Cor. 10:3–5; Phil. 1:7; Jude 3).²⁵¹ Fallen, sinful man by nature, suffering from the noetic effects of sin,²⁵² is steeped in unbelief and suppression

²⁵⁰ See McClintock & Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, II, pp. 20–26 for a discussion of the other various monthly fasts, feasts and commemorations which the Jews observed.

²⁵¹ Apologetics, a rational or intelligent defense of the faith. From the Gk. ἀπό, “off, from,” and λέγειν, “to speak,” and thus to speak from a given position and thus to defend it. For a concise and summary discussion of presuppositional apologetics and the miracles, see Paul S. Nelson, *Presuppositionalism: A Biblical Approach to Apologetics*, pp. 237–250.

²⁵² “Noetic,” from the Gk. νοῦς, mind, the faculty of thinking and reasoning. The noetic effects of sin refer to the mental incapacity of fallen, sinful mankind (Rom. 1:18–20; Eph. 4:17–19).

of the truth (Rom. 1:18),²⁵³ thus, he either refuses to believe in miracles or reverts to an irrational religious superstition. Modern secular science by its very nature is empirical and antisupernaturalistic. The universe is perceived to be a closed system where everything functions within the confines of natural law, which is necessarily uniformitarian and unalterable. A miracle is thus impossible, as it would be a violation of immutable natural law. What may have seemed to be a miracle in the past was either fiction, legend or a phenomenon which could or may later be explained with time and scientific advancement.

The Scriptures, however, attest to the miraculous. What is the foundational issue? It is presuppositional, deriving from one's world-view. One's belief-system, or world-view, is evidenced through his presuppositions; all facts are interpreted by one's presuppositions, as noted in the preceding paragraph.²⁵⁴

The Christian Theistic World-and-Life View, which presupposes the triune, self-disclosing God of Scripture, also necessarily presupposes the Divine inspiration, authority and self-attesting nature of inscripturated Divine revelation, and so affirms the supernatural and thus the miracles of Scripture. God providentially governs the universe from the stars and galaxies to the electrons and neutrons of each individual atom according to his eternal purpose (Psa. 19:1-6; Dan. 4:35; Neh. 9:6; Eph. 1:11).

All laws are God's laws, and he sovereignly rules over all in his providence without hindrance or contradiction. To believe in God and Scripture is to believe in the miraculous.

Even in Scripture, truly supernatural miracles [*providentia extraordinaria*] are not the usual means of the Divine,

²⁵³ "Holding," κατεχόντων, "pres. ptc., "habitually suppressing."

²⁵⁴ See the section, "The Necessity for and Importance of One's Presuppositions" in this volume, pp. 28-32.

providential government [*providentia ordinaria*]. They are the exception, reserved for special successive stages of the revelatory and redemptive purpose. Miracles reveal God's power and purpose and credential his revelatory message and messenger.

There have been four great eras of miracles since Creation and the Fall: The Mosaic era (e.g., Ex. 4:1–9; 7:1–5; 10:1–2; Numb. 14:11; Deut. 4:32–35; 6:20–25; 7:18–19; 26:8; 29:2–6), the era of Elijah and Elisha (e.g., 1 Kgs. 17:13–24; 18:36–40; 2 Kgs. 1:7–14; 2:1, 11–14; 2:19–22; 4:1–7, 32–36; 5:1–14; 6:1–7, 18–20; 13:21), the earthly life and ministry of our Lord (e.g., Matt. 8:16; 12:15; 14:14; 21:14; Mk. 1:34; 3:10; Acts 10:38) and the ministry of the inspired Apostles (e.g., Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3–4).

Each of these heralded a further stage in the progressive redemptive revelation which culminated in the ministry of our Lord and was finally credentialed through the ministry of the Apostles. When the canon of Scripture was complete and Christianity became established in the world, the era of miracles ceased, having fulfilled its purpose (1 Cor. 13:8–13). Men are now urged to turn from sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospel message; repentance and faith have superseded sight.

What is a Miracle?

The term “miracle” [Lat: *miraculum*, “that which causes wonder”] in the English Bible is the vague equivalent of several Greek terms, and these biblical terms form the basis of a proper definition. There are four terms. One is a very general term, ἔργα, which denotes “works,” referring to our Lord's miracles in general and used only by John (Jn. 5:36; 7:3; 9:4; 10:25, 32–38; 14:12; 15:24). The three main terms are δυνάμεις, “powers;” σημεῖα, “signs;” and τέρατα, “wonders.” These three terms occur together in three passages: Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12 and Heb. 2:3–4.

Δυναμία or “power” describes the cause of a miracle; it is a manifestation of Divine power. This term is often translated as “mighty works” (e.g., Matt. 11:20–24). Σημεῖον, a “sign” describes the purpose of a miracle. It is designed to reveal, to teach, to instruct. Every miracle was performed for a distinct revelatory purpose (e.g., Jn. 2:11). Τέρας, a “wonder,” describes the effect of the miracle upon the observer (e.g., 1 Kgs. 18:19–40). This final term is always used in conjunction with σημεῖα: “signs and wonders” (e.g., Jn. 4:48). These were a call to see and believe.

A miracle is not “a violation of natural law,” but either a mediate [through the use of means, e.g., Ex. 14:21–30; Jn. 9:1–7] or immediate [without the use of means, e.g., Matt. 8:24–27], extraordinary, supernatural, actual [not merely mental perception] Divine intervention or exercise of “power” into the natural sphere (e.g., 1 Kgs. 18:24, 36–39) which supersedes God’s laws of nature [were nature not uniform under God’s laws, there would be no miracle] which glorifies God.

It is a “sign,” a demonstration of Divine omnipotence, an action or “wonder” which is designed to cause awe or astonishment and thus credential God’s man or message in the context of the Divine redemptive purpose (e.g., Ex. 8:18–19; 1 Kgs. 18:36–39; Lk. 11:19–20).

What is the Significance of Our Lord’s Miracles?

Our Lord’s miracles were never meant for a mere demonstration of power or wonder. They attested to the arrival of the promised Messianic era (Matt. 12:22–28; Mk. 1:14–15; Lk. 7:19–23), and credentialed both our Lord’s person and his message (Jn. 10:22–26, 32, 37–38). His miracles were a means of self-disclosure (Jn. 1:18; 14:9), attesting to his both his Messiahship and his Deity, as he performed them by his own inherent, Divine prerogative, power and authority (Matt. 7:28–29; Jn. 2:11; 11:4).

They also certified his message as the fulfillment of saving truth in the New or Gospel Covenant promised by the Old

Testament (Jer. 31:31–34; Matt. 26:53–56; Mk. 14:49; Jn. 3:14–21; Rom. 1:1–5).

Our Lord's miracles may be generally divided into three types: those dealing with the physical human realm, e.g., healing of the sick, maimed, diseased and blind, raising the dead; those dealing with the natural realm, i.e., turning the water into wine, stilling the storm, multiplying the loaves, walking on water, withering the fig tree, the miraculous draughts of fish; miracles dealing with the spirit world, i.e., casting out demons and healing the demoniacs. These demonstrated our Lord's absolute power over every realm and thus witnessed to his Deity as the Son of God.

It must never be thought that our Lord's ministry was impersonal or that his miracles were performed merely as duties or passively, simply to fulfill prophetic expectation. As the God-Man, truly Divine and yet truly human, he was filled with compassion and sympathy for those to whom he came (Lk. 19:41–44) and those he healed or raised their loved ones from the dead (Matt. 14:14; 20:29–34; Mk. 1:40–41; 5:19; Lk. 7:11–16; Jn. 11:1–45) and those to whom he ministered (Matt. 9:36–38; 15:32; Mk. 6:34; 8:1–3).

His Divine powers were never exercised for his own needs, advantage or solely in his own interest (e.g., Matt. 4:1–4, 11; 8:20; 27:39–43; Mk. 15:40–41; Lk. 23:39).

It must be noted that, until the gospel went forth to the world through the Apostles, the truly miraculous was confined to Israel and her prophets in the progressive, redemptive, revelatory purpose. Thus, the nation was religiously, historically and prophetically predisposed to receive the miraculous to credential both the messenger and his message (Matt. 12:38–40; 16:1–4; Mk. 8:11–12; Lk. 11:16–20; Jn. 2:18; 6:30; 1 Cor. 1:22).

The person and ministry of our Lord, attested by his message and miracles, left them without excuse. Their blatant unbelief (Matt. 13:54–58; Jn. 5:39–47; 7:28–32, 45–49; 10:25–

26; 12:37–41) in the face of the great number of Messianic prophecies (e.g., Psa. 22; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 35:5–6; 52:13–53:1–10; 61:1–3; Mic. 5:2) and the evident supernatural reality of the miracles themselves, was incredible—as was their religious prejudice (Jn. 7:52) and envy (Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10). Further, the Scriptures had been obscured by their traditions.²⁵⁵ Unable to explain the evident supernatural nature of his miracles, their only alternative was to attribute our Lord’s power and authority to demonic power (Matt. 9:34; 12:22–28; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15)!²⁵⁶

A List of the Specific Miracles in the Gospels

Our Lord performed countless miracles during his three and a half year ministry; many are simply recorded *en masse* (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 12:15; 14:14; 19:2; 21:14; Mk. 1:34; 3:10; 6:5; Lk. 4:40; 6:17–19). Thirty-five specific miracles are recorded in the Gospel records:

Miracle	Mark ²⁵⁷	Matthew	Luke	John
Water changed into wine at Cana				2:1–11
Nobleman’s son healed				4: 46-54
Demoniac healed	1:23-26		4:33-36	
Peter’s mother-in-law healed	1:29-31	8:14-17	4:38-39	

²⁵⁵ Jewish expectation was that the Messiah would be a conquering hero, a reigning king (Psa. 2; 110), freeing them from the yoke of Rome. They were blind to the suffering Messiah and Savior (e.g., Psa. 22; Isa. 53; Zech. 13:7).

²⁵⁶ From their Scriptures and history, the Jewish leaders knew of the demonic miracles and deceptive works of the Egyptian sorcerers and those with familiar spirits (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, etc. Lev. 20:27; 1 Sam. 28:7ff; 2 Chron. 33:6).

²⁵⁷ The priority is given to Mark’s account, followed by the other Synoptics and John.

First miraculous catch of fish			5:4-11	
Leper cleansed	1:40-45	8:1-4	5:12-16	
Paralyzed man healed	2:1-12	9:1-8	5:17-26	
Lame man at Bethesda healed				5:1-16
Withered hand healed	3:1-5	12:9-13	6:6-11	
Centurion's servant healed		8:5-13	7:1-10	
Widow's son restored to life			7:11-16	
Storm stilled	4:35-41	8:23-27	8:22-25	
Exorcism of Demoniac of Gadara	5:1-20	8:28-34	8:26-39	
Woman with issue of blood	5:25-34	9:20-22	8:43-48	
Jairus' daughter raised	5:22-24, 35-43	9:18-19, 23-26	8:41-42, 49-56	
Two blind men healed		9:27-31		
Mute demoniac healed		9:32-34		
Blind and mute demoniac healed		12:22-29	11:14-22	
Five Thousand fed	6:32-44	14:15-21	9:12-17	6:1-13
Jesus walks upon the water	6:45-52	14:22-33		6:16-21
Daughter of Syro-Phoenician woman healed	7:24-30	15:21-28		
Deaf-mute man healed	7:31-37			
Four thousand fed	8:1-9	15:32-39		
Blind man healed	8:22-26			
Epileptic boy healed	9:14-29	17:14-21	9:37-43	
Coin obtained from fish's mouth	17:24-27			

Man born blind healed				9:1-41
Woman with infirmity healed			13:10-17	
Man with dropsy healed			14:1-6	
Ten lepers healed			17:11-19	
Lazarus raised from the dead				11:1-44
Blind Bartimaeus healed	10:46-52	20:29-34	18:35-43	
Fig tree cursed	11:12-14, 20-24	21:18-22		
Malchus' ear healed			22:49-51	
Second miraculous catch of fish				21:3-14

Only one miracle is recorded in all four Gospels: The Feeding of the Five Thousand. Each Gospel record recorded certain miracles and omitted others, consonant with the author's purpose. Among the Synoptics, Matthew's Gospel records twenty miracles and omits fifteen. Mark's Gospel records eighteen miracles and omits seventeen. Luke's Gospel records twenty miracles and omits fifteen. John's Gospel records eight miracles [σημεῖα] which were selected according to his purpose (20:30–31). Of these, six are peculiar to John.²⁵⁸

The Parables of our Lord

The Bible, as the inscripturated Word of God conveyed in human language, abounds in figures of speech. Among the more common figures are idioms (Matt. 6:13), similies (Psa.

²⁵⁸ For an analysis and listing of the miracles and their distribution among the Gospel records as to either inclusion or omission, see W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, pp. 202–203, 286–291, 418–420, 662.

1:3), metaphors (Psa. 23:1), allegories (Matt. 12:43–45), proverbs (2 Pet. 2:22) and parables.²⁵⁹

The Definition and Description of a Parable

A parable [Gk: παραβολή, from παρά, “alongside,” and βάλλειν, “to throw or cast”] is “a setting alongside” for the sake of comparison. The LXX used this term for the Heb. מִשְׁלָּה, which meant either a parable or proverb (Psa. 78:2). In its broadest sense a biblical parable has been described as “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” It is a comparison to illustrate one subject by another, an imaginative story,²⁶⁰ yet true to nature, which illustrates a Divine truth.

Our Lord’s parables may be generally classified in a three-fold manner. A. B. Bruce notes that:

Christ was the Light of the world; and in his parabolic teaching, He let His light shine upon men in beautiful prismatic rays, and the precious fruit is preserved for our use in three groups of parables: first, the *theoretic* parables, containing the *general truth* concerning the kingdom of God; second, the *evangelic* parables, setting forth the Divine *goodness* and grace as the source of salvation and the law of the Christian life; third, the *prophetic* parables, proclaiming the *righteousness* of God as the Supreme Ruler, rewarding men according to their works.²⁶¹

The Interpretation of Parables

Two issues must be addressed in the interpretation of parables: first, a parable is meant to teach and illustrate one main spiritual truth (e.g., Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Lk. 21:29–36).

²⁵⁹ The reader is referred to E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated*, 1104 pp.

²⁶⁰ The story of The Rich Man and Lazarus is traditionally considered to be a parable (Lk. 16:19–31), but it would be the only story in which a person is specifically named. Many, including this author, hold this to be actual and historical. If not, then a given amount of revelation would be without doctrinal warrant and relegated to the realm of fancy.

²⁶¹ A. B. Bruce, *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, p. 4.

This prohibits an allegorical interpretation which would find some esoteric significance in a multitude of minor details. Allegorization has ever led to great error and contradictory speculation.

Second, the purpose of a parable is to illustrate a given spiritual truth; it must never form the basis for a given truth, i.e., parables must never form the basis for theological truth or argumentation. Parables are illustrative, not revelatory. Generations of biblical interpreters laid down this same rule: *theologia parabolica non est argumentativa*.

Our Lord's Use of Parables

The ministry of the Lord Jesus in a general sense was preaching to the multitudes, healing the sick or credentialing his ministry through miracles and teaching his Disciples. He employed a variety of methods: he taught in parables (Matt. 13:3–9, 18–23), used epigrams (Matt. 5:3–12; 10:39), argumentation (Matt. 22:15–45), questions and answers (Matt. 16:24–26; 22:41–45) and object lessons (Matt. 18:1–6; Lk. 21:1–4).

The general purpose in our Lord's parabolic teaching was to enable his hearers to grasp and retain the truth through simple illustrations usually drawn from daily life.

Three realities concerning his parabolic teaching are essential to a proper understanding: first, he taught in parables for a two-fold reason—both to reveal and also to conceal the truth (Matt. 13:10–17; Lk. 8:10). Second, the Parable of the Sower, Seed and Soils (Matt. 13:3–9, 18–23; Mk. 4:3–13; Lk. 8:4–8, 11–15) provides the key to his parabolic teaching, as he explained this parable and principle to his Disciples (Mk. 4:13).²⁶² Third, as the tensions grew between our Lord and the religious authorities, which would culminate in his passion, he

²⁶² Mk. 4:13, οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην, καὶ πῶς πάσας τὰς παραβολὰς γνώσεσθε; “Do you not perceive this parable? Then how all parables will you come to know?”

increased his parabolic teaching rather than speak openly and freely of Divine matters to the multitudes (Matt. 13:34–35; Mk. 4:33–34).

The List of Parables in the Gospels

There are approximately fifty parables in the Gospel records and another twenty “parabolic illustrations,” or undeveloped, abbreviated parables. No one Gospel record contains all the parables of our Lord. Each evangelist drew upon and recorded the parables which fit his particular theme and purpose. Traditionally, Matthew is preeminently the Gospel of the Kingdom for the Jewish mind; Mark, the Gospel for the Roman mind; Luke, the Gospel for the world; and finally John, the Gospel for the believer, has no proper parables. Those recorded by two of the evangelists are those found in only in Matthew and Luke. Only seven parables are found in all of the Synoptics.²⁶³

Parable	Biblical Reference
Parables which occur in one Gospel only	
The Wheat and the Tares	Mat 13:24–30, 36–43
The Hidden Treasure	Mat 13:44
The Pearl of Great Price	Mat 13:45–46
The Fish Net	Mat 13:47–50
The Householder	Mat 13:51–52
The Unmerciful Servant	Mat 18:23–35
The Laborers in the Vineyard	Mat 20:1–16
The Two Sons called to Work	Mat 21:28–32
The Marriage of the King’s Son	Mat 22:1–14

²⁶³ This list has been adapted from W. Graham Scroggie, *Op. cit.*, pp. 549–551.

The Ten Virgins	Mat 25:1–13
The Talents	Mat 25:14–30
The Sheep and the Goats	Mat 25:31–46
The Seed Growing Secretly	Mk 4:26–29
The Householder and the Porter	Mk 13:34–37
The Two Debtors	Lk 7:41–43
The Good Samaritan	Lk 10:30–37
The Friend at Midnight	Lk 11:5–8
The Rich Fool	Lk 12:13–21
The Waiting and Watching Servants	Lk 12:35–38
The Barren Fig Tree	Lk 13:6–9
The Great Supper	Lk 14:16–24
The Unfinished Tower	Lk 14:28–30
The Unwaged War	Lk 14:31–32
The Lost Piece of Silver	Lk 15:8–10
The Prodigal Son and Elder Brother	Lk 15:11–32
The Unrighteous Steward	Lk 16:1–13
The Rich Man and Lazarus	Lk 16:19–31
The Unprofitable Servants	Lk 17:7–10
The Unjust Judge	Lk 18:1–8
The Pharisee and the Publican	Lk 18:9–14
The Pounds	Lk 19:11–27
The Door of the Sheep	Jn 10:1–10
The Good Shepherd	Jn 10:11–18, 25–30

The Vine and the Branches	Jn 15:1–6
Parables which occur in Two Gospels Only (Matthew and Luke)	
The Inward Light	Mat 6:22–23; Lk 9:34–36
The Two Builders	Mat 7:24–27; Lk 6:46–49
The Unclean Spirit Returns	Mat 12:43–45; Lk 9:24–26
The Leaven in the Meal	Mat 13:33; Lk 13:20–21
The Master and the Thief	Mat 24:43–44; Lk 12:39–40
The Faithful and the Evil Servants	Mat 24:45–51; Lk 12:42–46
The Lost Sheep	Mat 18:12–14; Lk 15:3–7
Parables which occur in Three Gospels	
The Savorless Salt	Mat 5:13; Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34–35
The Lighted Lamp	Mat 5:15; Mk 6:21; Lk 8:16–17; 9:33
The Bride and the Bridegroom	Mat 9:14–15; Mk. 2:19–20; Lk 5:34–35
The New Cloth on an Old Garment	Mat 9:16; Mk 2:21; Lk 5:36
The New Wine in Old Wineskins	Mat 9:17; Mk 2:22; Lk 5:37–39
The Sower, Seed and Soils	Mat 13:3–9, 18–23; Mk 4:1–9; Lk 8:4–8
The Mustard Seed	Mat 13:31–32; Mk 4:30–32; Lk 13:18–19
The Wicked Husbandmen	Mat 21:33–41; Mk 12:1–9; Lk 20:9–16
The Rejected Stone	Mat 20:42–46; Mk 12:10–11; Lk 20: 17–19
The Sprouting Fig Tree	Mat 24:32–35; Mk 13:28–31; Lk 21:29–33

Parabolic Illustrations	
Fishers of Men	Mat 4:19; Mk 1:16–17; Lk 5:10
The Salt of the Earth	Mat 5:13
The Light of the World	Mat 5:14–16; 11:34–36
Dogs and Swine	Matt 7:6
Doomed, Uprooted Plants	Mat 15:13
The Strait Gate and Shut Door	Lk 13:23–30
The Mote and the Beam	Mat 7:1–5; Lk 6:41–42
The Broad and Narrow Ways	Mat 7:13–14
The Good and Bad Fruit Trees	Mat 7:16–20; Lk 6:43–45
The Physician and the Sick	Mat 9:12–13
The Offending Bodily Members	Mat 5:29–30; Mk 9:43–47
Birds and Flowers	Mat 6:25–34; Lk 12:22–31
Parables re Satan's Kingdom	Mat 12:24–28; Mk 3:23–26
The Strong Man Bound	Mat 12:29–30; Mk 3:27; Lk 9:17–22
Good and Bad Treasures	Mat 12:34–37
The Blind Guiding the Blind	Mat 15:14; Lk 6:39
The Chief Seats at Feasts	Lk 14:7–11
The Harvest Field	Jn 4:35–48
The Grain of Wheat	Jn 12:23–26
Heart Defilement	Mat 15:10–20; Mk 7:14–23

A Harmony of the Gospels and Chronology of the Life of Christ

Introduction: A Harmony of the Gospels

The four Gospel records do not lend themselves to either a concise harmony or an exact chronology of the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the *Diatessaron* of Tatian (c. 160 AD), countless attempts have been made to arrange a suitable Harmony from the four Gospel records, and yet there remain debated difficulties and differences.²⁶⁴ No one Gospel record is entirely complete in itself. There are definite reasons for this: first, the authors under Divine inspiration were presenting a Person, neither writing biographies nor furnishing their readers with an inclusive account of our Lord's earthly life and ministry.

Second, the records are fragmentary because the purpose of each writer was to bring the reader to the centrality and finality of our Lord's passion—the trial and suffering, the cross and the resurrection. The development of these Gospel records was more topical and cumulative than chronological. The bulk of each Gospel record deals with the final events of our Lord's life. Thus, the purpose was neither merely historical nor informative, but salvific—and intended for a specific group of readers (e.g., Jn. 20:30–31).

Third, the authors were writing for their contemporaries who would have understood much by way of time, dates, events and circumstances that biblical scholars at this distant time may not. Many of the first-generation believers were still alive (c. 50–63 AD) and there were evidently already many written accounts (Lk. 1:1–4).

²⁶⁴ Most standard works on the Life of Christ include a detailed Harmony of the Gospels and a chronology of events. The older, standard work is A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ*, 1922. 305 pp.

Fourth, Although there are chronological markers such as dates and events, these are only approximate due to such issues as calendar variations, the date of the death of Herod the Great, the census of Quirinius (Lk. 2:2), the co-regency of Tiberius before his accession as sole Emperor (Lk. 3:1) and a lack of concern for the exactness of non-critical incidentals (Lk. 3:23). In the following chronology, the Gospel records are harmonized by scriptural references, giving the historical precedence to Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, then John, as supplemental to the Synoptics.

Introduction: A Chronology of the Life of Christ

The major events which act as chronological markers are: the dates of our Lord's birth; his baptism, which marked the beginning of his ministry; the duration of his ministry and the date of his passion: his suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection.

The duration of our Lord's ministry may be calculated according to the number of Passover Feasts; four Passovers, given or implied in John's Gospel (Jn. 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 11:55ff),²⁶⁵ reveal a ministry of approximately three and a half years, a duration generally accepted by conservative biblical scholars.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand marked the apex of Christ's public and popular ministry; it began to wane from that point onward to the final events (Jn. 6:14–15, 24ff, 66), as he did not fulfill the traditional, popular Messianic expectations of the people—a miracle-working “Bread King” or a military leader to free them from Roman oppression.

Further, opposition from the Jewish leaders constantly increased. His public ministry then became more esoteric, teaching more in parables while privately instructing his

²⁶⁵ While almost all conservative biblical scholars hold to a three and a half year ministry, there is disagreement concerning Jn. 5:1, an unnamed feast, possibly referring to a Passover.

Disciples. A marked change also took place at Caesarea Philippi in our Lord's private discourses, just prior to his final journey to Jerusalem, as he prepared the Disciples for his passion (Matt. 16:13–21; Mk. 8:27–31; Lk. 9:18–22).

A General Overview

To avoid being inundated by all the events of a detailed chronology of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, an introductory general overview should enable the reader to grasp the general flow of the Gospel records and the earthly life of our Lord. This overview is enlarged in a following chronology.

The Prologue: (Lk. 1:1–4; Jn. 1:1–18)

This was essential to establish Christ's Deity and the purpose of the incarnation. It also revealed the multiplicity of early existing oral and written records of our Lord's life.

I. Thirty Years of Preparation (6 BC–27 AD)

This was essential to establish Christ's Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18–26; Lk. 1:26–35), the heavenly announcement (Lk. 2:8–14) and proper Davidic lineage (Matt. 1:1–17; Lk. 3:23–38). Essentials considered: the fulfillment of Scripture (Matt. 1:21–25; 2:14–18, 23) and our Lord's self-consciousness of his true person and purpose (Lk. 2:43–52).

[The Year of Obscurity: Christ begins his public ministry and his fame spreads]

II. Opening Events (27 AD)

The ministry of John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, marking the advent of the long-awaited Messiah and identifying our Lord to the people (Matt. 3:1–17; 11:1–15; 17:10–13; Lk. 3:21–22; 7:28–29; Jn. 1:15, 19–34).

The first Passover and miracles (Jn. 2:11 ff).

III. Early Judean Ministry (27 AD)

The first cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:13–21), a public Messianic act.

IV. Samaritan Ministry (28 AD)

One of Christ's greatest receptions and public success was in Samaria (Jn. 4:4–43).

V. Galilean Ministry (28–29 AD)

The greater part of Christ's ministry was in the area of Galilee, with forays into Syro–Phoenicia, Iturea and areas to the north and into Decapolis to the east.

A. First Period (5 Months)

Second [unnamed] Passover [?] observed at Jerusalem (Jn. 5:1ff).

[The Year of Opportunity: Christ's ministry expands throughout Galilee and beyond. He begins to encounter opposition from the Jewish leaders]

B. Second Period (One Year)

The Feeding of the Five Thousand and subsequent events (Mk. 6:35–46; Matt. 14:15–23; Lk. 9:12–17; Jn. 6:15) mark the apex of Christ's public ministry. From this event and his refusal to comply with the popular demand of the people, the record emphasizes the private instructions to the Disciples and more retirement from public life.

Third Passover (Jn. 6:4).

[The Year of Opposition: The encounters with and opposition from the Jewish leaders increase and they seek to destroy him]

C. Third Period (6 Months)

Journeys to the north into Syro–Phoenicia and east into Decapolis.

VI. Later Judean Ministry (30 AD)

VII. Perea Ministry (30 AD)

This final journey to Jerusalem, following the usual pilgrim route on the east side of the Jordan River, marked Christ's ministry in Perea. Luke gives the most detailed account (Lk. 9:51–19:28).

VIII. The Closing Events (30 AD)

The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1–11; Matt. 21:1–11, 14–17; Lk. 19:29–40; Jn. 12:12–19).

The second cleansing of the Temple (Mk. 11:15–18; Lk. 19:45–46), a public Messianic act.

Last public discourse: a Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mk. 12:38–40; Matt. 23:1–39; Lk. 20:45–47).

Christ gives final instructions to his Disciples, including the eschatological discourses and the final prophecy of his own death and resurrection (Mk. 13:1–37; Matt. 24:1–25:46; Lk. 21:5–36).

The Final Passover (Jn. 11:55ff), arrest, trial and crucifixion (Mk. 14:1–15:37; Matt. 26:1–27:50; Lk. 22:1–23:46; Jn. 18:1–19:30).

Our Lord's resurrection (Mk. 16:1–15; Matt. 28:1–10; Lk. 24:1–48; Jn. 20:1–20).

IX. Post-Resurrection Confirmations (30 AD)

For forty days after his resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared repeatedly to the Disciples and others of the Christian community, then ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Mk. 16:1–20; Matt. 28:1–20; Lk. 24:1–53; Jn. 20:1–21, 25; Acts 1:1–11; 2:31–33; 3:13–15; 5:29–32; 10:38–42; 13:28–31; 1 Cor. 15:3–8).

A Chronology of the Earthly Life of Christ

This expanded chronology is developed from the foregoing overview. The Harmony is contained in the scriptural references to the various Gospels. Historical Dates are approximate.

The Prologue: (Lk. 1:1–4; Jn. 1:1–18)

1. The Prologue of John: the pre-incarnate state of the eternal Son of God and his incarnation as the manifestation and representation of God.
2. The Preface of Luke: a dedication and revelation of both his complete and accurate knowledge and his research methods from eye-witness accounts.

I. Thirty Years of Preparation (6 BC–27 AD)

3. The genealogies of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealing his legal lineage through Joseph and his natural lineage through Mary (Matt. 1:1–17; Lk. 3:23–38).
4. The Annunciation and Birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner and identifier of our Lord (6–5 BC) (Lk. 1:5–25, 57–80).
5. The Annunciation of the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (6–5 BC) (Matt. 1:18–25; Lk. 1:26–38).
6. The visit of Mary to Elizabeth (Lk. 1:39–56).
7. Birth and early life of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:57–80).
8. The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem of Judea. The Angelic Visitation and revelation to the Shepherds (Lk. 2:1–20).
9. The circumcision and presentation of the infant Jesus (Lk. 2:21–39).

10. The visit and worship of the Magi or Wise men (Matt. 2:1–12).²⁶⁶
11. The Divine warning and flight into Egypt (Matt. 2:13–18).
12. The slaughter of the Babes in the area of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16–18).
13. The return to Nazareth by Divine revelation (Matt. 2:19–23).
14. Jesus' boyhood at Nazareth (Lk. 2:40).
15. The Jerusalem Passover pilgrimage when Jesus was 12 years old. His disputations with the Jewish Teachers and his correction of his parents (Lk. 2:41–50).
16. The 18 silent years at Nazareth: Jesus' adolescence and early manhood (Lk. 2:51–52).

[The Year of Obscurity]

II. Opening Events (27 AD)

17. The ministry of John the Baptist, who came as the forerunner of the Messiah, to prepare the nation and identify our Lord to the people. The first spiritual awakening of the Gospel era (Mk. 1:2–8; Matt. 3:1–17; 11:1–15; 17:10–13; Lk. 3:7–23; 7:28–29; Jn. 1:15, 19–37).
18. The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the witness of the Spirit (Mk. 1:9–11; Matt. 3:13–17; Lk. 3:21–22).
19. First five Disciples chosen (Jn. 1:35–51).
20. The Wilderness Temptation (Mk. 1:12–13; Matt. 4:1–11; Lk. 4:1–13).

²⁶⁶ The Magi were not present at our Lord's birth, but arrived some time later. Luke's account has the family returning to Nazareth after the circumcision, presentation and Mary's 30 days of purification (Lk. 2:21–39). Only Matthew's account mentions the leading of the star, the presentation of the gifts (Matt. 2:8–12), the flight into Egypt (Matt. 2:13–15) and the age determined by Herod in the slaughter of the babes Matt. 2:16.

Note: The temptation, immediately following the first public proclamation, was necessary. Satan's kingdom was aroused and he must test the Son of God. This was the first step in dismantling Satan's kingdom (Gen. 3:15, "bruise," פִּיֶּשֶׁת, to grind down; 1 Jn. 3:8, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου). Our Lord was not tempted as a mere individual, but as the "Second Man" and "Last Adam" (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45–47).

21. The first Miracle at Cana in Galilee: turning water into wine (Jn. 2:1–12).

III. Early Judean Ministry (27 AD)

22. The first Passover recorded by John (Jn. 2:13).
23. The first cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:13–21), a public Messianic act.
24. First public confrontation with Jewish authorities and first miracles in Jerusalem (Jn. 2:18–25).
25. Interview with Nicodemus: Discourse on Regeneration and Redemptive love (Jn. 3:1–21).
26. The parallel ministry of Jesus with John the Baptist. The Baptist's testimony concerning Jesus (Jn. 3:22–36).
27. Jesus' departure from Judea into Galilee through Samaria (Mk. 1:14; Matt. 4:12; Lk. 3:19–20; 4:14; Jn. 4:1–4).

IV. Samaritan Ministry (28 AD)

28. The great Samaritan ministry: one of Christ's greatest receptions and public success (Jn. 4:4–42).

V. Galilean Ministry (28–29 AD)

A. First Period (5 Months)

29. Jesus' arrival in Galilee (Mk. 1:14–15; Matt. 4:17; Lk. 4:14–15; Jn. 4:43–45).
30. Healing of Nobleman's son (Jn. 1:46–54).
31. Second unnamed Passover [or Feast of Purim?] observed at Jerusalem (Jn. 5:1f).
32. Healing of the Lame man at the pool of Bethesda. Jews charge our Lord with blasphemy; our Lord's defense (Jn. 5:2–47).
33. Rejection at Synagogue in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16–30).

34. Removal of headquarters to Capernaum (Matt. 4:13–17).
35. John the Baptist imprisoned at Machaerus (Matt. 3:18; Lk. 3:19).
36. Miraculous draught of fishes; Call of the four Disciples: Peter, Andrew, James and John (Mk. 1:16–20; Matt. 4:18–22; Lk. 5:1–11).
37. Demoniac healed at Capernaum (Mk. 1:21–28; Lk. 4:31–37).
38. Peter's mother-in-law healed with many others (Mk. 1:29–34; Matt. 8:14–17; Lk. 4:38–41).

[The Year of Opportunity]

39. First preaching tour of Galilee (Mk. 1:35–39; Matt. 4:23–25; Lk. 4:42–44).
 40. The healing of a leper and the following publicity (Mk. 1:40–45; Matt. 8:1–4; Lk. 5:12–16).
 41. The forgiving and healing of a paralytic (Mk. 2:1–12; Matt. 9:1–8; Lk. 5:17–26).
 42. Call of Matthew; eating with publicans; the question of fasting. Parables of the Bride and Bridegroom, New cloth on Old Garment, New Wine in Old Wineskins (Mk. 2:13–22; Matt. 9:9–17; Lk. 5:27–39).
 43. Controversy over plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23–28; Matt. 12:1–8; Lk. 6:1–5).
 44. Healing man with withered hand on Sabbath (Mk. 3:1–6; Matt. 12:9–14; Lk. 6:6–11).
- B. Second Period (One Year)**
45. Withdrawal to the Sea. Teaching and healing the multitudes (Mk. 3:7–12; Matt. 12:15–21).
 46. After a night of prayer, Jesus appoints Twelve Disciples (Mk. 3:13–19; Lk. 6:12–16).
 47. The Sermon on the Mount. Parables: the Inward Light, the Two Builders, the Savorless Salt, Dogs and Swine, the Good and Bad Trees and Fruit, The Broad and Narrow Ways (Mk. 9:50; Matt. 5:1–8:1; Lk. 6:17–49; 14:34–35).

48. Healing of a centurion's servant at Capernaum (Matt. 8:5–13; Lk. 7:1–10).
49. A widow's son raised from the dead at Nain (Lk. 7:11–17).
50. The Inquiry of John the Baptist and Jesus' response and eulogy (Matt. 11:2–19; Lk. 7:18–35).
51. Jesus pronounces woes upon the cities where his most notable works were done because of their unbelief (Matt. 11:20–30).
52. Christ's feet anointed by a sinful but contrite woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee; Parable of the Two Debtors (Lk. 7:36–50).
53. Second preaching tour of Galilee (Lk. 8:1–3).
54. The "Long" or "Busy Day:" various parables, e.g., Secretly Growing Seed, crossing the Sea of Galilee, calming the storm and healing the demoniacs. Demons and the swine. Parables of the Returning Unclean Spirit, the Leaven in the Meal (Mk. 3:19–5:20; Matt. 8:18, 23–34; 12:22–13:53; Lk. 8:4–39).
55. Return to Galilee. Healing of the woman with the issue of blood. Raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk. 5:21–43; Matt. 9:18–26; Lk. 8:40–56).
56. Healing of two blind men and a dumb demoniac (Matt. 9:27–34).
57. Healing of another demoniac (Matt. 12:22–29; Lk. 11:14–22).
58. Parables of the Kingdom: Sower, Seed and Soils, Wheat and Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven, Hid Treasure or Pearl and The Net (Mk. 4:1–34; Matt. 13:1–53; Lk. 8:4–18).
59. The second rejection at Nazareth and Jesus final visit there (Mk. 6:1–6; Matt. 13:54–58).
60. Third and final preaching tour of Galilee. The Disciples sent forth by Twos (Mk. 6:6–13; Matt. 9:35–11:1; Lk. 9:1–9).

61. The death of John the Baptist and the guilty fears of Herod Antipas (Mk. 6:14–29; Matt. 14:1–12; Lk. 9:7–9).²⁶⁷
62. Third Passover (Jn. 6:4).
63. The first retirement and training of the Twelve; the feeding of the five thousand, marking the apex of Jesus' ministry (Mk. 6:30–44; Matt. 14:13–21; Lk. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–13).
64. The futile and aborted attempt to force Jesus to become king (Mk. 6:45–46; Matt. 14:22–23; Jn. 6:14–15).
65. The Disciples in the storm. Jesus walking on the water (Mk. 6:47–52; Matt. 14:24–33; Jn. 6:16–21).
66. The reception at Gennesaret.²⁶⁸ A multitude of miracles (Mk. 6:53–56; Matt. 14:34–36).

[The Year of Opposition]

67. The collapse of the Galilean campaign; Jesus will not conform to popular Messianic expectations (Jn. 6:22–71).
 68. A delegation of Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem reproach our Lord and his Disciples (Mk. 7:1–23; Matt. 15:1–20; Jn. 7:1).
- C. Third Period (6 Months)
69. The second withdrawal to the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Healing of the daughter of the Syro–Phoenician woman (Mk. 7:24–30; Matt. 15:21–28).

²⁶⁷ John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded at the Herodian fortress of Machaerus on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Mk. 5. After the healing of the demoniac and drowning of the herd of swine the people rejected our Lord, but a year later they joyfully received him. The former demoniac had been sent back to proclaim Jesus' power and his testimony prepared the population for his return.

70. The third withdrawal north through Phoenicia and east to Decapolis. Healing of deaf and mute man and feeding of the four thousand (Mk. 7:31–8:9; Matt. 15:29–38).
71. A visit to Dalmanutha in Galilee. Opposition of Pharisees and Sadducees (Mk. 8:10–12; Matt. 15:39–16:4).
72. The fourth retirement to Bethsaida Julias. Our Lord rebukes the dullness of the Disciples. A blind man healed (Mk. 8:13–26; Matt. 16:5–12).
73. At Caesarea Philippi: Peter's confession (Mk. 8:27–30; Matt. 16:13–20; Lk. 9:18–21).
74. Our Lord begins to instruct the Disciples concerning his suffering, death and resurrection (Mk. 8:31–37; Matt. 16:21–26; Lk. 9:22–25).
75. Prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man (Mk. 8:38–9:1; Matt. 16:27–28; Lk. 9:26–27).
76. The Transfiguration on a mountain [Hermon?] where our Lord's glory shone through his flesh, the prophets Moses and Elijah appeared and the Father's voice was uttered from heaven (Mk. 9:2–8; Matt. 17:1–8; Lk. 9:28–36).
77. Discourse concerning the resurrection and Elijah and John the Baptist (Mk. 9:9–13; Matt. 17:9–13; Lk. 9:36).
78. Healing of demoniac boy; the powerlessness of the Disciples (Mk. 9:14–29; Matt. 17:14–20; Lk. 9:37–43).
79. More private instruction concerning our Lord's death and resurrection (Mk. 9:30–32; Matt. 17:22–23; Lk. 9:43–45).
80. Our Lord and the Temple tax. The miracle of the coin in the fish's mouth (Matt. 17:24–27).
81. Teaching the Disciples concerning greatness and humility (Mk. 9:33–37; Matt. 18:1–5; Lk. 9:46–48).
82. Mistaken zeal rebuked. Stringent warning against causing one to stumble (Mk. 9:38–50; Matt. 18:6–14; Lk. 9:49–50).

83. The principle of dealing with private and public faults; forgiveness of a sinning brother. Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:15–35).
84. Discourse on total commitment (Matt. 8:19–22; Lk. 9:57–62).
85. Feast of Tabernacles: Our Lord's unbelieving and ridiculing brothers counsel him to publicly exhibit himself in Judea. He rejects their counsel (Jn. 7:2–9).

VI. Later Judean Ministry (30 AD)

From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication: approximately three months.

86. Journey to Jerusalem through Samaria. Rejection by the Samaritans because of Jesus' countenance (Lk. 9:51–56; Jn. 7:10).
87. Intense excitement during the Feast of Tabernacles by our Lord's presence and reputation. His public proclamation. Sanhedrin frustrated in seeking his arrest (Jn. 7:11–52).
88. Adulterous woman forgiven; accusing Jews frustrated and convicted (Jn. 7:53–8:11).²⁶⁹
89. Feast of Tabernacles: Jesus' claim, violent confrontation and the attempted stoning by the Jews (Jn. 8:12–59).
90. The man born blind healed and another Sabbath controversy. The boldness of the healed man and his excommunication (Jn. 9:1–41).²⁷⁰
91. Discourse on Door of the Sheepfold and the Good Shepherd and the resulting division among the Jews (Jn. 10:1–21).
92. The mission of the Seventy. The Lord rejoices in prayer on their return (Lk. 10:1–24).

²⁶⁹ The incident of the adulterous woman bears all the marks of authenticity. It has occupied various places in the Gospel records.

²⁷⁰ Many of our Lord's most notable miracles were performed on the Sabbath, raising great objections from the Scribes and Pharisees, who made the Sabbath observance the test of orthodoxy, and thus rejected our Lord despite his miracles.

93. The question of a lawyer and the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25–37).
94. Jesus the guest of Martha, Mary and Lazarus at Bethany (Lk. 10:38–42).
95. Our Lord's second discourse on and pattern for prayer. Parable of the Importunate Friend (Lk. 11:1–13).²⁷¹
96. Blasphemous criticism by the Jews against our Lord, accusing him of being in league with Beelezbub (Lk. 11:14–36).
97. At breakfast with a Pharisee. Our Lord severely denounces the Pharisees and Lawyers (Lk. 11:37–54).
98. A public discourse to the Disciples and a great multitude concerning hypocrisy and covetousness, with warnings and parables, i.e., Parable of the Rich Fool, the Waiting and Watching Servants (Lk. 12:1–59).
99. The report of two tragedies. A discourse on repentance and the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Lk. 13:1–9).
100. Healing of a crippled woman on the Sabbath; another Sabbath controversy and two parables concerning the kingdom (Lk. 13:10–21).
101. Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. Controversy between our Lord and the Jews concerning his being the Messiah (Jn. 10:22–39).²⁷²

VII. Perea Ministry (30 AD)

This journey to Jerusalem, following the usual pilgrim route on the east side of the Jordan River, marked Christ's ministry in Perea. Luke gives the most detailed account (Lk. 9:51–19:28). Approximately three months.

102. Withdrawal to Bethany beyond Jordan (Jn. 10:40–42).

²⁷¹ The first lesson was the Model Prayer given during the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:5–15).

²⁷² A span of about three months occurs between John 10:20 and 10:21, between our Lord's discourse about the Good Shepherd and the Feast of Dedication.

103. Discourse concerning salvation, warned of Herod's hatred (Lk. 13:31–35).
104. A Sabbath dinner at the house of a Pharisee. Man with dropsy healed. Parable of the Great Supper (Lk. 14:1–24).
105. Our Lord warns the multitude to count the cost of discipleship. Parables of the Great Supper, the Unfinished Tower, The Unwaged War (Lk. 14:25–35).
106. Parable of Lost Things: Sheep, Silver, Sons (Lk. 15:1–32).
107. Parables concerning Stewardship, teaching on adultery (Lk. 16:1–13).
108. The true story of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19–31).²⁷³
109. Discourse on being faithful, but unprofitable servants (Lk. 17:1–10).
110. A short journey to Jerusalem to raise Lazarus from the dead. The Sanhedrin plots Jesus' death (Jn. 11:1–44).
111. The final journey to Jerusalem through Galilee and Samaria. Healing of ten lepers (Lk. 17:11–19).
112. Discourse concerning the kingdom and prophecy of judgment (Lk. 17:20–37).
113. Two parables on prayer: The importunate widow, the Pharisee and Publican (Lk. 18:1–14).
114. Journey through Perea. Teaching on divorce (Mk. 10:1–12; Matt. 19:1–12).
115. Failure of Disciples to comprehend our Lord's attitude. Teaching on a child-like faith (Mk. 10:13–16; Matt. 19:13–15; Lk. 18:15–17).
116. The rich young ruler, danger of riches, reaction of the Disciples (Mk. 10:17–31; Matt. 19:16–30; Lk. 18:18–30).

²⁷³ Evidently a true story, as our Lord never names anyone personally in any other parable.

117. Parable of the Householder and the workers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1–16).
118. Jesus instructs his Disciples concerning his passion and resurrection. He rebukes James and John (Mk. 10:32–45; Matt. 20:17–28; Lk. 18:31–34).
119. Jericho: blind Bartimaeus and companion healed (Mk. 10:46–52; Matt. 20:29–34; Lk. 18:35–43).
120. Conversion of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1–10).
121. Parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:11–28).

VIII. The Closing Events (30 AD)

122. Arrival at Bethany. Mary anoints him for his burial. Chief Priests take counsel to put both Christ and Lazarus to death (Jn. 11:55–12:11).
123. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1–11; Matt. 21:1–11, 14–17; Lk. 19:29–40; Jn. 12:12–19).
124. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41–44).
125. Barren fig tree cursed. The second cleansing of the Temple (Mk. 11:12–18; Matt. 21:18–19, 12–13; Lk. 19:45–48), a public Messianic act.
126. Some Greeks seek to see Jesus (Jn. 12:20–50).
127. The fig tree withered (Mk. 11:20–26; Matt. 21:19–22). Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 28–32).
128. The Sanhedrin formally challenges our Lord concerning his credentials as a teacher. Parables of the Marriage Feast for the King's Son, The wicked Husbandmen and the Rejected Stone (Mk. 11:27–12:12; Matt. 21:23–22:14; Lk. 20:1–19).
129. Pharisees and Herodians seek to ensnare Jesus concerning paying tribute to Caesar (Mk. 12:13–17; Matt. 22:15–22; Lk. 20:20–26).
130. Sadducees ask a question concerning the levirate marriage and the resurrection (Mk. 12:18–27; Matt. 22:23–33; Lk. 20:27–40).
131. A Lawyer asks a legal question, our Lord summarizes the Divine Commandments (Mk. 12:28–34; Matt. 22:34–40).

132. A question concerning Psa. 110 and the Son of David (Mk. 12:35–37; Matt. 12: 41–46; Lk. 20:41–44).
133. Last public discourse: a Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mk. 12:38–40; Matt. 23:1–39; Lk. 20:45–47).
134. As an answer to the question concerning the beautiful stones of the Temple, Christ gives final instructions to his Disciples, including the eschatological discourses and the prophecy of his own death and resurrection. Parables of the Ten Virgins, Talents, Sheep and Goats, Householder and Porter, Master and Thief, Faithful and Evil Servants (Mk. 13:1–37; Matt. 24:1–25, 43–51; Lk. 21:5–36).
135. Jesus predicts his own crucifixion to come pass in two days (Mk. 14:1–2; Matt. 26:1–5; Lk. 22:1–22).
136. Judas conspires with the Sanhedrin to betray our Lord for thirty pieces of silver (Mk. 14:10–11; Matt. 26:14–16; Lk. 22:3–6).
137. The Final Passover (Mk. 14:12–17; Matt. 26:17–20; Lk. 22:7–30). Jesus washes the feet of the Disciples (Jn. 13:1–20).
138. Our Lord reveals his betrayal and Judas as the betrayer (Mk. 14:18–21; Matt. 26:21–25; Lk. 22:21–23; Jn. 13:21–30).
139. After the departure of Judas, Jesus warns the Disciples against desertion (Mk. 14:27–31; Matt. 26:31–35; Lk. 22:31–38; Jn. 13:31–38).
140. Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper as a memorial ordinance, concluding with a hymn (Mk. 14:22–25; Matt. 26:26–29; Lk. 22:17–20).²⁷⁴
141. The final upper room discourse (Jn. 14:1–31).

²⁷⁴ The hymn was the final singing of the Hallel: Psa. 115–118. Cf. 1 Cor. 11:23–26, where the Apostle Paul deals with the Lord's Supper in the practicality of a local church context with a commentary.

142. Discourse on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Parable of the Vine and Branches (Jn. 15:1–16:33).
143. The intercessory of High Priestly Prayer of our Lord for his own (Jn. 17:1–26).
144. The Garden agony in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:26, 32–42; Matt. 26:30, 36–46; Lk. 22:39–46; Jn. 18:1).
145. The betrayal by Judas and the arrest of our Lord by the Romans and Jews.²⁷⁵ He heals the ear of Malchus, which Peter had cut off (Mk. 14:43–52; Matt. 26:47–56; Lk. 22:47–53; Jn. 18:2–13).
146. Jesus is forsaken by his Disciples, and a young man escapes.²⁷⁶ Our Lord taken to Annas, the former High Priest, for examination before his two-phase trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Jn. 18:13–14, 19–23).
147. The mock trial before the Sanhedrin by which our Lord is condemned to death, then mocked and maltreated (Mk. 14:53, 55–65; Matt. 26:57, 59–68; Lk. 22:54, 63–65; Jn. 18:24).²⁷⁷
148. Peter, who had followed afar off, sits outside the trial chamber and denies his Lord thrice (Mk. 14:54, 66–72; Matt. 26:58, 69–75; Lk. 22:54–62; Jn. 18:15–18, 25–27).
149. Our Lord formally condemned and sent to Pilate (Mk. 15:1; Matt. 27:1; Lk. 22:66–71).
150. The remorse and suicide of Judas the betrayer (Matt. 27:3–10. Cf. Acts 1:15–20).

²⁷⁵ The Roman detachment numbered 480 men [Roman cohort], consisting of a chief captain [Tribune, ὁ χιλίαρχος], six centurions, each with 80 men, in addition to the Temple guard.

²⁷⁶ The reference to this young man clothed with a linen cloth, occurring only in Mark's account, refers to John Mark himself who wrote this Gospel record.

²⁷⁷ Under oath, our Lord answers without reservation that he is the Messiah, the Son of God.

151. Our Lord's first appearance before Pilate (Mk. MK. 15:1–5; Matt. 27:2, 11–14; Lk. 23:1–5; Jn. 18:28–38).²⁷⁸
152. His second appearance before Herod Antipas (Lk. 23:6–12).
153. Jesus' final appearance before Pilate, who appeases the multitude, washes his hands and gives Jesus up to crucifixion, knowing his innocence (Mk. 15:6–15; Matt. 27:15–26; Lk. 23:13–25; Jn. 18:39–19:16).
154. Mockery by the Roman soldiers Mk. 15:16–19; Matt. 27:27–30).
155. The path to Golgotha. Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear Jesus' cross (Mk. 15:15–23; Matt. 27:31–34; Lk. 23:26–33; Jn. 19:17).²⁷⁹
156. The first three hours on the cross: 9 AM–Noon (Mk. 15:24–32; Matt. 27:35–44; Lk. 23:33–43; Jn. 19:18–27).
157. The final three hours of darkness on the cross: Noon–3 PM (Mk. 15:33–37; Matt. 27:45–50; Lk. 23:44–45; Jn. 19:28–30).
158. Confession of the centurion. Earthquake; Veil of Temple rent from top to bottom (Mk. 15:38–41; Matt. 27:51–56; Lk. 23:47–49).
159. Our Lord's death certified by the Roman government. His body taken by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus and laid in a new tomb (Mk. 15:42–46; Matt. 27:57–60; Lk. 23:50–54; Jn. 19:31–42).
160. Some women who followed Jesus watch the tomb, and the Sanhedrin has a guard posted to prevent the Disciples from stealing his body (Mk. 15:47; Matt. 27:61–66; Lk. 23:55–56).

²⁷⁸ Both Jewish and Roman trials had three phases.

²⁷⁹ After the Roman scourging, the convicted were already half-dead from the torture, torn flesh and muscles and loss of blood

161. Our Lord's resurrection. Angelic announcement to the women. Peter and John run to the tomb. Appearance to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:1–8; Matt. 28:1–8; Lk. 24:1–8; Jn. 20:1–18).
162. The guards return to the Sanhedrin and reports; their invalid testimony becomes a tradition (Matt. 28:11–15).²⁸⁰

IX. Post-Resurrection Confirmations (30 AD)

163. Our Lord appears to two of the Disciples on the road from Emmaus, and to Peter (Mk. 16:12–13; Lk. 24:13–35).²⁸¹
164. Our Lord appears to his Disciples twice, once without Thomas being present, the second time with Thomas present (Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36–43; Jn. 20:19–25).
165. Jesus appears to and discourses with seven of the Disciples by the Sea of Galilee. Second miraculous draught of fishes. Peter challenged as to his love for our Lord (Jn. 21:1–25).
166. Our Lord appears unto his half-brother James, who was destined to become the main leader in the Jerusalem church (1 Cor. 15:7).
167. The Great Commission given to 500 brethren at a mountain in Galilee (Mk. 16:15–18; Matt. 28:16–20).
168. Disciples commissioned at Jerusalem and prepared for Pentecost and world evangelism (Lk. 24:44–49; Acts 1:3–8).
169. The ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven (Mk. 16:19–20; Lk. 24:50–53; Acts 1:9–12).

²⁸⁰ Sleeping witnesses would be completely without credibility.

²⁸¹ Cf. 1 Cor. 15:5–8 for a summary of our Lord's post-resurrection appearances.

The Gospel According to Matthew

There is only one Gospel, or “good news” [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] of salvation through the impeccable person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are four Gospel records, each with its own particular approach and emphasis to the earthly life and ministry of our Lord: one biography, but four portraits.²⁸²

All of the four Gospel records are anonymous, but from the early second century have traditionally been assigned to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Thus, the traditional titles of these four in both English and in the Greek Testament are: The One Gospel “according to Matthew” [ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΘΘΙΟΝ], “according to Mark” [ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΡΚΟΝ], “according to Luke” [ΚΑΤΑ ΛΟΥΚΑΝ] and “according to John” [ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΗΑΝΝΗΝ].

Authorship

Matthew, also called Levi, was a “publican” [Gk: τελώνης, Lat: *publicani, portitores*] or tax collector in the territory of Herod Antipas in Galilee when converted and called by our Lord. He is mentioned only five times in the biblical record (Matt. 9:9; 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13). Some suppose that he was distantly related to our Lord and might have been the twin of Thomas.²⁸³

Matthew was a devout Jew, and doubtless a well-educated individual, bilingual [Aramaic, Greek] and perhaps trilingual [Aramaic, Greek and Latin] as a customs official. His Gospel record reveals his education and great sense of organization. He was probably well-to-do as a tax collector for the Roman government, although disfavored by many of the people.

²⁸² For the relation of the four Gospel records to the one Gospel, see pp. 96–98.

²⁸³ For a biographical sketch of Matthew and the meaning of “publican,” see pp. 201–202, 251–252.

As one of our Lord's Disciples, Matthew had personal and intimate knowledge of our Lord's earthly ministry and an intimate relationship with the other Disciples. His organized and perceptive mind, coupled with Divine inspiration, has given to Christians the most comprehensive and often detailed account of our Lord's earthly life and mission as the promised Messiah and Davidic King.

Although the author is not named in his Gospel account, the traditional, undisputed author is Matthew.²⁸⁴ Not until the nineteenth century and the speculations of radical biblical critics concerning the alleged λογία [a supposed precursor to Matthew written in Hebrew or Aramaic] and *Quelle* [The Ger. term for "source," an alleged document containing the sayings of Jesus and supposedly used by the author of Matthew's Gospel] was the Matthean authorship of the first Gospel denied.

The earliest copies of Matthew's Gospel are all in Greek, and the Greek text betrays no traces of being a translation. Further, there are incidentals and details in this Gospel record which point to Matthean authorship, e.g., only Matthew records his conversion and call (9:9ff). Matthew is described as "the publican" only in this Gospel (10:3).

Some grammatical expressions point to Matthew [e.g., 9:10, (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ) "in the house" rather than "his house," etc.]. Only Matthew records the incident concerning the Temple tax and gives the exact monetary amount [στατήρα, *stater*, a *hapax legomenon*] (17:24–27). Finally, a forger would probably not have chosen the name of a lesser Disciple to give credence to his work.

²⁸⁴ Matthean authorship has been undisputed from the time of Papias, an Apostolic Father (c. 70–163 AD) and disciple of the Apostle John.

Canonical Position and Preeminence

Although the Gospel according to Mark was probably the first written record historically, the Gospel according to Matthew has always occupied the first place among the Gospel records and the first position in the New Testament canon.²⁸⁵ This is the witness of the oldest Greek manuscripts, the earliest biblical canons in Greek and the most ancient versions.²⁸⁶

The reasons are that Matthew is the most complete written Gospel record, it was written by an Apostle, it emphasizes our Lord as the promised Messiah, stresses the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament and, more than the other Synoptics with its distinctly Jewish character, provides the ideal transition from the Old Testament to the New.

This gospel stands like a swinging door between the two testaments. It swings back into the Old Testament and gathers up prophecies fulfilled at the coming of Christ, and it swings into the New Testament and speaks of the 'new creation' of God, 'Upon this rock *I will build my church*' (Matt. 16:18).²⁸⁷

Finally, our Lord's actual words comprise about one fourth of Matthew's Gospel record, more than the other Gospel records.

Joseph Ernst Renan (1823–1892), the French Skeptic, Orientalist and philosopher, wrote that Matthew is "...the most important book in Christendom—the most important book that ever has been written."²⁸⁸ It was the most widely read Gospel in the early churches. The Early Church Fathers quote Matthew more than the other Gospel records, and its systematic organization of our Lord's discourses made it the most suitable

²⁸⁵ In Matthew 1:1, the first word of the Greek Testament is Βίβλος, or "book," from which the entire English word "Bible" is named.

²⁸⁶ Only three ancient Greek mss. put the Gospel of John first, ostensibly because of the prologue (Jn. 1:1–18), which begins in eternity with the pre-incarnate Christ as the Λόγος.

²⁸⁷ J. Vernon McGee, *Briefing the Bible*, p. 125.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

for reading in public worship. “In grandness of conception and in the power with which a mass of material is subordinated to great ideas no writing in either Testament, dealing with with a historical theme, is to be compared with Matthew.”²⁸⁹

The style of Matthew’s Gospel record has been described by F. W. Farrar as “antique simplicity” and yet “monumental grandeur.” His organization of facts and discourses, his descriptive, artistic and effective narrative is due, “not to genius, but to revelation; not to art, but to truth. The greatness of the work lay, not in the writer, but of Him of Whom he wrote; and in this, that without art, without style, without rhetoric, in perfect and unconscious simplicity, he sets forth the facts as they were.”²⁹⁰

Recipients, Date and Provenance

The exact date of writing is unknown, but the Synoptics were all written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Later dates are based upon the premise that these were written by authors other than the traditional authors: Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Only John’s Gospel was written at the end of the first century as the strategic or supplementary Gospel record when Gnosticism was a major concern for the churches. Assuming the priority of Mark’s Gospel (c. 50–55), the consensus of conservative scholarship is that Matthew would be dated approximately c. 55–66.

The provenance²⁹¹ of Matthew’s Gospel is unknown. Various places of writing have been suggested, with the most support given to either Antioch in Syria or Judea, depending

²⁸⁹ Theodor Zahn, as quoted by R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel*, p. 20.

²⁹⁰ W. Graham Scroggie, *Know Your Bible*, pp. 36–37.

²⁹¹ “Provenance,” from the Fr., “origin or place of origin.” Used in contemporary Bible Surveys and Introductions to refer to the place of origin and writing of a given biblical book.

upon the date. There was a Jewish persecution of Christians in Judea before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. Many fled to the Syrian Antioch, which became a center for Christians through the end of the first century.

Purpose and Theme

The four evangelists have common themes: their Christology, when taken together, is a complete, inspired commentary on the person and work of our Lord in the context of the Old Testament prophecies and promises. The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah, the King, the Savior of sinners and the revelation of God in the flesh, enables men to see the goodness, grace and power of God. Ecclesiologically, the Disciples and those intimately related to our Lord's ministry comprised the first church (Acts 1).

Evangelically, the world-wide outreach of the Gospel is noted in forays into predominantly Gentiles areas and cities. Further, our Lord in his own personal life and ministry exemplified the believer in prayer and self-sacrificing service. He remains our great and glorious example and pattern.

The purpose of Matthew's Gospel record was to present our Lord as the promised Messiah who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies—the promised and ultimate Davidic King, Immanuel, the Son of God (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Matt. 1:1, 23). He wrote this Gospel for Jews and Jewish Christians, and it contains more quotations from the Old Testament prophecies than the other Gospels—almost always prefaced by a reference to scriptural fulfillment.²⁹²

The theme, although not specifically stated as with Luke (1:1–4) and John (20:31), is given in the opening verse: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

²⁹² See the following section on Old Testament References in Matthew's Gospel Record.

There are two genealogies: Matt. 1:1–17²⁹³ and Lk. 3:23–38. Matthew’s purpose is to demonstrate that our Lord was the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and so the legitimate heir to the Davidic throne. Luke traces the lineage back to Adam, presenting our Lord as the Perfect Man, the Savior of sinners. Matthew gives the regal genealogy through Joseph; Luke gives the legal genealogy through Mary.

Note: The two genealogies may need clarification. Matthew’s genealogy traces the Davidic line through Solomon. But a curse rested upon this line through the apostasy and wickedness of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim:

Jer. 22:24, 28–30. ²⁴ As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;... ²⁸ *Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?* ²⁹ O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. ³⁰ Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Thus, the Davidic line through Joseph, the husband of Mary, was under a curse. Mary’s genealogy came from David through Nathan (Lk. 3:31). Because Mary’s father, Heli, had no son, Joseph, according to Jewish custom, became his son-in-law or adopted son, and Mary was then reckoned in his genealogy.²⁹⁴ Thus, with Joseph as his legal guardian but not actual father and through Mary his natural mother, our Lord held title to the Davidic throne through both genealogies.

Key Terms and Phrases

The phrase “Kingdom of God” occurs in the four Gospel records fifty-three times; five times in Matthew. Matthew’s

²⁹³ Matthew’s genealogy is abbreviated, tracing the lineage through the major characters in 3 sets of 14 names.

²⁹⁴ This principle was established in the matter of the daughters of Zelophehad in Numb. 27:1ff; 36:1–13.

Gospel has traditionally been known as “The Gospel of the Kingdom.” He alone of the four Evangelists uses the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” [ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν] and does so thirty–three times. The other Evangelists use the term “Kingdom of God” [ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ] in nineteen parallel passages where Matthews uses the term “Kingdom of Heaven.”

The concept of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven is very broad and inclusive. It refers generally to the rule of God over his creation and the sphere over which he exercises his authority. The Jews anticipated the Messianic age as a political kingdom. Even the Disciples still anticipated such after our Lord’s resurrection. Jesus’ final teaching and correction before his ascension concerned the kingdom and its nature (Acts 1:1–9).

The Kingdom of our Lord in a narrow sense is a spiritual kingdom expanding throughout the world through the Gospel and ruling in the hearts of men through Divine grace. The kingdom of Heaven has been described as “...the some total of all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the coming of the King from heaven to set up a kingdom on this earth with heaven’s standard.”²⁹⁵

The kingdom is neither identical with the church nor co–extensive with it. The institution of the New Testament church is an entity within the kingdom and the institution through which the kingdom increases.²⁹⁶

As The Gospel of the Kingdom and the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah and King, a suggestive outline of Matthew follows:

The Revelation of the King	(Chap. 1–10).
The Rebellion against the King	(Chap. 11–13).
The Retirement of the King	(Chap. 14–20).
The Rejection of the King	(Chap. 21–27).

²⁹⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Briefing the Bible*, pp. 125–126.

²⁹⁶ See W. R. Downing, *The New Testament Church*, pp. 24–25.

The Resurrection of the King (Chap. 28).²⁹⁷

Only Matthew, in line with his theme, calls Jerusalem “the Holy City” (4:5; 27:53), “the holy place” (24:15) and “the city of the great King” (5:34–35). He refers to our Lord as “the Son of David” ten times (1:2, 20; 9:7; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9, 15; 22:42. Also see 22:45). He alone mentions “the church” (16:18; 18:17) and he alone declares that our Lord “will sit on the throne of his glory” (19:28; 25:31). He with the other three evangelists pointedly refers to the placard on the cross: “This is Jesus King of the Jews” (Matt. 27:37; Mk. 15:25–26; Lk. 23:36–38; Jn. 19:19–22).

Characteristics and Emphases of Matthew

Many of the characteristics and emphases unique to Matthew’s Gospel record have necessarily been considered in the context of other headings: the theme, the regal genealogy, the predominantly Jewish character, the emphasis on fulfilled prophecy, the repeated emphasis upon the Kingdom of Heaven, the mention of the church, the didactic nature of the discourses, the emphasis upon the very words of Christ, etc.

It remains to note the following: first, there are some thirty incidents, sayings and events which are peculiar to Matthew’s account:

Incident, Saying, Event	Reference
The Regal Genealogy	1:1–17
The dream or vision of Joseph	1:20–24
The visit of the Magi	2:1–12
The flight into Egypt	2:13–15
The massacre of the infants	2:16
The Salt of the Earth	5:13
Dogs and Swine	7:6

²⁹⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Expository Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 11.

The Broad and Narrow Ways	7:13–14
The Physician and the Sick	9:12–13
Two blind men healed	9:27–31
The dumb demoniac healed	9:32–33
Good and Bad Treasures	12:34–37
Parable of the Tares	13:24–30, 36–43
Parable of the Hidden Treasure	13:44
Parable of the Pearl	13:45–46
Parable of the Dragnet	13:47
Doomed, uprooted plants	15:13
Coin in the mouth of the fish	17:24–27
Parable of the Unmerciful Servant	18:23–25
Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard	20:1–16
Parable of the Two Sons	21:28–32
Parable of the marriage of King's Son	22:1–13
Parable of the Ten Virgins	25:1–13
The Sheep and the Goats	25:21–36
Parable of the Talents	25:14–30
The suicide of Judas	27:3–10
The troubled dream of Pilate's wife	27:19
The resurrection of many saints after our Lord's resurrection	27:52
The bribery of the Guard who were at the tomb	28:12–15
The Great Commission including teaching, baptism and the abiding promise	28:18–20

Second, Matthew, diverse from the other Gospel records (e.g., Mk. 5:41; 15:22, 34; Lk. 2:4; 22:1; Jn. 1:38, 41–42; 4:25; 5:2; 19:13), and writing for Jews and Jewish Christians, does not usually interpret or explain Jewish customs, places or terms.

Third, in keeping with his predominantly Jewish theme and intention, Matthew deals with being righteous (9:13; 10:41; 13:17, 43; 23:28,–29, 35; 25:37, 46) and with righteousness (3:15; 5:6, 20; 6:33; 21:32), which are seldom mentioned by the other Gospel records.

Fourth, in keeping with Matthew's theme, there exists both a Jewish particularism and a Gentile universalism in his gospel account. There is at times an emphasis upon the perpetuity of the Law and its true spiritual nature. He lifted the Law of Moses to a higher, spiritual plane (5:17–21, 27–30). The commands of the Scribes and Pharisees are to be obeyed because they represent Moses, although they are not to be imitated (23:2ff). Mention is made of various Jewish observances (e.g., 5:23; 6:16ff; 24:20; 25:27).

He mentions three Gentile women in our Lord's genealogy: Tamar, Rahab and Ruth, and also arranges this genealogy according to Jewish reckoning. Our Lord made statements restrictive of his Messianic mission to draw out the faith of a Gentile woman (15:21ff). He commented positively on the great faith of a Gentile Centurion and gave an awful warning and prediction concerning the Jews (8:5–13). There are references to the inclusiveness of the Gospel which culminate in the Great Commission with its world-wide scope (28:18–20).

Fifth, Matthew's account gives a greater place to eschatological issues than the other Synoptics. The Parables of the Wheat and Tares (13:24–30), the Ten Virgins (25:1–13), The Talents (25:14–46) and other passages have eschatological elements. This is especially true in his great apocalyptic discourse in chapters 24 and 25.

Finally, Matthew organizes his Gospel record in a more topical than chronological fashion, largely fitted around the major discourses. This organization of facts and discourses is considered separately under Structure and Organization.

The Gospel of Matthew and the Old Testament

The Gospels and the Old Testament

The relation of the four Gospel records to the Old Testament prophecies is a critical study which deserves attention. Fulfilled prophecy is an integral witness to the self-attesting nature of Scripture and to our Lord as the promised Messiah. There are direct quotations, general references and paraphrases or allusions in all four Gospel records to the Old Testament prophecies concerning John the Baptist, our Lord as the promised Messiah, his Deity, Virgin Birth, the various aspects of his person and earthly ministry, his crucifixion and death, the Disciples, Judas and the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

There are some 383 Old Testament references in the Gospels, covering most of the Old Testament books and drawn from the three-fold division of The Law [*Torah*], the Prophets [*Nabi'im*] and the Psalms or Writings [*Kethubim*]. Mark's Gospel record contains sixty-three references. Luke's Gospel contains some twenty-five quotations and forty-two allusions. John's Gospel record contains nineteen citations and about 105 allusions.

Old Testament References in Matthew's Gospel Record

Matthew's Gospel contains 129 references: fifty-three quotations and seventy-six allusions or general references. Many of these are prefaced with such formulas as: "it is written," "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet..." "...that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled," "...that which was spoken unto you by God..." and such introductory phrases. Matthew's purpose in writing mainly to Jews and Jewish Christians was to portray our Lord as promised Messiah and Savior who fulfilled all of

the Old Testament prophecies. The following chart lists the use of the Old Testament in Matthew's account.

Matthew	Old Testament	Reference
1:1–17	Many Genealogical References	—
1:22–23	Isa. 7:14	Quotation
2:5–6	Mic. 5:1–2	Quotation
2:15	Hos. 11:1	Quotation
2:17–18	Jer. 31:15	Quotation
2:23	Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12	Allusion ²⁹⁸
3:3	Isa. 49:3	Quotation
3:9	Gen. 12	Allusion
3:17	Psa. 2:7	Allusion
4:4	Deut. 8:3	Quotation
4:6	Psa. 91:11–12	Quotation
4:7	Deut. 6:16	Quotation
4:10	Deut. 6:13	Quotation
4:14–16	Isa. 9:1–2	Quotation
5:4	Isa. 61:2	Allusion
5:5	Psa. 37:11	Quotation
5:7	Psa. 18:25	Allusion
5:12	General reference to “the prophets”	Allusion
5:21	Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17	Quotation
5:27	Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18	Quotation
5:31	Deut. 24:1	Quotation
5:33–37	Ex. 20:7; Numb. 30:2; Lev. 19:12; Deut. 5:11; 23:21; Isa. 66:1; Psa. 48:2	Quotation

²⁹⁸ The name “Nazarene” possesses a prophetic significance of the Messiah as “The Branch.” See the section: “The Names and Titles of our Lord,” pp. 164–173.

5:34	Isa. 66:1	Allusion
5:35	Psa. 48:2	Allusion
5:38	Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21	Quotation
5:43a	Lev. 19:18; Deut. 23:6; 25:19	Quotation
5:43b	Deut. 23:6; 25:19	Allusion
7:12	General Reference to “the Law and the Prophets”	Allusion
7:23	Psa. 6:8	Quotation
8:4	Lev. 14:3	Allusion
8:11	Isa. 49:12	Allusion
8:17	Isa. 53:4	Quotation
9:13	Hos. 6:6	Quotation
9:36	Numb. 27:17	Allusion
10:15	Gen. 19	Allusion
10:35	Mic. 7:6	Quotation
11:5	Isa. 2:18–19; 35:5–6; 61:1	Allusion
11:10	Mal. 3:1	Quotation
11:13	General reference to “all the prophets and the law”	Allusion
11:14	Mal. 4:5	Allusion
11:21–22	Ezk. 28:20–22; 36; 37	Allusion
11:23a	Isa. 14:13–15	Allusion
11:23b–24	Gen. 19:24	Allusion
11:29	Jer. 6:16	Allusion
12:2	Ex. 20:10; Deut. 5:14; 23:25	Allusion
12:3–4	Lev. 24:9; 1 Sam. 21:1–6	Allusion
12:5	Numb. 28:9–10	Allusion
12:7	Hos. 6:6	Quotation
12:10–12	Deut. 22:4, etc.	Allusion
12:18–21	Isa. 62:1–4	Quotation
12:23	Psa. 110	Allusion

12:39–40	Jonah 1:17; 2:1–2; 3:5; 4:3	Allusion
12:41	Jonah 1:2	Allusion
12:42	1 Kgs. 10:1ff; 2 Chron. 9:1ff	Allusion
13:13–15	Isa. 6:9–10	Quotation
13:32	Dan. 4:12, 21	Allusion
13:35	Psa. 78:2	Quotation
13:43	Dan. 12:3	Allusion
14:4	Lev. 18:16; 20:21	Allusion
15:4–6	Ex. 20:12; 21:17; Lev. 20:9	Quotation
15:7–9	Isa. 29:13	Quotation
16:4	Jonah 3:4	Allusion
16:14	Deut. 18:18	Allusion
16:27	Psa. 62:12; Prov. 24:12	Allusion
17:3–4	Reference to Moses and Elijah	Allusion
17:5	Deut. 18:5; Psa. 2:7; Isa. 53:1	Allusion
17:11–12	1 Kgs. 19:2, 10; Mal. 4:5– 6	Allusion
18:16	Deut. 19:15	Quotation
19:4	Gen. 1:27; 5:2	Quotation
19:5	Gen. 2:24	Quotation
19:7–8	Deut. 24:1	Allusion
19:18	Ex. 20:13–16; 21:17; Deut. 5:17–20	Quotation
19:19a	Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16	Quotation
19:19b	Lev. 19:18	Quotation
19:26	Gen. 18:14; Job 42:2	Allusion
20:30	Psa. 110	Allusion
21:4–5	Zech. 9:9; Isa. 52:11	Quotation
21:9a	Psa. 118:26	Allusion
21:9	Psa. 118:26	Quotation

21:13a	Isa. 56:7	Quotation
21:13b	Jer. 7:11	Quotation
21:15	Psa. 132:11	Allusion
21:16	Psa. 8:2	Quotation
21:33	Isa. 5:1ff	Allusion
21:42	Psa. 118:22–23	Quotation
21:44	Isa. 8:14	Allusion
22:24	Deut. 25:5	Allusion
22:29	General reference to the Scriptures	Allusion
22:31–32	Ex. 3:6, 15	Quotation
22:37	Deut. 6:5	Quotation
22:39	Lev. 19:18	Quotation
22:44	Psa. 90:1	Quotation
23:2	Deut. 33:3; Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8:4	Allusion
23:23	Lev. 27:30; Mic. 6:8	Allusion
23:35	Gen. 4:8; 2 Chron. 24:20–21	Allusion
23:38	Psa. 118:26; Jer. 12:7; 22:5	Allusion
23:38–39	Psa. 118:26; Jer. 12:7; 22:5	Quotation
24:7	Isa. 19:2	Allusion
24:15	Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11	Allusion
24:21	Dan. 12:1	Allusion
24:23–24	Deut. 13:1–13	Allusion
24:28	Job 39:30	Allusion
24:29	Dan. 8:10; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15–16	Allusion
24:30a	Zech. 12:12	Allusion
24:30b	Dan. 7:13; Isa. 13:9–10; Ezk. 32:7–8; Amos 8:9; Zeph. 1:14–16	Allusion

24:37–39	Gen. 6:11–13; 7:7, 21–23	Allusion
25:31	Zech. 14:5	Allusion
25:46	Dan. 12:2	Allusion
26:15	Zech. 11:12–13	Allusion
26:28	Ex. 24:8; Lev. 4:18–20; Jer. 31; Zech. 9:11	Allusion
26:30	Psa. 115–118 The final hymn or Hallel	Allusion
26:31	Zech. 13:7	Quotation
26:54	General reference to the fulfillment of the Scriptures	Allusion
26:56	General reference to “the scriptures of the prophets”	Allusion
26:64	Psa. 110:1; Dan. 7:13	Allusion
26:65–66	Lev. 24:16	Allusion
26:67	Isa. 1:6	Allusion
27:6	Deut. 23:18	Allusion
27:7	Zech. 11:13	Allusion
27:9–10	Zech. 11:13; Jer. 18:2; 19:2; 32:6	Allusion & Quotation ²⁹⁹
27:31	Isa. 53:7	Allusion
27:34, 48	Psa. 69:21	Quotation
27:35	Psa. 22:18	Quotation
27:39	Psa. 22:7; 109:25	Quotation
27:43	Psa. 22:8	Quotation
27:46	Psa. 22:1–2	Quotation
27:60	Isa. 53:9	Allusion

²⁹⁹ The allusion is from Jeremiah; the quotation from Zechariah. The conflation may be attributed to Jeremiah as the greater of the two prophets.

Matthew and Mark

The consensus of modern biblical scholarship is that the Gospel according to Mark was the first of the Synoptics to be written (c. 50–55). John Mark (Acts 12:12, 15; 15:37–39; 2 Tim. 4:11), the nephew or cousin of Barnabas, under Divine inspiration, penned the inspired reminiscence of the Apostle Peter (Jn. 14:26; 16:13–15).

It seems evident that both Matthew (c. 55–70) and Luke (c. 60–66) made use of Mark’s Gospel record and added much of their own information under inspiration.³⁰⁰ Mark’s Gospel record is essentially factual, presenting our Lord as the perfect Servant, and so omitting the genealogy, and also several of major discourses and sections on parables.

Matthew, presenting our Lord as the promised King, gives preeminence to the legal genealogy of our Lord as the Son of David, the son of Abraham, and also continually refers to the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. Almost the whole of Mark’s Gospel account is contained in Matthew, and he fills in many of the incidents and entities which Mark omits and elaborates others.

It is traditional to say that Mark wrote for the Roman mind and Matthew for the Jewish mind. The thrust of their writings seems to bear this out. There are twenty-one incidents, situations and issues which only Mark and Matthew record:

The Incident, Event or Situation	Mark	Matthew
Jesus’ final visit to Nazareth	6:1–6	4:13
John the Baptist’s martyrdom by beheading	6:17–29	14:6–12

³⁰⁰ For a thorough discussion of Matthew’s use of Mark according to his organizational principle and purpose, see Mark A. Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, pp. 110–111.

Jesus walking on the water	6:45–52	14:25–31
The Tradition of the Elders	7:1–23	15:1–20
A Syro–Phoenician girl cured	7:24–30	15:21–28
Feeding of the Four Thousand	8:1–9	15:30–39
The Demand for a Sign	8:10–12	16:1–4
The Dullness of the Disciples	8:13–21	16:5–12
A Question concerning Elijah	9:9–13	17:9–13
Causing a Little One to Stumble	9:42–50	18:1–10
Concerning Divorce	10:1–12	19:1–12
The Petition of the Sons of Zebedee	10:35–45	20:20–23
Withered Fig Tree	11:20–25	21:18–22
The First Commandment	12:28–34	22:34–40
The Anointing of Jesus before His Passion	14:3–9	26:6–13
The Trial of our Lord	14:55–64	26:59–69
The mocking of our Lord by the Soldiers	15:16–19	27:27–31
The God–forsaken cry on the Cross	15:34–35	27:46–49
The Women visit the Tomb	16:1	28:1ff
The Great Commission	16:15–18	28:18–20

Matthew and Luke

It is quite probable that Matthew and Luke used Mark's Gospel account and elaborated on and added various realities under Divine inspiration. It is also almost certain that Luke had both Mark and Matthew's Gospels before him as he wrote his account. There are fourteen incidents, issues and discourses which occur only in Matthew and Luke:

John the Baptist's warning to the Scribes and Pharisees	3:7–10	3:2–9
Our Lord's Selecting the Twelve	3:13–19	6:12–16
The Wilderness Three-fold Temptation of our Lord	4:1–11	4:1–13
The Sermon on the Mount	5:1–7:29	6:12–40
Our Lord addresses some would-be disciples	8:19–22	9:57–62
Exhortations to the Disciples	10:16–28	12:1–12
The Mission of John the Baptist's disciples to our Lord	11:2–19	7:17–24
Our Lord's pronouncement of woe to the cities of Galilee	11:20–24	10:13–16
The Babes and the worldly-wise	11:25–27	10:21–22
The Good and Corrupt Trees	12:33–37	6:43–46
Request for a Sign and our Lord's answer	12:38–45	11:27–32
Parable of the leaven	13:33	11:20–21
Parable of the Lost Sheep	18:12–14	15:3–7
Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants	24:45–51	12:43–48

The Miracles Recorded in Matthew's Account

Of the thirty-five miracles recorded in the Gospel records, Matthew records twenty and omits fifteen.³⁰¹ Three miracles are recorded only by Matthew: the healing of the two blind men (9:27–31), the healing of a dumb demoniac (9:32–33) and

³⁰¹ For a discussion of the miracles of our Lord, see the section "The Miracles of our Lord," pp. 215–222.

coin in the fish's mouth (17:24–27). The twenty miracles recorded by Matthew:

Miracle	Reference
Peter's mother-in-law healed	8:14–17
Leper cleansed	8:1–4
Paralyzed man healed	9:1–8
Withered hand healed	12:9–13
Centurion's servant healed	8:5–13
Storm stilled	8:23–27
Exorcism of two men of Gadara	8:28–34
Jairus' daughter raised	9:18–26
Woman with issue of blood healed	9:20–22
Two blind men healed	9:27–31
Mute demoniac healed	9:32–34
Blind and mute demoniac healed	12:22–29
Five Thousand fed	14:15–21
Jesus walks upon the water	14:22–33
Daughter of Syro-Phoenician woman healed	15:21–28
Four thousand fed	15:32–39
Epileptic boy healed	17:14–21
Coin obtained from fish's mouth	17:24–27
Blind Bartimaeus healed	20:29–34
Fig tree cursed	21:18–22

The fifteen miracles omitted by Matthew:

Miracle	Reference
Water changed into wine	Jn 2:1–11
Nobleman's son healed	Jn 4:46–54
Demoniac healed	Mk 1:23–26; Lk 4:33–36
First Catch of fish	Lk 5:6–11

Man at pool of Bethesda healed	Jn 5:1–16
Widow's son restored to life	Lk 7:11–16
Deaf–mute man healed	Mk 7:31–37
Blind man healed	Mk 8:22–26
Man born blind healed	Jn 9:1–41
Woman with infirmity healed	Lk 13:10–17
Man with dropsy healed	Lk 14:1–6
Ten lepers healed	Lk 17:11–19
Lazarus raised from the dead	Jn 11:1–44
Malchus' ear healed	Lk 22:49–51
Second catch of fish	Jn 21:3–6

The Parables Recorded in Matthew's Account

There are approximately fifty parables in the four Gospel records and another twenty “parabolic illustrations,” or undeveloped, abbreviated parables.³⁰² No one Gospel record contains all the parables of our Lord. Each evangelist drew upon and recorded the parables which fit his particular theme and purpose. Matthew includes eighteen parables and omits twenty–one. Those parables and parabolic illustrations which are peculiar to Matthew's account are:

Parable	Reference
The Salt of the Earth	5:13
Dogs and Swine	7:6
The Broad and Narrow Ways	7:13–14
The Physician and the Sick	9:12–13
Good and Bad Treasures	12:34–37
The Wheat and the Tares	13:24–30, 36–43

³⁰² For a discussion of the parables and a complete list, see: The parables of our Lord in this volume, pp. 222–228.

The Hidden Treasure	13:44
The Pearl of Great Price	13:45–46
The Fish Net	13:47–50
The Householder	13:51–52
Doomed, Uprooted Plants	15:13
The Unmerciful Servant	18:23–35
The Laborers in the Vineyard	20:1–16
The Two Sons called to Work	21:28–32
The Marriage of the King's Son	22:1–14
The Ten Virgins	25:1–13
The Talents	25:14–30
The Sheep and the Goats	25:31–46

Parables omitted by Matthew:

Parable	Reference
The Seed growing Secretly	Mk. 4:26–29
The Householder and the Porter	Mk. 13:34–37
The Two Debtors	Lk. 7:41–43
The Good Samaritan	Lk. 10:30–37
The Friend at Midnight	Lk. 11:5–8
The Rich Fool	Lk. 12:13–21
The Waiting and Watching Servants	Lk. 12:35–38
The Barren Fig Tree	Lk. 13:6–9
The Strait Gate and Shut Door	Lk. 13:23–30
The Chief Seats at Feasts	Lk. 14:7–11
The Great Supper	Lk. 14:16–24
The Unfinished Tower	Lk. 14:28–30
The Unwaged War	Lk. 14:31–32
The Lost Piece of Silver	Lk. 15:8–10

The Prodigal Son and Elder Brother	Lk. 15:11–32
The Unrighteous Steward	Lk. 16:1–13
The Rich Man and Lazarus	Lk. 16:19–31 ³⁰³
The Unprofitable Servants	Lk. 17:7–10
The Unjust Judge	Lk. 18:1–8
The Pharisee and the Publican	Lk. 18:9–14
The Pounds	Lk. 19:11–27

Organization and Structure

Two of the main features of Matthew's account are its organization and structure. With the other Synoptics, he gives more space to the Galilean ministry (4:12–16:20) and then transitions to the later Judean ministry (16:21–26:1), Passion (26:2–27:66), resurrection and Commission (28:1–28).

Only John's account treats the early Judean ministry (Jn. 2:13–4:3) and deals in depth with our Lord's travels to and confrontations at Jerusalem at the various feasts and Passovers.

As a biography of our Lord's earthly life and ministry, Matthew's two points of division are 4:17, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The second division is 16:21, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

The first statement marks the transition from the chronological and preliminary events: the nativity, the visit of the magi, the slaughter of the children, the sojourn in Egypt, the ministry of John the Baptist, our Lord's baptism and wilderness temptation (1:1–4:11) and the beginning of our Lord's preaching ministry and popularity. The second marks the beginning of the decline of his popularity and the

³⁰³ See footnote 260 for the historicity of this alleged parable.

preparation of his Disciples for his Passion—the Transfiguration, final journey to Jerusalem, Triumphal Entry, second cleansing of the Temple and final events of the Passion Week: Last Supper, garden agony, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and Great Commission.

The organization of Matthew’s account is more topical than chronological, organized around five major discourses. [There are other, shorter discourses and confrontations (e.g., 21:1–23:39) and the final Great Commission (28:18–20)]. The major five discourses, here noted in their larger context, are designed to have a cumulative effect, each marked by a concluding transition:

(1) 4:12–7:29. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings...”

(2) 8:1–11:1. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence...”

(3) 11:2–13:53. “And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence...”

(4) 13:54–19:2. “And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee...”

(5) 24:1–26:1. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings...”

Some, perhaps over-emphasizing Matthew’s Jewish approach, speculate that these five discourses correspond to the Five Books of Moses and that Matthew portrayed our Lord as the New and Greater Moses who delivered his commentary on Moses’ Law also on a mount [The Sermon on the Mount, 5:1–8:1]. Matthew also seems to group parables (e.g., chapters 8–10) and miracles (e.g., chapter 13:1–53) into groups.

Outline

The outline gives an abbreviated and summarized view of the contents of Matthew’s Gospel record. Some of the contents are furthered explained in the survey.

Outline of Matthew's Gospel Account:
The King and The Kingdom

- I. The Birth and Infancy of the King (1:1–2:23).
 - A. The Regal Genealogy of the King (1:1–17).
 - B. The Birth of the King (1:18–2:23).
 - 1. The King's Divine origin (1:18–23).
 - 2. The King's Human Birth (1:24–25).
 - C. The King's Infancy (2:1–23).
 - 1. Herod and the Magi (2:1–12).
 - 2. Slaughter of the Infants (2:2:13–15).
 - 3. Flight into Egypt (2:2:16–18).
 - 4. Return to Nazareth (2:19–23).
- II. The Baptism and Temptation of the King (3:1–4:25).
 - A. The Ministry of John the Baptist (3:1–12).
 - B. The Baptism of our Lord: Anointing as Messiah (3:13–17).
 - C. The Wilderness Temptation (4:1–11).
 - 1. Tempted as to Prerogative (4:1–4).
 - 2. Tempted as to Presumption (4:5–7).
 - 3. Tempted as to Patience (4:8–11).
- III. The First Part of the Galilean Ministry (4:12–25).
 - A. The Move to Capernaum upon the Imprisonment of John (4:12–16).
 - B. Jesus' Ministry replaces that of John (4:17).
 - C. The Call of the First Disciples (4:18–22).
 - D. A Summary of Jesus' early Ministry (4:23–25).
- IV. The First Discourse: The Sermon on the Mount by the King (5:1–7:29).**
 - A. The Citizens of the Kingdom (5:1–20).
 - B. The Laws of the Kingdom (5:21–7:12).
 - C. The Tests of the Kingdom (7:13–27).
 - D. The Reaction to the Manifesto of the Kingdom (7:28–29).
- V. The Second Part of the Galilean Ministry: The Works of the King (8:1–9:34).
 - A. Authority over Disease (8:1–22).

- B. Authority over Nature (8:18–27).
- C. Authority over Demons (8:28–34).
- D. Authority to Forgive Sin (9:1–8).
- E. Authority over the Will of Man (9:9–13).
- F. Authority over Death (9:14–26).
- G. Authority over Blindness and Dumbness (9:27–34).
- H. A Lesson in Prayer and Evangelism (9:35–38).
- V. The Second Discourse: The Mission of the Twelve sent out by the King** (10:1–11:1).
- A. The Delegation of Power to the Disciples (10:1–4).
- B. The Commission of the Twelve (10:5–42).
- VI. The Third Part of the Galilean Ministry** (11:1–12:50).
- A. The Questions of John the Baptist (11:2–15).
- B. The Refusal of the Masses to Consider the Truth (11:16–24).
- C. The Attitude of our Lord in the midst of Difficulty (11:25–30).
- D. Opposition from the Pharisees (12:1–14).
- E. The Response of our Lord (12:15–21).
- F. Attacks of the Pharisees Concerning Exorcism (12:22–37).
- G. Demand by Religious Leaders for a sign (12:38).
- H. Our Lord's Rejection of that Generation (12:39–45).
- I. Interruption by our Lord's earthly Family (12:46–50).
- VII. The Third Discourse: Parables of the Kingdom** (13:1–52).
- A. Parable of the Sower (13:1–23).
- B. Parable of the Wheat and Tares (13:24–30).
- C. Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31–32).
- D. Parable of the Leaven (13:33).
- E. Teaching the Disciples in the House (13:36–52).
- VIII. The Rejection of the King** (13:53–17:27).
- A. Rejection of our Lord at Nazareth (13:53–58).
- B. Herod's Fears (14:1–12).
- C. Feeding of the Five Thousand (14:13–21).
- D. Walking on the Water (14:22–33).

- E. Healings at Gennesaret (14:34–36).
- F. Attacks by Pharisees Concerning Ceremonial Purity (15:1–20).
 - 1. The deputation from Jerusalem (15:1–2).
 - 2. The evil of their Pharisaic traditions exposed (15:3–9).
 - 3. Teaching concerning true defilement (15:10–20).
- G. Healing of the Syro–Phoenician daughter (15:21–23).
- H. Healings in the Area of Decapolis (15:29–31).
- I. Feeding of the Four Thousand (15:32–39).
- J. Opposition by the Religious Leaders (16:1–12).
- K. Our Lord prepares the Disciples for His Passion (16:13–28).
 - 1. Peter’s confession as to our Lord’s true identity (16:13–17).
 - 2. Jesus’ declaration concerning the Keys of the Kingdom (16:18–19).
 - 3. Jesus’ charge to keep silence about his true identity (16:20).
- L. The Transfiguration of our Lord (17:1–1–13).
- M. The Healing of the Demoniac Boy (17:14–20).
- N. The Cross and daily life (17:21–23).
- O. The Temple Tax and the Miracle of the Fish and Coin (17:24–27).
- IX. The Fourth Discourse: Life in the Kingdom** (18:1–35).
 - A. Greatness in the Kingdom (18:1–6).
 - B. Warning Concerning Offences (18:7–14).
 - C. Method of Settling Offences (18:15–20).
 - D. Measure of Mutual Forgiveness (18:21–35).
- X. The Journey through Perea and into Judea with the King (19:1–20:24).
 - A. From Galilee to Judea (19:1–2).
 - B. Controversy Concerning Divorce (19:3–12).

- C. Blessing the Little Children (19:13–15).
- D. The Rich Young Ruler and Riches (19:16–26).
- E. Present and Future Rewards (19:27–30).
- F. Parable of the Vineyard Laborers (20:1–16).
- G. Reiteration of our Lord's forthcoming Passion (20:17–19).
- H. Selfish request for James and John (20:20–28).
- I. Healing of Two Blind Men (20:29–34).
- XI. Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as the Messianic King (21:1–9).
- J. Second Cleansing of the Temple (21:12–16).
- K. The Fig Tree: A Lesson in Faith (21:17–22).
- L. Confrontation with Jewish Leaders (21:23–22:46).
- XII. The Warnings against the Jewish leaders by the King (23:1–39).
- XIII. The Fifth Discourse: Revelation of the Future to the Disciples** (24:1–25:46).
- XIV. The Passion and Death of the King (26:1–27:66).
- A. Preparatory Events (26:1–16).
- 1. The conspiracy of the Sanhedrin (26:3–5).
- 2. The anointing at Bethany (23:6–13).
- 3. The conspiracy of Judas to betray Jesus (26:14–16).
- 4. The Final Passover (26:17–25).
- B. The institution of the Lord's Supper (26:26–30).
- C. The Garden of Agony (26:30–56).
- D. The Betrayal by Judas and arrest by the authorities (26:46–57).
- E. The trial of our Lord before the Sanhedrin (26:57–27:31).
- F. The denial of Peter (26:69–75).
- G. The Crucifixion and Death of the King (27:32–56).
- 1. Jesus taken before Pilate (27:1–2).
- 2. The remorse and suicide of Judas (27:3–5).
- 3. The purchase of the Potter's field with the blood money (27:6–9).
- 4. Jesus before Pilate second time (27:10–26).

5. Jesus mocked and tortured by the soldiers (27:27–31).
6. Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear Jesus' cross (27:32).
7. Jesus crucified between two thieves (27:33–50).
8. Jesus dismisses his spirit and dies (27:50).
9. The earthquake and rent veil of the Temple (27:51).
10. The resurrection of many departed saints after Jesus' resurrection (27:52–53).
11. The confession of the centurion and the gathered women (27:54–56).
12. Burial of our Lord by Joseph of Arimathaea (27:57–66).
13. Chief priests and Pharisees request a guard from Pilate (27:62–66).
- XV. The Resurrection Triumph of the King (28:1–20).
 - A. Confirmation of the Resurrection (28:1–10).
 1. The earthquake and the angel (28:1–3).
 2. The great fear of the guard (28:4).
 3. The announcement to the women and the Disciples (28:5–8).
 4. The report of the guard to the chief priests (28:11–15).
 - B. The universal Lordship of the Triumphant King (28:16–18).
 - C. The Great Commission (28:19–20).

Survey

A general survey of Matthew's Gospel account centers on the five major discourses within the context of the Galilean and later Judean ministries, with a preceding section on preliminary and introductory events (1:1–4:11) and the addition of two further sections on our Lord's Passion and the Great Commission (26:2–28:20). This survey considers Matthew's Gospel account by chapters for ease of reference.

Thirty Years of Preparation: 6 BC–26 AD

Genealogy, Birth and Early Years

Chapter 1

The regal genealogy and the perplexity of Joseph. The royal Davidic line through Joseph and the legal lineage through Mary has been considered. A moral paradox and the angelic vision: Joseph was torn between his righteous obedience to the Moral Law and his love for Mary. As a true and righteous Israelite, Joseph found that Mary, his betrothed bride, was pregnant. He had determined to give her a private divorce to both maintain his conscience before God and to protect her from public shame. The angelic vision and revelation of the Virgin Birth answered both (Isa. 7:14).³⁰⁴

He took Mary with him when he went to Bethlehem for the taxation to protect her (Lk. 2:4–5). Joseph was a righteous man whose life was at strategic points guided by Divine revelation (1:20–25; 2:13–15, 19–23).

Chapter 2

Herod and the visit of the Magi. The reference to the star in the east prophesied by Balaam and the exact time–frame prophesied by Daniel are a confirmation of our Lord’s Messiahship (Numb. 24:17–19; Dan. 9:24ff). The magi found our Lord, Mary and Joseph living in a house almost two years after his birth.

Herod, ever insanely jealous to the point of murdering members of his own household, had no reservations of murdering a possible rival—and he took an inclusive approach.³⁰⁵ The flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth

³⁰⁴ Isa. 7:14. Both the Heb. [הַעַלְמָה] and the LXX [ἡ παρθένος] are articular: “The Virgin...”

³⁰⁵ See pp. 136–144 for the life of Herod the Great.

were according to Divine revelation. The fulfilled prophecies that Jesus was to be called a Nazarene have been considered.³⁰⁶

Chapter 3

Almost thirty years pass between chapters two and three. No space is given to our Lord's childhood and young adulthood. John the Baptist was the promised forerunner, the "Elijah" who preceded and identified our Lord for Israel (Isa. 40:1–5; Mal. 4:5–6; Matt. 11:7–15; 17:9–13; Mk. 9:9–13; Lk. 1:13–17; Jn. 1:19ff). This is an instance when the Scriptures were not literally fulfilled. John's ministry signaled the Gospel era and became a great religious movement which took in the nation with a great religious awakening (Matt. 3:5–8; 11:11; Mk. 1:1–5; Lk. 1:13–17, 67–80; 3:2–19; Jn. 1:15, 19–34; Acts 1:20–22).

The baptism of our Lord by John both identified him as the promised Messiah [Heb: מָשִׁיחַ, "Anointed One;" Gk: χριστός] and was the occasion of his Divine anointing for his earthly ministry (Mk. 1:9–11; Lk. 3:21–22; Jn. 1:31–34; 4:25–26). The ministry, miracles and works of Jesus were carried out through the power of the Holy Spirit, not his own inherent power as God in the flesh—He *was* Israel's promised Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One (Lk. 4:18–19; Acts 4:27–28; 10:38).

The Commencement: The Year of Obscurity: 26–27 AD

The First Point of Transition

Key: 4:17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Chapter 4

Immediately after Jesus' baptism and Divine anointing he was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. This was a necessary confrontation at the very outset of his earthly ministry as he came to dismantle [λύσει, 1 Jn. 3:8] the works of

³⁰⁶ See p. 167 for the connection of prophecies with Jesus being called a Nazarene.

the devil. The temptation came to our Lord as the “Last Adam” or Representative Man, and parallels the temptation of the “First Adam” (Gen. 3:1–8; Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45–47).

This temptation was three-fold, and in each case, our Lord answered with Scripture: first, as to prerogative. Our Lord refused to satisfy a legitimate appetite apart from the revealed will of God.

Second, as to presumption. This was a temptation to bypass the cross with all its suffering and shame. He would have gloriously descended from heaven on the hands and wings of angels, fulfilling Mal. 3:1 in the sight of all at the Temple. Mark that the devil misquoted the Scripture at a strategic place [“to keep thee in all thy ways”] (Psa. 91:11–12).

Third, as to patience. He would be constituted universal Lord at his resurrection and ascension, through and after the suffering and death upon the cross (Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:10; Heb. 1:3; 12:2; Rev. 1:5–18).

After his baptism and wilderness temptation, Jesus commenced his preaching ministry, beginning where John the Baptist had ended with his imprisonment at the Herodian fortress of Machaerus on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. This marks *the First Part of the Galilean Ministry*. Jesus moved his headquarters to Capernaum on the western shore of Galilee. Here he called his first four Disciples: Peter, Andrew, James and John. This chapter ends with a summary of Jesus’ early Galilean ministry. Note that only John’s account gives the early Judean ministry (Jn. 2:13–4:3).

The Continuation: The Year of Opportunity: 28–29 AD

Chapters 5–7

These three chapters detail the **First Great Discourse: The Sermon on the Mount**. This discourse or sermon is a manifesto concerning the Kingdom of Heaven and its citizens (5:1–20), Laws (5:21–7:12), and those who either react foolishly or wisely to Jesus’ sermon (7:13–27).

The emphasis is upon true, inner religion and conformity to the Moral Law as opposed to the traditional externality of Jewish traditions which taught that only the overt act was sin (e.g., 5:17–22, 27–28, 43–48). The use of meaningless or “light” oaths is condemned. The true believer is to be taken at his word (5:33–37). 5:39 does not teach pacifism, as this refers to a back–handed slap of contempt, which is to be endured.

A central part of this discourse is our Lord’s teaching on prayer (6:5–16). Prayer is faith articulate. This is a model and template for private prayer, and gives the proper realization, priorities [God’s name, kingdom and will are the foremost concerns], submission, attitude and faith for true prayer. Mark that this Model Prayer is comprised almost entirely of petitions. The only further comment of Jesus is that we cannot pray with an unforgiving attitude (6:14–15).

The seventh chapter is taken up with a variety of concerns: righteous judgment and self–examination (7:1–6), encouragement to perseverance in prayer (7:7–11), a stringent command to strive to enter into the strait gate and narrow way (7:13–14), a warning against false prophets who are known by their fruits [i.e., converts or followers] (7:15–20) and deceived professors of religion (7:21–23). Finally, a promise and a warning as to how his message is received and acted upon (7:24–27). The astonishment of the listeners, realizing his Divine authority, ends this section (7:28–29).

Chapters 8–10

The essence of these three chapters is the manifestation of our Lord’s authority. Chapters 8 and 9 mark *the Second Part of the Galilean Ministry*. Jesus demonstrates his authority over disease (8:1–22; 9:27–31), nature (8:18–27), demons (8:28–34; 9:32–34), in forgiveness of sins (9:1–8), over the will of man (9:9–13) and over death (9:14–26).

The final section reveals his compassion. Our Lord was fully man as he was fully God, and was often moved with

compassion at the hunger, suffering and needs of sinful mankind (9:35–38). His was a practical godliness!

Note should be taken of 8:28–34 (Cf. Mk. 5:1–20, esp. v. 18–20). The former demoniac greatly desired to be with our Lord, as was natural, considering his great deliverance. But he was kindly refused and sent back to his home and city to declare what great things God had done for him. From a fierce demoniac to a fervent missionary! This prepared the way for the open reception of these same people at Jesus' next visit, although Matthew does not make this connection (14:34–36; Mk. 6:53–56).

In **The Second Great Discourse: The Mission of the Twelve**, he sends forth his Disciples with the delegation of this Divine authority to preach, heal and perform miracles (10:1–11:1). It should be noted that Judas Iscariot was evidently given this same authority, as none of the Disciples ever suspected him. The content of Jesus' message and commission seems to extend well beyond the immediate ministry into the more distant future.

Chapters 11–12

These two chapters deal with *the Third Part of our Lord's Galilean ministry* (11:2–12:50). The narrative begins with John sending two of his disciples to inquire about our Lord (11:2–15). This inquiry was concerning the nature of our Lord's ministry, which was contrary to the Jewish expectation of a political kingdom.³⁰⁷ Jesus then upbraids the cities for their blatant unbelief in spite of his ministry and credentialing miracles (11:16–24). This chapter ends with his thankful prayer (11:25–27) and gracious invitation (11:28–30).

³⁰⁷ Matt. 11:3, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν; Mark the term ἕτερον, another of a different kind. John's inquiry was concerning the nature of our Lord's mission and ministry. Was Jesus the kind of Messiah they were expecting?

Chapter 12 begins with the non-ending Sabbath Day controversy with the Pharisees.³⁰⁸ These held to the “Tradition of the Elders,” and their traditional observance of the Sabbath was their great test of orthodoxy. Jesus declared that he was the Lord of the Sabbath.

The latter part of chapter 12 is concerned with the Unpardonable Sin and Jesus’ severe condemnation of the Pharisees (12:22–46).³⁰⁹ The chapter ends with Jesus’ family seeking to speak with him and his answer, which gives priority to spiritual relations over natural relations (12:46–50).

Chapter 13

This chapter contains **The Third Great Discourse: The Parables of the Kingdom**. These major parables concerning the kingdom were given both to reveal the truth to his own followers and to conceal the truth from the rest. Jesus takes the time to instruct the Disciples as to the meaning of these parables, a valuable section on parabolic teaching.

The Parable of the Sower deserves great attention, as it provides the key to our Lord’s parabolic teaching (13:18–23; Mk. 4:13). The four types of soil represent four types of hearers: the “packed soil” on the hardened footpath, the “promising” or rocky soil, the “prosperous” or thorn-infested soil and the “prepared” soil. Only the last understood the message and brought forth fruit. Only one out of four. No “carnal Christians” or mere, “nominal” Christians in our Lord’s teaching!

³⁰⁸ E.g., Matt. 12:1–15; Mk. 2:23–28; 3:2–6; Lk. 6:1–11; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; Jn. 5:8–18; 7:16–23; 9:10–16.

³⁰⁹ The full explanation is found in the parallel passage, Mk. 3:22–30, where they said he was possessed by an unclean spirit. The unpardonable sin is attributing plain and undeniable works of the Holy Spirit to the devil.

Chapter 14

This chapter is highly significant, as it marks the highpoint of our Lord's ministry with the "Feeding of the Five Thousand." This is one of the few great events described by each of the evangelists (Matt. 14:14–32; Mk. 6:33–52; Lk. 9:11–17; Jn. 6:1–21)—the teaching, compassion and great miracle by our Lord, and the Disciples sent into the storm.

John alone notes that the people sought to take him by force and make him a king, so Jesus sent the Disciples away immediately for their own good and he himself went up into a mountain to pray. The following day many of the people began to reject his ministry (Jn. 6:22–66). This is the great turning point in John's Gospel account. Jesus' second trip to Gennesaret and his reception by the people (14:34–36; Mk. 6:53–56) was evidently the result of the previous healing of the demoniac and his testimony, for they had pleaded with him to depart on his first visit (Matt. 8:24–28; Mk. 5:1–17).

The Conclusion: The Year of Opposition: 30 AD The Later Judean Ministry

Chapter 15

This chapter begins with the opposition of the Pharisees (15:1–11) and ends with the great miraculous feeding of the four thousand men besides women and children (15:32–39). Other issues are Jesus' instructions of his Disciples concerning true inner defilement (15:15–20), the great faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman and the healing of her daughter. Her great trial brought forth her persevering and humble faith (15:21–28). This chapter closes with Jesus' ministry to the multitudes upon his return to Galilee (15:29–31).

The Second Point of Transition

Key: 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Chapter 16

This chapter begins with Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees who, with all their religious and scriptural background, could not discern the times. This chapter is very significant for two reasons: first, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (16:13–20), and, second, the final great transitional point in our Lord's instruction of the Disciples as he prepares them for his Passion (16:21).

Jesus' rebuke of Peter is significant. The devil may attack at one's highest spiritual thoughts and desires. Jesus' discourse on the importance of one's soul reveals the true nature of worldly concerns as opposed to the most important (16:24–26). The closing verses prepare the Disciples and the reader for the Transfiguration of chapter 17 (16:27–28).

Chapter 17

The major event in chapter 17 is the Transfiguration of our Lord (16:28–17:9; Mk. 9:1–10; Lk. 9:27–36), an event so momentous that Peter recalls it vividly toward the end of his life (2 Pet. 1:17–18).

Note: Seldom in the New Testament is the very voice of God the Father heard from heaven, and all are noteworthy (Matt. 3:16–17; 17:5–6; Mk. 1:10–11; MK. 9:7; Lk. 3:21–22; 9:34–36; Jn. 12:28–30; Acts 10:13–15). Paul saw a vision of the ascended, reigning Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9:3–7, 27; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:3–8) and heard his voice from heaven (Acts 9:3–7; 22:6–10, 14; 26:13–15).

Moses was present as representing the Law and Elijah representing the prophets. This is followed by the inquiry concerning the reappearance of Elijah which Jesus explained to them as referring to John the Baptist (17:10–13; Mk. 9:11–13).

The chapter continues with the episode of the demon-possessed boy brought by his distraught father and Jesus answering the Disciples' inquiry with a statement concerning faith, prayer and fasting (17:21); then our Lord's reiteration of his approaching suffering, death and resurrection (17:22–23). This section concludes with the miracle of the tribute money

and the coin in the mouth of the fish. Only Matthew gives the exact coinage [στατῆρα] of the Temple tax.

Chapter 18

This chapter is **The Fourth Great Discourse: Life in the Kingdom**. Jesus instructs his Disciples concerning true greatness in the kingdom, as they were often concerned about this matter and their own importance (18:1–6), a warning against the seriousness of offences against believers, who are characterized by the simplicity of a child-like faith (18:7–14), the way to settle offences in the church (18:15–20),³¹⁰ and Peter's question about personal offences and Jesus' answer with a vivid parabolic illustration (18:21–35).

Chapters 19–20

These two chapters trace Jesus' travel and ministry through Perea and into Judea. On this final trip Jesus followed the usual pilgrim path through Perea on the eastern shore of Jordan to avoid Samaria, then crossed the river and went up from Jericho to Jerusalem. (Luke traces this journey with great detail: Lk. 13:22–19:29).

The events are varied. The first incident involved the two schools of Pharisaical teaching: the school of Shammai taught that unfaithfulness was the only grounds for divorce; that of Hillel taught that incompatibility was sufficient grounds. Jesus taught that only fornication was proper grounds, for it breaks the marriage bond and oneness established by God at creation. He then gave a short statement concerning both physical and spiritual eunuchs (19:1–15).

Next, Jesus rebukes the Disciples for forbidding the mothers with their little ones to be blessed by him (19:13–15). Then follows the episode of the rich, young ruler and our

³¹⁰ Matthew alone of the four evangelists, mentions the church as the God-ordained institution for the work of the kingdom (16:16–19; 18:15–18). Our Lord's church was being formed and was functional before his ascension and before Pentecost (Matt. 28:19–20; Mk. 16:16; Jn. 20:22; Acts 1:12ff).

Lord's teaching on salvation and wealth (19:16–26). Jesus used the Moral Law to convict him of his sin of covetousness. When Peter inquires about the portion for the Disciples, Jesus' answer is eschatological and is further explained by the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard and the prerogative of the owner to do as he pleased with his own. The implication is that service for the Lord is duly rewarded, whether short or long. There are both present and future rewards (19:27–21:16).

Once more our Lord reiterates his approaching passion and resurrection (20:17–19). Then follows the request of the wife of Zebedee for her sons and the indignation of the other Disciples. This is followed by our Lord's discourse concerning true service and humility (20:20–28). This section closes with the healing of the two blind men at Jericho (20:29–34).

Chapters 21–22

These two chapters deal with four main issues: first, our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem—our Lord's final presentation of himself to Israel as its Messianic King—an act which appalled the chief priests and Scribes (21:1–16). Second, the second cleansing of the Temple, another clear Messianic claim (21:12–13). Third, the miracle of the barren and withered fig tree and the following lesson on believing prayer (21:17–22). Fourth, the chief priests and elders increasingly confront our Lord on several issues: first, the question of his authority, which he answered with subtlety to silence them (21:23–27), then furthers his answer with two parables (21:28–41) and a quotation from their Scriptures (21:42–46), then yet another parable (22:1–14).

Second, the confrontations by the Jewish leaders were growing in intensity. Jesus then answered both the Pharisees on the question of paying tribute—a question which would give them a charge of insurrection against him by the Roman authorities if he gave a negative answer. This was not merely academic (22:15–22). The Sadducees questioned Jesus concerning the levirate marriage and the resurrection. It is noteworthy that our Lord considered the patriarchs as alive in

the presence of God and only “dead” to this world (Deut. 25:5–10; Matt. 22:23–33).

Third, a Pharisee asks him concerning the Greatest Commandment, a current subject of debate. Our Lord’s answer was a summarization of the Moral Law under two headings (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:34–40). Finally, our Lord initiates the issue with a question which they could not answer, not comprehending how David’s Lord was also David’s Son, a clear implication of the Deity of the Messiah (Psa. 110; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Matt. 22:41–46).

Chapter 23

This entire chapter is a lengthy diatribe against the Scribes and Pharisees, our Lord repeatedly pronounced a “Woe” upon them. These leaders were to be obeyed as the representatives of Moses, but not imitated. This was our Lord’s utter condemnation of that religiously hypocritical generation and its leaders. They had rejected him in their blindness to biblical prophecy, religious traditions which obscured the truth, and in their pride and envy; he rejected them in his righteous condemnation.

Chapters 24–25

These two chapters comprise **The Fifth Great Discourse: Revelation of the future to the Disciples**. This is our Lord’s revelation concerning the immediate future [the destruction of Jerusalem forty years later] and later eschatological events—a mixture of prophetic utterances and eschatological parables. The key: be ready for what hour or time they would think not, the Son of Man would come.

Closing Events and Passion Week: 30 AD

Chapters 26–27

These two chapters concern the passion and death of our Lord, the promised Messiah– King. Preparatory events include the conspiracy of the Sanhedrin (26:1–5), the anointing at

Bethany (26:6–13; Jn. 12:3–6), the conspiracy of Judas Iscariot (26:14–16) and the final Passover (26:17–25).

During or after the Passover meal, Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper (26:26–30). When all the passages are compared and exegeted, it will be noted that Judas was not at this event, but had previously departed. Matthew, Mark and John are in agreement. Luke may have referred to the first cup during the Passover meal, not the final cup (Matt. 26:26–29; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:17–20; Jn. 13:1–18:1).

On the walk over the brook Kidron and up to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus foretells the scattering of the Disciples in fear. Peter objects repeatedly and vehemently and Jesus foretells his denial (26:31–35). The conversation and discussions on this walk are given in detail in John’s account (Jn. 14:1–18:1), including our Lord’s comforting words and High Priestly Prayer (Jn. 14–17).

The Garden Agony (26:30–44) reveals the true humanity of our Lord as the “Last Adam” and impeccable God–Man, anticipating the imputation of our sins. After the Garden Agony and prayers, he once again regained his complete composure at his betrayal and subsequent trials (26:45ff).

The multitude which came with Judas numbered over 480 men.³¹¹ Judas’ act of betrayal and impudence is graphically described by Matthew: he fervently and repeatedly kissed Jesus!³¹² Peter was ready to die for Jesus and attacked the army, cutting off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Jesus healed this man, but such a miracle had no effect upon the surrounding cohort. Peter remains a lesson: one must be ready to live for Christ as well as to die for him! This final healing before the cohort is yet another revelation of the failure of evidentialism.

³¹¹ Jn. 18:3 reads: τὴν σπεῖραν, i.e., a Roman cohort, comprised of 480 soldiers led by 6 centurions, each with 80 men. There were also additional members of the Temple guard.

³¹² Matt. 26:49, κατεφίλησεν, “to kiss fervently and repeatedly.”

The three trials before the Sanhedrin were a mockery with many false witnesses, held at an improper time, illegally in a private house and without benefit of counsel. Finally, our Lord answered under a Divine oath that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and added that they would see him sitting in heaven and coming in glory (26:57–64). Joseph Caiaphas, the high priest, rent his clothes at this alleged blasphemy and sinned away his priesthood in his self-righteous indignation (Lev. 21:10; Matt. 26:65; Mk. 14:63).

After being mocked and tortured, Jesus was sent to Pilate for Roman judgment, another trial with three phases (27:1–2, 11–26). Judas, filled with great remorse, returned the blood money and hanged himself (27:3–10).³¹³

Before and during the trials, our Lord's innocence was declared by Judas (27:4), by Pilate (27:23–24; Mk. 15:14; Lk. 23:4, 14–15) and by his wife (27:19). Yet to pacify the people, Jesus was crucified because of envy on the part of the priests and leaders (27:17–18) and political expediency on the part of Pilate (27:23–24; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 23:4, 14–15).

After being scourged (Isa. 53:5; Matt. 27:26), then mocked and tortured by the Roman soldiers (27:27–31), Jesus was sent to be crucified on Golgotha (Psa. 22:14–19; Matt. 27:32–36).

Note: Scourging or flogging was the Roman legal preliminary to every execution. A short whip [Lat: *flagrum*] with several leather strands of unequal length having sharp sheep bones and iron balls at their ends was used to lacerate and rip the skin and tissue from the back, buttocks and legs of the condemned. The scourging was methodical up and down each side of the back to the legs.

The brutal procedure left the skeletal bones exposed. The resulting tissue damage and blood loss left the person close to death and would determine the time spent crucified on the cross. Crucifixion was reserved for the most heinous criminals. This did our Lord suffer at the hands of wicked, sinful men to

³¹³ He was filled with remorse [μεταμεληθεῖς]; he did not repent [μετάνοια]. See pp. 203–204.

effect our redemption—yet his soul-sufferings were immeasurable, and infinitely beyond the physical trauma.

He refused the traditional stupifying drink of sour wine and myrrh to help alleviate his pain. He bore our sins without respite. During his crucifixion agony, all of the Scriptures concerning the Messiah's suffering and death were fulfilled,³¹⁴ yet none of the leaders, though steeped in their own Scriptures, were conscious of this. Mark his cry of God-forsakenness. It came from the very depths of his own soul as he suffered personally and vicariously for sin and sinners!³¹⁵

After six hours he dismissed his spirit, i.e., voluntarily gave up his life and redemption was complete—the finished work of Christ (27:35–50).³¹⁶ The following great earthquake, the confession of the centurion, the rending of the Temple veil and the resurrection of many departed saints after his resurrection all testified to his finished work.

The reference to blood and water which poured from our Lord's side is a medical testimony to his death. The blood had coagulated and the serum had separated (Jn. 19:33–35). Jesus' death was certified by the Roman government (Mk. 15:44–45). This stands opposed to the radical theory that Jesus merely swooned on the cross and later revived in the tomb—a rationalistic attempt to deny the resurrection.

³¹⁴ E.g., Numb. 9:12; Psa. 22; 31:5; 34:20; Isa. 50:6; 52:14–53:11; Zech. 13:6–7.

³¹⁵ The agonizing cry, a quotation of Psa. 22:1, differing from both the Heb. [אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לֵמָּה עֲזַבְתָּנִי] and LXX [ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου πρόσχες μοι ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με], reads: Θεέ μου θεέ μου, ἵνατί με ἐγκατέλιπες; i.e., “My God! My God! Why *me* has thou forsaken?!”

³¹⁶ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν κράζας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα, i.e., Our Lord literally sent away or dismissed his spirit (Jn. 10:17–18), a voluntary act. That great cry was τετέλεσται (Jn. 19:30), a cry or shout of victory in the full perf. tense, “It is fully and finally finished and will continue so!”—the strongest expression possible.

Note: death by crucifixion. The original method used by the ancient Phoenicians and Assyrians was simply to impale the condemned on the end of a sharpened pole and set it upright for a horrible, lingering death. In the Roman method the condemned was nailed to either a gibbet [*crux simplex*, an upright stake or pole with arms stretched over one's head] or a stake with a cross beam [*patibulum*]. Early representations of our Lord's crucifixion depict both forms.

Death came from various causes, including hypovolemic shock [decreased blood volume from the scourging], asphyxia [loss of oxygen from the collapse of the lungs because of the position of the arms and hanging weight of the body], arrhythmia and heart failure and pulmonary embolism [blood clots in the lungs].

If left unattended, scavenging birds would peck out the eyes and tear the flesh. Predators would also savage the victim. Because of the High Feast Day, the Jewish leaders would have the deaths of the three hastened to death that day, so their shin bones were broken. Our Lord was already dead, so his body was left alone without a bone broken in fulfillment of Scripture (Ex. 12:43–46; Psa. 34:20; Jn. 19:36). Our Lord's death was voluntary as he dismissed his spirit into the hands of his Father.

Note: The Savior's seven sayings on the cross: Matthew and Mark record but one (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34). Luke records three (23:34, 43, 46) and John, the only eye-witness, records four (19:26–27, 28, 30).

Several women close to our Lord and to his mother were gathered at the cross (Matt. 27:55–56; Mk. 15:40–41; Lk. 23:27–31, 40, 55–56; Jn. 19:25–27). Only John was there of the Disciples. All of the men had fled. The place and ministry of these women, from our Lord's mother to Mary Magdalene, is a study in itself.

Note: (Jn. 19:26–27). It is noteworthy that our Lord, who had evidently been the head of his family after Joseph's death as the eldest son, gave his mother into the care of his closest Christian friend, not into the care of his yet unregenerate family.

Both Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus took the body from the cross and laid it in Joseph's new tomb (27:57–60; Jn.

19:38–42). What courage and belief these two demonstrated, becoming Jewish apostates by unnecessarily touching a dead body at Passover time (Numb. 9:4–13) while the Disciples were hiding in fear!

The Resurrection:
Triumph, Exaltation and Commission

Chapter 28

The resurrection was confirmed first by the earthquake and the angel (28:1–6), then the women (28:7–8), then our Lord himself (28:9–10) and then, unwittingly, the guards (28:4, 11–15). The prearranged final meeting place was a mountain top in Galilee where our Lord declared his universal Lordship (28:18) and gave to his Disciples the Great Commission (28:19–20). The other Gospel accounts give more information concerning the post-resurrection appearances and conversations of our Lord with his own (Mk. 16:1–20; Lk. 24:1–53; Jn. 20:1–22:25; Acts 1:1–9).

Notes and Observations

1. (1:1) These words introduce the greatest wonder imaginable! The eternal Son of God became flesh and entered into the realm of time through the Virgin Birth and thus had a human genealogy, but without sin. He took to himself a human nature and body, and through these he effected our redemption in his active and passive obedience: The “Second Man,” the “Last Adam” (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:20–23, 45–47).
2. (1:1) The first word of the Gk. New Testament is Βίβλος, and has become the word for the entire Scriptures, the “Bible.”
3. (1:1) As the Son of both David and Abraham, our Lord gathered together and fulfilled all of the prophecies of the promised Messiah.
4. (1:18–25) Joseph was a righteous man. He could not morally marry his betrothed, as he found her already

- pregnant, but he so loved her that he intended to give her a private divorce—until the Angel revealed the truth to him.
5. (2:1–6) Herod was a king, but ignorant of the Scriptures. High position and power do not truly make a man great—but may only enable his wickedness.
 6. (2:11–15) God providentially provided for Joseph, Mary and the infant Christ for their sojourn in Egypt through the gifts of the wise men. God is never at a loss to provide.
 7. (2:16–18) God does not always deliver the innocent. He has had many martyrs. In such unjust times we must trust his overall purpose. This life does not end all; it is only the beginning of a new life which will never end, but only rise to eternal glory.
 8. (3:1–12) The New Testament era began with revival. This ought to stir us to pray for revival in our day, in spite of contrary circumstances. John had an awakening ministry; we need such today!
 9. (3:2) Repentance is a lost truth. One cannot savingly come to Christ without turning from sin. Jesus is both the Lord of our lives and our Savior from sin (Matt. 1:21).
 10. (4:1–11) Our Lord answered every temptation with Scripture. This was wielding “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [utterance] of God” [τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ῥῆμα θεοῦ] (Eph. 6:17).
 11. (4:6) The devil cannot be trusted, even to quote Scripture. He misquoted it, omitting the critical phrase, “...to keep thee in all thy ways...” (Psa. 91:11–12).
 12. (4:18–20) If this is a figure of gospel evangelism, then mark carefully that they did not use bait or hook, but nets. Bait appeals to the natural appetite and the hook speaks of deception, but nets speak of hard work, honesty and a sweeping approach.
 13. (4:23–25) Beware of traditional and unscriptural expectations. The miracles of Jesus credentialed who he was and the message he preached. Jewish unbelief was

grounded in their traditional political and military expectations; our Lord's kingdom was spiritual.

14. (5:1–11) If we would want God's blessings, we must obey his Word. Disobedience never brings blessing.
15. (5:11–12) There are great blessings in persecutions, if they are for the cause of Christ and the gospel.
16. (5:13–16) We, as true believers, are to be both salt and light. Both in nature make a great difference. The first seasons and makes thirsty; the second scatters darkness. Do we (Phil. 2:14–16)?
17. (5:17–18) Our Lord did not come to negate or abrogate the Law, but to fill it full, i.e., restore its true spiritual nature, which had been lost through tradition and mere external religion. Believers see the Law through the blood of Christ and obey it from love, not fear or mere external religious tradition. The unsaved will face it on the great Day of Judgment (Rom. 3:19–20).
18. (5:27–28) All sin begins in the heart. The Decalogue recognized this with the Tenth Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. 20:17).
19. (5:29–30) Sometimes drastic action must be taken to deal with sin. Our Lord was speaking figuratively, but the principle of decisive, drastic action remains.
20. (5:33–37) The Jews had both "heavy" and "light" oaths, and were given to swear religiously. The true believer is to be taken at his word, without any religious reenforcement.
21. (5:43–48) Being God's children demands responsible and consistent activity. Godliness is a full-time occupation.
22. (6:5–15) The Model Prayer is a template for private prayer. In principle, this short prayer encompasses everything. And it is in the plural, implying that our lives cannot be isolated. Mark carefully the first petitions: they are concerned with God's name, kingdom and will, not our desires or needs. Do we have our priorities in the right

order? It also emphasizes that we cannot pray with an unforgiving attitude (6:12, 14–15).

23. (6:19–21) By nature, we are engrossed with this world; by grace we are to be lifted to a higher plane and anticipation. How we must have our hearts in heaven!
24. (5:24–34) It is difficult not to be divided in thought, desire and action. But we cannot and so must not seek to serve two masters. Faith is not abstract; it is to be the substance of our lives, joy and expectation of glory.
25. (7:1–5) Self-righteousness is very subtle and we need to continually examine our motives and remember that we are sinners saved and kept by grace.
26. (7:7–12) What encouragements we have in God's Word to persevere in prayer! Our two great enemies in prayer are unbelief and impatience. The first weakens us; the second robs us.
27. (7:13–14) Our Lord was speaking to Jews, not irreligious people. The broad way is the way of false or mere religion, not necessarily open wickedness or profligacy. The narrow way is that of faith, obedience and grace.
28. (7:15–20) False teachers are known by their converts. What type of converts does one's ministry produce?
29. (7:21–23) Evidently, there are many mere professing Christians and even unconverted ministers who seem to manifest great zeal and works! The one true test is obedience to the revealed will of God in the Scriptures.
30. (7:24–27) One house had a foundation, the other did not. Have we laid our foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11)? Many sadly build upon the sand.
31. (8:2–4) Leprosy was the very worst of diseases of that time. Nothing is too great or awful to take to Jesus.
32. (8:5–13) Great faith may be found in unexpected places and people. Such faith is not usually paraded, but exercised in humility and prayer.

33. (8:18–22) Many seek to follow Christ without thought. Youthful enthusiasm and a sense of adventure quickly fade. Where are those who count the cost and persevere?
34. (8:23–27) The Lord is Lord everywhere and there is no place or circumstance where the Lord is not Lord.
35. (8:28–34) How sad is postmodernity! All it can see here is that Jesus ruined the environment and the economy. It is blind to the great spiritual significance of the miracle.
36. (9:2–7) Our Lord's physical miracles always implied a great spiritual truth concerning his power and authority in every realm.
37. (9:10–13) Jesus ate and drank with sinners. Who else would he be with? Are we not all sinners? Only the self-righteous would condemn our Lord or us.
38. (9:18–26) We might wonder what Jairus thought in his urgent state when our Lord stopped to heal the poor woman with the issue of blood. We learn that God's delays are not his denials, and that delays may bring greater blessing.
39. (9:34) The Pharisees would not—could not—believe the truth, so they took the only alternative, which was completely irrational. Is this not the story of mere religion?
40. (10:1ff) Our Lord gave the Disciples power to heal and perform miracles. The ministry was theirs, the power was his. Is this not true today?
41. (10:25) Do we become offended or disappointed when men speak ill of us? Consider the words of our Lord. The eternal Son of God, impeccable and holy, was called demon-possessed (cf. Jn. 8:48). What can we really expect?
42. (10:26–31) How intimately he knows us—even the number of hairs on our heads! How valuable are we to our Heavenly Father? “of more value than many sparrows.” Is not that comforting?

43. (10:34–36) The truth of God and faithfulness to him may well destroy even the closest of filial relationships apart from Divine grace.
44. (11:2–6) John’s question was concerning the kind of Messiah. Our Lord’s answer revealed the spiritual nature of his kingdom.
45. (11:12) This text was used by Jonathan Edwards on the duty of sinners to press into the kingdom of God.
46. (11:20–24) Men are not converted through witnessing great miracles—although they ought to be! On every page of Scripture we see the failure of Evidential Apologetics. Sinners do not need more information, they need regeneration.
47. (11:28–30) A great gospel invitation for those in great spiritual need and willing to come to Christ as he is, not as someone he is not.
48. (12:1–8) The burden and observation of mere external religion, which denies even the practicalities of life.
49. (12:9–14) How heartless is mere religion without grace or mercy. But our Lord cared for this sufferer and did not heal simply out of duty.
50. (12:38ff) It was proverbial: “The Jews require a sign.” Yet with all the miracles and signs that our Lord performed, they wanted just one more! No sign will cure determined, criminal unbelief.
51. (12:43–45) Sinners need to be saved from themselves as well as from the reigning power of sin.
52. (12:46–49) Spiritual relationships are closer than natural relationships. The Old Testament was family-oriented; the New Testament, in the context of the gospel, is church-oriented, i.e., we are brothers and sisters in Christ.
53. (13:1–23) The Parable of the Sower. Jesus taught that some were only temporary believers and others would continue throughout life as mere professors. Only the good or

prepared soil brought forth fruit—one out of four. Temporary and false professors are frequent subjects in our Lord's parables.

54. (14:1ff). Herod's troubled conscience: it caused him fear, but not repentance. Conscience cannot be trusted (Jn. 8:9) unless it is governed by the Word of God.
55. (14:26) The Disciples thought they saw a spirit or phantom [φάντασμα ἔστιν, "a phantom it is!"]. This was a reversion back to their old religious superstition. In times of fear do we revert back to our old thoughts and ways?
56. (15:1ff) The self-righteous seem to keep to the religious traditions, but they often excuse themselves and violate their own principles.
57. (15:10–20) True defilement comes from within. The heart must be changed. God works from the inside out; mere religion seeks to work only on the outside and leaves the inside unchanged.
58. (15:21–28) The Canaanitish woman had no basis upon which to approach our Lord than faith and the hope of his mercy. What a Picture of the sinner! And sinners have hope as did this poor woman.
59. (15:29–38) The Disciples had not learned from the past experience of the feeding of the 5,000. Have we learned from our past experiences of God's grace and provision?
60. (16:13–17) Peter's confession was by Divine revelation, so it is with every sinner who comes to Christ by faith. Salvation is a Divine and effectual work of grace.
61. (17:1–9) The Transfiguration. How privileged were Peter, James and John! Our Lord's Deity shown through his humanity. Do we by faith not glimpse the same in times of earnest prayer, spiritual communion and joy?
62. (18:1ff) Our Lord emphasized the reality of a child-like faith. Little children are characterized by the simplicity of trust. Such is to be our faith also.

63. (18:21–22) A lesson in forgiveness. Do we need to learn such? An unforgiving attitude not only affects our horizontal relationships, but the vertical as well (Matt. 6:12, 14–15).
64. (19:16–26) The Rich Young Ruler. So promising, so sincere—but his wealth was the one obstacle which kept him from the kingdom. Do we have obstacles?
65. (19:27–30) The spiritual riches and rewards for God’s servants are incomparable. Earthly riches fade away, fame is transitory; spiritual realities and riches are eternal.
66. (20:1–16) The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Do we have any cause for complaint about God’s dealings with us?
67. (20:17–19) Jesus prepares the Disciples for his passion and resurrection. Can we face the reality of future trials and suffering? God prepares us and gives us faith to endure and even to persevere and overcome.
68. (21:1–16) The Triumphal Entry. The ass was symbol of peace; the horse a symbol of war. Why did the throngs suddenly appear and welcome our Lord? The answer is found in Jn. 12:9–18. The multitude of pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover were amazed and jubilant over the raising of Lazarus and were coming from Jerusalem to Bethany to see him.
69. (22:15–22) The tribute money. Our Lord declared the reality of a composite society in contrast to the Jews, who had held to a monolithic society, which had one religion and government for the community [Judaism, state churches, etc.]. A composite society would distinguish between that which is spiritual and that which is political. Christianity was meant to exist in a composite society.
70. (22:34–40) Our Lord summarized the Moral Law or Decalogue into its two tables: love to God and love to man, bringing together Ex. 20:1–17 and Lev. 19:18. Our

Lord heightened the standard for believers: Matt. 5:44; Jn. 13:34–35.

71. (22:41–46) Jesus confounds the Pharisees with Psa. 110, a prophetic Psalm which described himself, and which we as believers see clearly. How blind to the Scriptures is mere traditional religion!
72. (23:13–36) Jesus' final diatribe against the religious leaders for their unbelief and spiritual blindness in the face of their own Scriptures! Are we blind to Divine truth?
73. (25:1–13) The Parable of the Ten Virgins. It is traditional to make the oil a type of the Holy Spirit in this parable. It cannot be! For they all had the oil at the beginning, some ran out of oil and when the others would not share, they purchased it, and were then excluded from the wedding feast! Let us be careful when allegorizing Scripture!
74. (26:25) Judas found out. As everyone else, Judas asked, "It isn't me, is it Master?" anticipating a "No" answer [μήτι ἐγώ εἰμι, ῥαββί;]. What hypocrisy! But Jesus identified him to his face and with the sop—and even then the others did not understand (Jn. 13:21–29). How careful and perceptive we must be in critical matters.
75. (26:33–35) Peter's avowal of loyalty and faithfulness unto death. He faced an army of 480 Roman soldiers and the Temple guard, alone with a short sword (26:47–54; Jn. 18:3–12), then later denied our Lord thrice (Matt. 26:69–75; Mk. 14:66–72; Lk. 22:54–62; Jn. 18:16–18, 25–27). The first action was irrational, but well-meant in the strength of the flesh—he would die for Jesus; the latter was Peter when left to himself. How often we may fail when left to ourselves in our own want of strength and faith!
76. (Chap. 27) Consider all the prophecies fulfilled in the passion of our Lord. Yet none considered them in their rage and blind religious fervor. Are our emotions sanctified and subject to the Word of God? Holy,

scriptural emotions are glorious for they have Divine truth at their foundation.

77. (Chap. 27) The suffering and death of the Lord Jesus—his passive obedience—together with his active obedience—procured a perfect righteousness which is imputed to us by faith. This is the glory of the impeccability of our Lord! The glory of the cross! How can any believer ever doubt the love of God?
78. (28:1ff) The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was the guarantee of the efficacy of his suffering and death (Rom. 4:23–25). He rose in victory, the “First Begotten from the dead,” and is alive forevermore.
79. (28:18–20) The Great Commission. The Eng. command, “Go” is actually an aor. ptc., “having gone” [πορευθέντες], not a verb or command. It is taken for granted in the very nature of biblical Christianity that we will go! The command is “make disciples!” [μαθητεύσατε], aor. imp.
80. (28:20) “Alway.” Lit: πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας, “all the days:” the good days, evil days, discouraging days and days of blessing. David Livingston was found dead at the side of his cot where he had passed to heaven while in prayer. His Bible was opened to this verse, and it was marked, “The word of a Gentleman.”

The Gospel According to Mark

Introduction: Mark and the Synoptics

The Gospel according to Mark is the shortest and most abbreviated account among the four Gospel records. From the early centuries and in the writings of the Church Fathers, Mark was considered only as a later abstract of Matthew, based on the preaching of Peter. All but about fifty–five of Mark’s verses are found in Matthew.³¹⁷ Thus, Matthew’s account completely overshadowed Mark’s. Victor of Antioch (c. 400), an early post–Nicene Father, lamented that there were no commentaries on Mark in his time.

Only in the nineteenth century and in the studies concerning the three Synoptic Gospels, did Mark’s account assume its rightful place as the first written Gospel record and key to the Synoptic Problem.³¹⁸ Indeed, it may even be that Mark coined the term “Gospel” [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] (Mk. 1:1) in relation to the message of salvation through the ministry, person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.³¹⁹

Mark’s Gospel account is basically a narrative and the first written account of the Lord’s ministry. It is filled with activity—a ministry of service and action by Jesus as the promised, perfect Servant of Yahweh (Isa. 42:1ff; 52:13; 53:11; Zech. 3:8; Matt. 12:16–21; Mk. 10:45). His miracles reveal him to be the Son of God.

The concentration is on the Galilean ministry (1:1–9:50) and the second half of Mark is devoted to our Lord’s final trip to Jerusalem and his passion (10:1–16:20). It was left to

³¹⁷ The only passages found in Mark and not in Matthew are: 1:23–28, 35–38; 4:21–25, 26–29; 5:18–20; 7:31–37; 8:22–26; 9:38–41; 12:41–40. See W. Graham Scroggie, *Op. cit.*, pp. 181, 253.

³¹⁸ For a discussion of the Synoptic Problem and the relation of Matthew and Luke to Mark, see pp. 183–187.

³¹⁹ For a discussion of the term “Gospel” and its previous use in secular Greek, see pp. 173–174.

Matthew and Luke to fill out the details, give more events, incidents, miracles, parables, discourses and a more in-depth account. The account of John, written many years later (c. 90–98 AD), was supplementary to the Synoptics.

It has been stated that Matthew wrote for Jews and Jewish Christians, presenting our Lord as the promised Messiah and King; thus the royal genealogy from Abraham and David, and the continued references to fulfilled prophecy.

Mark wrote for the Roman mind, presenting him as the Perfect Servant; thus no genealogy—a servant needs none—but a narrative of activity.

Luke wrote for Gentile mind, presenting our Lord as the Perfect Man, filled with compassion and power—the Savior of the world. Thus, Luke traces our Lord’s genealogy from Adam.

John wrote for believers, presenting our Lord as the Christ, very God in the flesh, and so begins with a statement concerning his eternity, equality and Deity (Jn. 1:1–3, 18; 20:31).³²⁰

Authorship

The Life of John Mark

John Mark had both a Hellenized Hebrew name, “John” [Ἰωάννης, “Yahweh is gracious”], and a Latin surname, “Mark” [*Marcus*, “hammer”]. His mother, Mary, was Jewish; his father may have been a Roman. The family was evidently fairly wealthy. Mark is mentioned nine times in Scripture: Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37–39; Col. 4:10; Phlm. 23–24; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:13. He is variously referred to as “Mark,” “John,” “Marcus” or as “John whose surname was Mark.”

He was the cousin or nephew of Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus (Col. 4:10; Acts 4:36) and lived at Jerusalem. His mother’s house was evidently a well-known meeting place for many in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:12ff). This implies that

³²⁰ See the section, “The Christ of the Gospels,” pp. 158–164.

young Mark had a first-hand knowledge of the early church and the original Disciples. The reference to a young man, found only in Mark's Gospel, may point to young John Mark being in the garden at our Lord's betrayal and arrest (Mk. 14:51–52), thus giving him some first-hand knowledge of our Lord's ministry.

John Mark is mentioned next in connection with the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. He was their attendant,³²¹ but departed, evidently under negative circumstances, and returned to Jerusalem from Perga (Acts 13:1–13). When Paul planned the second missionary journey, he and Barnabas separated, largely because Barnabas wanted John Mark to accompany them. Barnabas returned to Cyprus with Mark and Paul took Silas and went through Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36–41).

Years later Mark is found at Rome with Paul (Col. 4:10) and with Peter in a close relationship at Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13). Finally, Paul at Rome writes to Timothy at Ephesus to bring Mark to him in Rome, as one profitable to him in the ministry (2 Tim. 4:11). John Mark made a poor beginning, but finished with being profitable in the ministry.

The Authenticity of the Marcan Account

By the middle of the second century AD, all the Gospel records were authenticated by ancient witnesses. There has never been any question concerning the authenticity of Mark's Gospel until the rise of radical biblical criticism in the nineteenth century. The earliest writings of the Church Fathers all ascribe this account to Mark: the Epistle of Barnabas (c. 70–90 AD), Clement of Rome (c. 96 AD), The *Didache* (c. 80–120 AD), Ignatius (c. 107–115 AD), Papias (c. 120–125 AD). The unanimity of witnesses continues through the third century.

³²¹ Cf. Acts 13:1–5. "Attendant" [ὑπηρέτην], Mark was evidently a helper or assistant, but neither "separated to the ministry" nor "sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

Provenance, Recipients and Date

Four places have been suggested as the place of writing: the Syrian Antioch, Caesarea, Alexandria, Egypt, and Rome. The Egyptian source is based on an old tradition that Peter sent John Mark to Alexandria where he later became its Bishop until martyred c. 68 AD.

The most likely place, however, is Rome and that Mark wrote for the Roman mind. The traditional reasons are as follows: first, Mark was in Rome twice with Paul and perhaps with Peter during their final imprisonments. Second, Mark alone mentions that Simon the Cyrenian was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mk. 15:21; Rom. 16:13). Third, he uses several Latin terms not found in the other Gospel accounts. Fourth, there are fewer quotations and allusions to the Old Testament than in Matthew and Luke. Fifth, Aramaic terms are translated or explained. Sixth, several Jewish customs and references to the Law are omitted. Other Jewish customs and observances are explained. Seventh, many geographical locations are described, which would be unnecessary for those living in Palestine. Eighth, the general tone of Mark's account as a gospel of action is fitted to appeal to the Roman mind.

The date depends upon two issues: first, was Mark's account the first written Gospel record? If so, then it antedated both Matthew (c. 55–66) and Luke (c. 58–60), a date of c. 50–55 AD, making it one of the earliest books of the New Testament,³²² written after Mark's return from Perga and during Paul's second missionary journey.

Second, the ancient tradition [Papias] that Mark was greatly influenced by Peter and wrote his account either just before or after Peter's death at Rome (c. 64–68 AD). That Mark wrote his Gospel record at Rome is most likely; that he wrote

³²² Approximate dates for the earlier New Testament books: James, c. 44 AD; Galatians, c. 48 AD; 1 & 2 Corinthians, c. 54–56 AD; Romans, c. 58 AD; Acts, c. 63 AD.

for the Roman mind is a distinct possibility; that he had been greatly influenced by Peter is almost a certainty. When he wrote his account is a matter of conjecture; that he wrote earlier than the other Synoptics is the most probable; that he wrote under Divine inspiration is unquestionable.

Note: Most commentators have historically held that “Babylon” (1 Pet. 5:13) is a spiritual designation for Rome [See Babylon’s description in Rev. chapters 17–18], and that Peter was martyred there c. 64–68 AD. Some contemporary scholars, however, hold that Babylon is to be taken literally, that history began in the Middle East and will end there, contrary to the Western or European model. Peter, then, would have been taken to Rome at some point in time before his death.³²³

John Mark and The Apostle Peter

Christian tradition from Papias (c. 120–125 AD) onward has held that Mark wrote his Gospel account under the influence of the Apostle Peter. All the subsequent early Church Fathers maintain this view. It was stated that Mark was Peter’s interpreter or amanuensis, translating into Greek the Aramaic preaching of the Apostle as he remembered it, and so wrote it down accurately.

Some have taken Acts 10:36–40 and paralleled Mark’s Gospel account as an expanded outline of Peter’s preaching.³²⁴ The result, under Divine inspiration, is a rather terse narrative of activity giving a summary of the Galilean ministry (1:1–9:50) and the final weeks of Christ’s life and ministry (10:1–16:20).

External evidence of Peter’s influence derives from 1 Pet. 5:13, where Peter refers to Mark as his “son,” implying a close and enduring spiritual relationship; and from the unified testimony of the early Patristic writers. Internal evidence

³²³ See the section on Peter, pp. 460–465.

³²⁴ D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 105–107.

possibly includes the fact that Mark's Gospel account begins with the ministry of John the Baptist and the call of Peter (Mk. 1:1ff; Jn. 1:28–42), the many references to an eye-witness account, events and occasions which involved only the original three Disciples: Peter, James and John, e.g., the Transfiguration, the raising of Jarius' daughter, the garden agony, etc. The colloquial style may betray Peter's oral preaching. Finally, the plain, honest portrayal of Peter in this Gospel record. While such do not amount to undeniable evidence, when coupled with external evidence, they imply such an influence.

Purpose, Theme and Style

The purpose of this first written Gospel account, although not specifically stated at the outset, may be gathered from its contents. It is a brief, action-filled, historical and evangelistic narrative of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ: first, portraying him as the Servant of Yahweh by his mighty works and words (1:1–9:50); second, a record of his suffering, death and resurrection, proving him to be who and what he claimed to be (10:1–16:20). “What Jesus did proved who he was. What he wrought authenticated what he taught. The mighty works verify the startling words.”³²⁵

Of the 678 verses in Mark's Gospel, 285 record the words of our Lord. The first announcement is 1:1, the revelation of the Gospel. The second reveals the character of our Lord's activities (10:45). The narrative, as noted previously, seemed best suited to the Roman mind. One has observed that “The Jew was impressed by spiritual power; the Greek, by intellectual and aesthetic power; and the Roman, by practical power.”

The theme is stated at the outset: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God...” (1:1). Mark is an

³²⁵ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, V, pp. 189–190.

evangelistic narrative. Everything is subordinated to the Gospel and its glorious culmination in the work of the cross.

As to style, Mark is a terse historical narrative which constantly pushes toward the grand climax: the passion of The Lord Jesus. Scroggie compares the varied styles of the four Gospel records as follows: “Matthew is methodical and massive. Luke is artistic and graceful. John is abstract and profound...Mark, in contrast to these, is conversational, colloquial, graphic, concise, abrupt, vigorous, forceful [and] realistic”³²⁶—the Gospel of action intended for the practical Roman mind.

Key-Word and Key-Verses

The key-word is εὐθὺς, occurring forty-three times in its adverbial or adjectival forms [adv: εὐθέως, εὐθὺς; adj: εὐθύς],³²⁷ and variously translated as: “straightway,” “immediately,” “forthwith,” “straight,” “anon” and “as soon as.” This term characterizes the immediacy of action in this historical narrative.

The Key-Verses by necessity are 1:1 and 10:44–45. The first summarizes the contents of Mark’s historical narrative as “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God,” and the second reveals the major emphasis of our Lord’s earthly ministry as the Servant of Yahweh: “And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Distinctive Features

Mark’s purpose, theme and plain, vivid style and compressed narrative have all been considered. Other distinctive features: he omits all of our Lord’s major discourses except an abbreviated account of the final Eschatological

³²⁶ Scroggie, *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

³²⁷ The *Stephanus Text* has several occurrences omitted in the Critical Text.

Discourse (Mk. 13:1–37). He also omits such passages as the nativity, the first cleansing of the Temple, the Model Prayer, the mission of the seventy and such classic parables as the Trilogy of Lost Things (Lk. 15). The grammar is unrefined. He is fond of the historic present tense, which gives an animated thrust to his account.³²⁸

The gestures and emotions of our Lord and his reactions to given situations are common to Mark's Gospel, betraying a careful eye-witness account and providing vivid mental pictures. Largely absent are Jesus' denunciations of those who rejected his ministry, but present are the confrontations of the Jewish leaders and how they plotted against him. The Gentiles are prominent.

More than the other Gospel accounts, Mark repeats the commands of our Lord not to reveal his identity: e.g., he admonishes demons (1:25), those who have been healed (1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26) and the Disciples themselves (8:30; 9:9). Although this is the Gospel of action, Mark records several withdrawals of Jesus to rest, pray and teach his Disciples (1:35, 45; 3:7, 13; 6:31–32, 46; 7:24).

Mark and the Old Testament

There are numerous Old Testament quotations and allusions in Mark's Gospel account. All the Gospel records are grounded in the Old Testament prophecies and promises as integral to Christianity. Mark has least 63 quotations or allusions.³²⁹

Mark	Old Testament	Reference
1:2	Mal. 3:1	Quotation

³²⁸ The historic present tense is an idiom in which past events are described in the present tense for emphasis or vividness. Mark uses this idiom more than 150 times.

³²⁹ Chart adapted from W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, pp. 190–191.

1:3	Isa. 40:3	Quotation
1:15	Old Testament Prophecy implied	Allusion
1:44	Lev. 13:49	Allusion
2:24	Ex. 20:9–11	Allusion
2:25–26	1 Sam. 21:6	Allusion
4:12	Isa. 6:9	Quotation
4:29	Joel 3:13	Allusion
4:32	Ezk. 17:23; Dan. 4:12, 21	Allusion
6:15	Mal. 4:5; Deut. 18:5	Allusion
6:18	Lev. 18:16; 20:21	Allusion
6:34	1 Kgs. 22:17; Numb. 27:17; Ezk. 34:5	Allusion
7:6–7	Isa. 29:13	Quotation
7:10a	Ex. 20:12; 21:17; Deut. 5:16	Quotation
7:10b	Ex. 21:17	Quotation
8:18	Jer. 5:21; Ezk. 12:2	Allusion
8:28	Mal. 4:5; Deut. 18:5	Allusion
9:4	Moses, Elijah	Allusion
9:11, 12a–13	Mal. 4:5	Allusion
9:12b	Psa. 22:6; Isa. 53:2–3; Zech. 13:7	Allusion
9:48	Isa. 66:24	Quotation
10:3–4	Deut. 24:1–4	Allusion
10:6	Gen. 1:27	Quotation
10:7	Gen. 2:24	Quotation
10:19	Ex. 20:12–17; Deut. 5:16–20	Quotation
10:27	Gen. 18:14; Zech. 8:6	Allusion
11:9	Psa. 118:25–26	Quotation

11:17a	Isa. 56:7	Quotation
11:17b	Jer. 7:11	Quotation
12:1	Isa. 5:1ff	Allusion
12:10–11	Psa. 118:22	Quotation
12:19	Deut. 25:5; Gen. 38:8	Quotation
12:24	Old Testament	Allusion
12:26	Ex. 3:6	Quotation
12:29	Deut. 6:4	Quotation
12:30	Deut. 6:5	Quotation
12:31	Lev. 19:18	Quotation
12:32a	Deut. 6:5	Allusion
12:32b	Deut. 4:35	Allusion
12:33a	Deut. 6:5	Allusion
12:33c	1 Sam. 15:22	Allusion
12:36	Psa. 110:1	Quotation
13:8	Isa. 19:2	Allusion
13:12	Mic. 7:6	Allusion
13:14	Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11	Quotation
13:19	Dan. 12:1	Allusion
13:22	Deut. 13:1	Allusion
13:24–25a	Isa. 13:10	Allusion
13:25b	Isa. 34:4	Allusion
13:26	Dan. 7:13	Allusion
13:27	Deut. 30:4	Allusion
14:12	Ex. 12	Allusion
14:18	Psa. 41:9	Allusion
14:24	Ex. 24:8; Zech. 9:11	Allusion
14:26	Psa. 114–118	Allusion
14:27	Zech. 13:7	Quotation
14:49	Old Testament Prophecies	Allusion
14:62	Psa. 110:1ff; Dan. 7:13	Allusion

15:24	Psa. 22:18	Allusion
15:28	Isa. 53:12	Quotation
15:29	Psa. 22:7; 109:25	Allusion
15:34	Psa. 22:1	Quotation
15:36	Psa. 59:21	Allusion

Miracles in Mark

The purpose of miracles was to credential our Lord's ministry and reveal his power over evil spiritual forces, over human sickness and disease and over the forces of nature—a supernatural power. Yet in Mark's Gospel record, almost every miracle is connected to some definite human need or for the relief of some emergency.

Of the thirty-five miracles in the Four Gospel accounts,³³⁰ Mark records eighteen and omits seventeen. Two miracles are only found in Mark: a deaf and dumb man healed (Mk. 7:31–37) and the blind man healed at Bethsaida (Mk. 8:22–26). Miracles recorded by Mark and the other Gospels:

Miracle	Reference
Demoniac healed	Mk. 1:23–26; Lk. 4:33–36
Peter's mother-in-law healed	Mk. 1:29–31; Matt. 8:14–17; Lk. 4:38–39
Leper cleansed	Mk. 1:40–45; Matt. 8:1–4; Lk. 5:12–16
Paralyzed man healed	Mk. 2:1–12; Matt. 9:1–8; Lk 5:17–26
Withered hand healed	Mk. 4:35–41; 3:1–5; Matt. 12:9–13; Lk 6:6–11
Stilling of the Storm	Mk. 4:35–41; Matt. 8:18, 23–27; Lk. 8:22–25

³³⁰ See the section "The Miracles of our Lord," pp. 215–222.

Exorcism of two men of Gadara [Mk. mentions only one]	Mk. 5:1–20; Matt. 8:28–34; Lk. 8:26–39
Jairus' daughter raised	Mk. 5:22–24; 35–43; Matt. 9:18–26; Lk 8:41–42, 49–56
Woman with issue of blood healed	Mk. 5:25–34; Matt. 9:20–22; Lk. 8:43–48
Five Thousand fed	Mk. 6:32–44; Matt. 14:15–21; Lk. 9:12–17; Jn 6:1–13
Jesus walks upon the water	Mk. 6:45–52; Matt. 14:22–33; Jn. 6:16–21
Daughter of Syro-Phoenician woman healed	Mk. 7:24–30; Matt. 15:21–28
Deaf-mute man healed	Mk. 7:31–37
Four thousand fed	Mk. 8:1–9; Matt. 15:32–39
Blind man healed	Mk. 8:22–26
Epileptic boy healed	Mk. 9:14–29; Matt. 17:14–21; Lk. 9:37–43
Blind Bartimaeus healed	Mk. 10:46–52; Matt. 20:29–34; Lk. 18:35–43
Fig tree cursed	Mk. 11:12–14, 20–24; Matt. 21:18–22

The seventeen miracles not recorded by Mark:

Miracle	Reference
Water changed into wine	Jn. 2:1–11
Nobleman's son healed	Jn. 4:46–54
First Catch of fish	Lk 5:6–11
Man at pool of Bethesda healed	Jn. 5:1–16
Centurion's servant healed	Matt. 8:5–13; Lk. 7:1–10
Widow's son restored to life	Lk. 7:11–16

Two blind men healed	Matt. 9:27–31
Mute demoniac healed	Matt. 9:32–34
Blind and mute demoniac healed	Matt. 12:22–29; Lk. 11:14–22
Coin obtained from fish's mouth	Matt. 17:24–27
Man born blind healed	Jn. 9:1ff
Woman with infirmity healed	Lk. 13:10–17
Man with dropsy healed	Lk. 14:1–6
Ten lepers healed	Lk. 17:11–19
Lazarus raised from the dead	Jn. 11:1–44
Malchus' ear healed	Lk. 22:49–51
Second catch of fish	Jn. 21:3–6

Parables in Mark

Of the estimated fifty parables and twenty parabolic illustrations in the Four Gospels, Mark only records eighteen which fit his purpose.³³¹

Parable	Reference
Fishers of men	Mk. 1:16–17; Matt. 4:19
The Sick and the Physician	Mk. 2:17; Matt. 9:12–14
The Bridegroom	Mk. 2:19–20; Matt. 9:14–15; Lk. 5:34–35
New Cloth on Old Garment	Mk. 2:21; Matt. 9:16; Lk. 5:36
The New Wine in Old	Mk 2:22; Matt. 9:17;

³³¹ All of our Lord's parables are listed in the section, "The Parables of our Lord," pp. 222ff. See this list for those omitted by Mark. Due to classification of some as parables and those which are mere parabolic illustrations, the numbers and identities may differ.

Wineskins	Lk. 5:37–39
The Divided Kingdom	Mk. 3:23–24; Matt. 12:25; Lk. 11:17
The Divided House	Mk. 3:23–25; Matt. 12:25; Lk. 11:17
The Strong Man Bound	Mk. 3:27; Matt. 12:29–23, 30; Lk 9:17–22
The Sower, Seed and Soils	Mk. 4:1–9; Matt. 13:3–9, 18–23; Lk 8:4–8
The Mustard Seed	Mk 4:30–32; Matt. 13:31– 32; Lk 13:18–19
The Lighted Lamp	Mk. 6:21; Matt. 5:15; Lk. 8:16–17; 9:33
The Seed Growing Secretly	Mk. 4:26–29
Inward Defilement	Mk. 7:14–23; Matt.
The Savorless Salt	Mk. 9:50; Matt. 5:13; Lk. 14:34–35
The Wicked Husbandmen	Mk. 12:1–9; Matt. 21:33– 41; Lk. 20:9–16
The Rejected Stone	Mk. 12:10–11; Matt. 20:42–46; Lk. 20:17–19
The Sprouting Fig Tree	Mk. 13:28–31; Matt. 24:32–35; Lk. 21:29–33
The Porter	Mk. 13:34–37

The Last Verses of Mark

One of the most perplexing problems for textual criticism, for which no satisfactory answer has been found, concerns the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel. As this is a matter for textual criticism³³² and not for a Survey, only some pertinent comments need be made:

³³² For a full discussion of textual criticism, its principles and methods, see the section on "New Testament Textual Criticism," pp. 37–50.

The problem: there are four different endings to Mark's record: the short, abrupt ending at 16:8, the long, traditional ending at v. 20, and two additional endings, one which inserts another verse before v. 9 and another which adds to the long, traditional ending with an insertion at v. 14. The longer ending has problematic contextual and stylistic issues, and may have been gathered from the other Gospel records by a later hand, or are a summary and conclusion by Mark.

The textual witnesses: first, Mk. 16:9–20 do not occur in the oldest uncial mss.,³³³ but do occur in the remainder of the uncials.³³⁴ Second, many of the ancient versions do not contain the longer ending. Third, Justin Martyr (c. 150) quoted the final two verses (16:19–20); Tatian (c. 170) used the longer ending, as did Irenaeus (c. 180). Fourth, the longer ending was unknown to Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265–340). Fifth, The majority of later texts have the longer, traditional ending. This longer ending has found its way into the English Bible through the majority of Greek mss.

The possible and most probable solutions: (1) Mark ended his Gospel at v. 8, although this is abrupt. (2) Some external force or circumstances caused him to leave the ms. incomplete. (3) The ending was a cumulative and summary statement. (4) The original scroll or later codex was damaged at the end or given page and lost or discarded.³³⁵

Organization and Structure

Mark does not organize his account around the five great discourses as does Matthew. The one pivotal passage which brings to culmination the first part and introduces the second is

³³³ *Siniaticus*, {N}, c. 340; the *Vaticanus*, {B}, c. 325–350. The scribe of {B}, contrary to his usual practice, left a blank column after v. 8 and then added the words “according to Mark.”

³³⁴ The *Alexandrinus* {A}, c. 450, et. al.

³³⁵ See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 122–126.

Mk. 8:27–31, Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi and the beginning of Jesus’ direct and repeated teaching concerning his coming Passion.

The general structure of Mark’s Gospel account is possible by introducing each section with either a transitional statement or a geographical transition: (1) The Introduction or Preliminaries (1:1–13). (2) The First Part of the Galilean Ministry (1:16–3:6). (3) The Second Part of the Galilean Ministry (3:7–5:43). (4) The Third Part of the Galilean Ministry (6:1–8:26). (5) A Time of Instruction and Revelation (8:27–9:50). (6) The Perea Ministry (10:1–52). (7) The Final Ministry at Jerusalem culminating in our Lord’s Passion (11:1–15:47). (8) Our Lord’s Resurrection and Commission (16:1–20).

Outline

A simple, two–fold outline which divides our Lord’s life between his ministry and the events leading up to and including his Passion:

- 1) The Servant gives His Life in Service (Chapters 1–10).
- 2) The Servant Gives His Life in Sacrifice (Chapters 11–16).

Mark’s Gospel record may be generally outlined in an inverted manner:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| A) The Predecessor (John the Baptist) | (1:1–8). |
| B) The Baptism in Water | (1:9–11). |
| C) The Temptation in the Wilderness | (1:12–13). |
| D) The Ministry: Galilee (1:14–9:50),
Perea (10) and Judea (–14:25) | (1:14–14:25). |
| C) The Travail in the Garden | (14:26–42). |
| B) The Baptism in Suffering | (14:43–15:47). |
| A) The Successors (The Apostles and Believers) | (16:1–20). |

This Gospel account is best divided into its geographical locations and transitions befitting our Lord as the Servant of Yahweh:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Prologue | (1:1–13). |
| A. The Theme | (1:1). |

- B. The Ministry of John the Baptist (1:2–8).
- C. The Baptism and Manifestation of Jesus (1:9–11).
- D. The Wilderness Temptation (1:12–13).
- I. The Servant's Early Galilean Ministry (1:14–3:6).
 - A. A summary of the Servant's Message (1:14–15).
 - B. The Call of the First Four Disciples (1:16–20).
 - C. The first Ministry at Capernaum (1:21–34).
 - 1. His authoritative teaching (1:21–22).
 - 2. Healing of a demoniac: the Servant's fame (1:23–28).
 - 3. Healing of Peter's mother-in-law (1:29–31).
 - 4. Post-Sabbath healings (1:32–34).
 - 5. Early morning, solitary prayer (1:35–37).
 - D. First Galilean preaching tour (1:38–45).
 - E. Capernaum: healing and confrontations (2:1–3:6).
 - 1. Paralytic healed and forgiven: first confrontation (2:1–12).
 - 2. Call of Matthew: second confrontation (2:13–22).
 - 3. Sabbath Day controversy (2:23–28).
 - 4. Man with withered hand healed: third controversy (3:1–6).
- II. The Servant's Mid-Galilean Ministry (3:7–7:23).
 - A. Withdrawal to the sea: 12 Disciples chosen (3:7–19).
 - B. The Servant misunderstood and maligned (3:20–35).
 - 1. Jesus charged with being insane (3:20–21).
 - 2. Jesus charged with being demon-possessed (3:22–30).
 - 3. Jesus puts spiritual relations above natural relations (3:31–35).
 - C. Parables concerning the Kingdom (4:1–34).
 - D. The stilling of the storm (4:35–41).
 - E. First foray into Gentile territory: Demoniac of Gadara (5:1–20).
 - F. Return to Galilee (5:21–43).
 - 1. The plea of Jairus for his daughter's life (5:21–24).

- 2. The woman with the hemorrhage healed (5:25–34).
- 3. Jairus' daughter raised from the dead (5:35–43).
- G. The Servant's rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a).
- H. Second Galilean preaching tour (6:6b–6:52).
 - 1. The commission and mission of the Twelve (6:b–13).
 - 2. Interlude: the death of John the Baptist (6:14–29).
 - 3. The Twelve return and report (6:30).
 - 4. A time of retirement (6:31–32).
 - 5. The feeding of the five thousand (6:33–44).
 - 6. The Servant walks upon the water (6:45–51).
- I. Second foray into Gentile territory (6:52–56).
- J. Controversy concerning defilement (7:1–23).
 - 1. The condemnation of mere human tradition (7:1–13).
 - 2. The source of true defilement (7:14–23).
- III. The Servant's Later Galilean Ministry (7:24–9:50).
 - A. Third foray into Gentile territory: healing of the Syro-Phonician woman's daughter (7:24–30).
 - B. Return to Galilee (7:31–9:50).
 - 1. Deaf and dumb healed: resulting unwanted fame (7:32–37).
 - 2. Feeding of the four thousand (8:1–9).
 - 3. Confrontation with Pharisees concerning a sign (8:10–12).
 - 4. Dissertation on the leaven of the Pharisees (8:13–21).
 - 5. Healing of a blind man: a command for silence (8:22–26).
 - 6. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (8:27–29).
 - 7. Jesus begins to openly predict his Passion (8:30–32a).
 - 8. Peter is rebuked for his misplaced zeal (8:32b–33).
 - 9. A short discourse on true discipleship (8:34–38).

- 10. The Transfiguration of the Servant (9:1–10).
- 11. Elias explained as John the Baptist (9:11–13).
- 12. Demoniac boy healed (9:14–29).
- 13. Final preaching tour through Galilee:
 - Disciples instructed (9:30–50).
- IV. The Servant's Perea Ministry (10:1–52).
 - A. Teaching on Divorce (10:1–12).
 - B. The Disciples corrected; the little children blessed (10:13–16).
 - C. The rich young ruler (10:17–22).
 - D. Jesus' dissertation on the obstacle of riches (10:23–27).
 - E. A discussion concerning wealth and reward (10:28–31).
 - F. Jesus' repeated prophecy of his Passion: the fear of the Disciples (10:32–34).
 - G. The request of James and John: instruction on Service (10:35–45).
 - H. Healing of blind Bartimaeus at Jericho (10:46–52).
- V. The Servant's Jerusalem Ministry (11:1–14:43).
 - A. Preparatory events (11:1–26).
 - 1. The Triumphal Entry (11:1–11).
 - 2. The fig tree cursed (11:12–14).
 - 3. Second cleansing of the Temple: the hatred of the Scribes and chief priests (11:15–18).
 - 4. The withered fig tree: lessons in prayer and forgiveness (11:19–26).
 - B. The Servant debates the leaders in the Temple (11:27–12:44).
 - 1. The demand for a sign; question of authority (11:27–33).
 - 2. Parable of the vineyard and husbandmen (12:1–12).
 - 3. A question of taxation: God and Caesar (12:13–17).

4. A question concerning the levirate marriage and the resurrection (12:18–27).
5. A question concerning the greatest Commandment (12:28–34).
6. Jesus warns the people against the Scribes (12:35–40).
7. A contrast of offerings: widow's two mites (12:41–44).
- C. The Servant's eschatological discourse (13:1–37).
- VI. The Servant's Passion: Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion (14:1–15:47).
- A. The conspiracy to betray and destroy Jesus (14:1–2).
- B. The anointing of Jesus by Mary at Bethany (14:3–9).
- C. Judas conspires to betray our Lord (14:10–11).
- D. The Last Supper or Passover meal (14:12–21).
 1. The preparation (14:12–16).
 2. The observance (14:17–18a).
 3. The revelation of the Betrayer among the Disciples (14:18b–21).
- E. The institution of the Lord's Supper (14:22–25).
- F. The garden agony, Peter's denial foretold (14:26–42).
- G. Jesus' betrayal and arrest (14:43–52).
- H. Trial before the Sanhedrin (14:53–65).
- I. The denial of Peter (14:66–72).
- J. Hearing before Pilate (15:1–20).
 1. Jesus answers, then is silent before his accusers (15:1–5).
 2. Barabas, a noted criminal, is released (15:6–14).
 3. Jesus is scourged and mocked by the Romans (15:15–20).
 4. Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear Jesus' cross (15:21).
- K. The Crucifixion and Death of the Servant (15:22–37).

- 1. The wine and drug refused (15:23).
- 2. The accusation and the mocking multitude (15:26–33).
- 3. Jesus' final cry and death (15:34–37).
- L. The aftermath and the burial (15:37–47).
 - 1. The Temple veil rent from top to bottom (15:38).
 - 2. The declaration of the centurion (15:39).
 - 3. The observing women (15:40–41).
 - 4. The burial of Jesus' body by Joseph of Arimathaea (15:42–47).
- VII. The Servant's Resurrection and Commission (16:1–20).
 - A. The Servant's resurrection (16:1–8).
 - 1. The women at the sepulchre (16:1–4).
 - 2. The witness of the angel (16:5–7).
 - 3. The risen Lord appears to Mary Magdalene (16:9).
 - 4. The unbelief of the Disciples (16:10–11).
 - 5. The appearance to two of the Disciples, the others do not believe (16:12–13).
 - 6. The appearance to the Eleven who are unbraided for their unbelief (16:14).
 - B. The Servant's Commission (16:15).
 - 1. Closing declarations and promises (16:16–18).
 - 2. Ascension into heaven to the right hand of God (16:19).
 - 3. The Disciples in obedience to the commission (16:20).

Survey by Section

Some biblical books may be surveyed by chapters, others by sections. Mark's Gospel account moves by either a transitional statement or a geographical transition rather than

by chapters.³³⁶ As the first written account, he gives a brief resume of our Lord's public life and ministry.

The Introduction or Preliminaries (1:1–13)

Mark begins his Gospel account with the theme (1:1) and the ministry of John the Baptist. This introductory declaration is both historical and theological. Jesus is both the promised Messiah and the Son of God. No genealogy [Matt. 1:1–17; Lk. 3:23–38], no nativity account [Matt. 2; Lk. 2] and no eternal identification [Jn. 1:1–3, 18]. His is the Gospel of action. He necessarily includes Jesus' baptism which identifies him as the Christ, the Son of God.

All four Gospel accounts record the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove—with the Father's voice from heaven, a Trinitarian witness. The Wilderness Temptation prepares him for his ministry, which deals with miracles and casting out demons, etc. While Matthew and Luke use the term "...led of the Spirit..." (4:1), Mark uses the term "...the Spirit driveth him..." (1:14).

The Galilean Ministry

Mark is concerned in the first major division of his account with the Galilean ministry of our Lord (1:16–9:50), with occasional forays into predominately Gentile territory (5:1–20; 6:52–56; 7:24–30). He omits the first calling of the first Disciples and the early Judean ministry (Jn. 1:19–4:1).

The first Part of the Galilean Ministry (1:16–3:6)

Jesus' ministry begins after John is cast into prison. His message is the Gospel with the two commands to repent and believe (1:14–15). After the call of the first four Disciples: Peter, Andrew, James and John, Mark describes a typical day in Jesus' ministry: teaching in the synagogue, healing and exorcising demons (1:16–24). He spent time alone in prayer, a habit which would cause him to withdraw from the multitudes for rest and the instruction of his Disciples several times (1:35–

³³⁶ See the previous section on "Organization and Structure."

38). As his fame spreads, he commands both demons and those healed not to advertise him (1:37–45). His healing of the leper was a witness to the priests that he had power over both spiritual and physical defilement (1:40–44).

Chapter three reveals the beginning of the continual controversies with the Jewish leaders over the Sabbath, his authority and actions (3:1–6). There would be a continual conflict between religious traditions and the truth as our Lord proclaimed and lived it. The Mosaic Law commanded one fast a year (Lev. 16:29); the Pharisees held two fast days a week—on Mondays and Thursdays (Lk. 18:12).

The Second Part of the Galilean Ministry (3:7–5:43)

This section moves from his first withdrawal to the sea to the raising of Jairus' daughter. All twelve of the Disciples are chosen (3:7–19). Jesus' family, not understanding his person or his ministry, fear that he is insane (3:20–21). The Scribes from Jerusalem, not able to explain his obvious power, claim that he is empowered by Beelzebul. Jesus answers them by parables and declares they are committing the unpardonable sin (3:22–30). His concerned family wants to talk with him, but he puts spiritual relations before earthly ones (3:31–35).

In 4:1–34, Jesus teaches concerning the kingdom of God in parables. Afterward, when crossing the Sea of Galilee, a storm arises and Jesus calms it to the utter astonishment of the Disciples. He reveals his power over nature (4:35–41).

He then makes his foray into Gentile territory to the east and Gadara (5:1–20). Here he heals the fierce demoniac [Matthew states there were two demoniacs, 8:28–34]. This area was predominately Gentile. The swine were raised for the Roman government, which supplied its soldiers with salt pork as their daily rations. The population urged Jesus to depart. 5:21–43 are concerned with the healing of the woman with a continual hemorrhage (5:25–34) and the raising of Jairus' daughter (5:21–24, 35–43). This is one of the three occasions when our Lord raised a dead person to life (Lk. 7:11–17; Jn.

11:1–45). The four final miracles of this section demonstrate our Lord's power and authority over nature, demonic forces, sickness and death.

The Third Part of the Galilean Ministry (6:1–8:26)

This section begins with Jesus' rejection at his own synagogue in Nazareth, the stronghold of Jewish orthodoxy in Galilee (6:1–6a) to the journey to Caesarea Philippi (8:27ff).

After his rejection at Nazareth, Jesus begins his second preaching tour of Galilee (6:6b–6:52). Even he had to marvel at the unbelief of his own people. Miracles and the declaration of truth make little impression upon religious people who are steeped in tradition.

Jesus commissions the Twelve to preach the Gospel and delegated them power to perform miracles (6:b–13). Then follows an interlude to explain the death of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas (6:14–29). The Twelve return from their successful mission and report to our Lord (6:30–31). Jesus then withdraws with his Disciples for a time of rest, but the people follow them.

The next scene begins with our Lord's compassion of the multitude, both physically and spiritually: the feeding of the five thousand men besides women and children (6:33–44). Afterward, Jesus commands his Disciples to board their boat and launch forth into the sea where they were beset with a nighttime storm. He comes to them, walking on the water (6:45–52).

Only John points out that this is the high point of our Lord's public ministry when the people wanted to make a king by force, and from that point, the ministry began to decline (Jn. 6:1–26, 66).

Now Jesus makes his second foray into Gentile territory, where the people now receive him and he heals many (6:53–56). The former demoniac had evangelized that region a year before (5:1–20).

7:1–23 deals with another controversy with the Pharisees, who held strongly to the “Tradition of the Elders” and ceremonial cleanliness. Our Lord reveals their hypocrisy, then reveals to his Disciples what true defilement is—it comes from within the depraved heart of man and is spiritual and moral, not ceremonial (7:1–23).

The remainder of chapter 7 (7:24–37) traces Jesus’ third and final foray into Gentile territory. He heals the demon-possessed daughter of the Greek Syro-Phoenician woman, then a deaf and dumb man as he returns to Galilee.

8:1–26 deals with four events: the feeding of the four thousand (8:1–9), the removal to Dalmanutha on the northwestern coast of the Sea of Galilee, another confrontation with the Pharisees concerning a sign (8:11–13; Matt. 12:38–45; 16:1–5; Lk. 11:16–36; Jn. 6:30). This reveals their obstinate hearts and spiritual blindness—his entire ministry was his teaching credentialed by numerous supernatural signs! Our Lord then instructs his Disciples concerning the “leaven,” i.e., the doctrine of the Pharisees (8:13–21; Matt. 16:6–12; Lk. 12:1).

A Time of Instruction and Revelation (8:27–9:50)

This section marks the apex of our Lord’s teaching to his Disciples as he begins to prepare them for his Passion, i.e., his suffering, death and resurrection. They expected him to be finally received as king, and they did not understand the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God.

Peter’s confession (8:27–30), our Lord’s private declaration to his own (8:30–31), then his rebuke of Peter (8:32–33), was followed by a short discourse on discipleship (8:34–38). It is noteworthy that Peter’s attempted correction of our Lord reveals that we may be beset and deceived by satanic temptation in our very highest Christian motives for good!

Chapter nine deals with the Transfiguration (9:1–10), a conversation concerning the coming of Elias (9:11–13; Mal. 4:5–6), the healing of the demoniac boy (9:14–29), his final

preaching tour through Galilee, while he continues to instruct and prepare his Disciples (9:30–50). It must be noted that our Lord was the greatest preacher on earth in the Scriptures!

The Perea Ministry (10:1–52)

Chapter Ten marks the second half of this Gospel record, and is devoted to our Lord's final journey from Galilee to Judea and Jerusalem and the final events. On this final trip, he uses the normal pilgrim path through Perea rather than Samaria.

Luke's Gospel record gives the most details of this final journey (Lk. 13:22–19:29). Luke also emphasizes the face of Christ as he prepared for his Passion and kept staring ahead toward Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51–56). The never-ending confrontation with the Pharisees rises once again with a dispute—this time over divorce. Jesus takes them back to the creation ordinance of marriage (10:2–12). He once again corrects his Disciples about their attitude and blesses the little children (10:13–16). The incident of the rich young ruler and discourse upon riches follows (10:17–31).

As they continue with their journey, Jesus once again reiterates his coming Passion, causing the Disciples a renewed fear (10:32–34). James and John desire to be exalted at his side, still believing that the kingdom was eminent. Jesus responds by giving a discourse on service (10:35–45). As the pilgrim party leaves Jericho, our Lord heals blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52). There is no mention of the episode concerning Zacchaeus, where Jesus and the Disciples spent the night (Lk. 19:1–10).

The Final Ministry at Jerusalem

culminating in our Lord's Passion (11:1–15:47)

The climax to our Lord's earthly ministry with his suffering, death and resurrection is now at hand. The major movements: preparatory events: the Triumphal Entry, second cleansing of the Temple and the miracle of the withered fig tree (11:1–26), final debates with the Jewish leaders in the Temple

(11:27–12:44), Jesus’ Eschatological Discourse (13:1–37. Cf. Matt. 24:1–25:46), and, finally, our Lord’s betrayal, arrest, the Jewish and Roman trials and crucifixion (14:1–15:47).

The Triumphal Entry and the second cleansing of the Temple caused great indignation on the part of the Jewish leaders (Cf. Jn. 12:9–18). These were distinct Messianic claims.

The great influx of pilgrims at the Feast of the Passover with the activities and festive atmosphere presented a most opportune time to capture our Lord and have him destroyed. They try Jesus with various questions and issues which would have weight with the Roman authorities. Our Lord answers them parabolically and with counter-questions which they were afraid to answer.

Mark then gives an abbreviated account of the great Eschatological Discourse—the only one of the five great discourses recorded by Matthew and forming the substance of His Gospel record.³³⁷

Chapter fourteen deals with the final conspiracy to destroy our Lord (14:1–1–2, 10–11), his anointing by Mary at Bethany (14:3–9), the final Passover meal (14:12–21), the institution of the Lord’s Supper (14:22–25), the trek to the Mount of Olives and the Garden agony (14:26–42), Jesus’ betrayal and arrest (14:43–52), trial before the Sanhedrin (14:53–65) and Peter’s denial (14:66–72).

John’s account gives much more detail concerning events from the Passover Meal to the arrest (Jn. 13:1–18:2), including the Upper Room Discourse and the High Priestly Prayer.

Chapter fifteen begins with our Lord’s hearing before Pilate (15:1–20) to his scourging, mocking, death on the cross and burial (15:21–47). The Sanhedrin convicted him of blasphemy; to the Romans, they stated that he had set himself

³³⁷ See Matt. 5:1–7:29; 10:1–11:1; 13:1–52; 18:1–35; 24:1–25:46. Luke gives an abbreviated account (Lk. 21:5–36).

up as a rival king. Pilate saw through their ruse and knew they were envious—a deadly sin.

The notable issues are the release of Barabas (15:6–14), Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear his cross (15:21), the six hours of agony on the cross wherein atonement was made for the sins of his people (15:32–37), his voluntary death (15:34–37),³³⁸ the declaration of the centurion (15:39), the witness of the women (15:39–41) and burial by Joseph of Arimathaea (15:42–47).

John was the only eye-witness among the Disciples for all except him had fled in fear. His account gives much more detail (Jn. 18:1–19:42). The horrors of scourging and crucifixion are noted in Matthew's account.³³⁹

Our Lord's Resurrection and Commission (16:1–20)

Including the long ending, Chapter sixteen is essentially two-fold: the resurrection (16:1–14) and the commission (16:15–20). Mark makes no effort to hide the unbelief of the Disciples. The post-resurrection appearances of our Lord and his commission may be gathered from Matt. 28:1–28; Lk. 24:1–53; Jn. 20:1–21:25; Acts 1:1–11.

Notes and Observations

These are notes not previously discussed in the foregoing study on Mark. Some of the notes and observations considered in Matthew need not be discussed in the following gospel records.

1. (1:1ff) It is significant that Mark begins his gospel with the ministry of John the Baptist. This was the beginning of the Gospel and New Testament era, as acknowledged by Peter (Acts 1:15–22). John should not be relegated to the Old

³³⁸ ἐξέπνευσεν. He literally breathed out his life, i.e., dismissed his spirit back to his Heavenly Father. See Matt. 27:50, ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα. This was a voluntary act. See Jn. 10:18.

³³⁹ For a description of scourging and crucifixion, see pp. 292–294.

Testament. His ministry resulted in a great spiritual awakening (1:5), which prepared for all that followed.

2. (1:15) Jesus' preaching was "Repent and Believe the gospel." These two requirements have never changed.
3. (1:23–26) Our Lord would not accept the testimony of demons, even when they admitted the truth (Mk. 3:11–12; Lk. 4:33–36). Neither did the Apostle Paul (Acts 16:16–18). Some believe that any means to spread the gospel is legitimate, but we must beware of means which may be questionable.
4. (1:35) If the sinless, holy Son of God found it necessary to spend hours in prayer (Lk. 6:12), what can be said of us who are sinful and inconsistent at best? Can we dare to forego prayer?
5. (3:22–30) The Unpardonable sin. It is not refusal to believe in Jesus, but attributing the work of God to the devil, and thus despising the work of the Holy Spirit. These said that Jesus had an unclean spirit, thus sinning against the Holy Spirit who worked through our Lord (cf. Acts 10:38). Jesus did not perform miracles by his own inherent power as the Son of God, but as the Messiah, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. (5:1–20) The Demoniac of Gadara. He was delivered and sent back to his own home. The people begged Jesus to leave. He departed, but exhorted the man to evangelize that area. A year later when our Lord returned, he was welcomed by the population (Mk. 6:53–56). The healed demoniac was the first foreign missionary in the New Testament! Do we so take advantage of our testimony and opportunities?
7. (5:41–43) Jairus' daughter raised from the dead. Note how our Lord cares for her and commands to give her something to eat. He never healed apart from his personal compassion (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:30–34; Mk. 1:40–41; 5:19; 6:34; 8:2; Lk. 7:11–13), and in her awful

sickness she had probably not eaten for a long time. And do we think that our Lord is not moved by our suffering, pain and needs?

8. (6:1–6) “A prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own kin, and in his own house.” What tragedy is unbelief! In his own country among his own people, he could do little. How much is lost through unbelief!
9. (6:7–13) The commission and first preaching journey of the Twelve. They were given power to work miracles, but no provisions. Thus, it was doubly a work and ministry of faith. Do we worry about our provisions?
10. (6:14–29) The martyrdom of John the Baptist. We, as he, are immortal until our work is done—a great encouragement to persevere.
11. (8:29–33) From Peter’s glorious confession to his awful rebuke. It is important to note that the devil seduced Peter at the very height of his personal concern and fervent love for our Lord. Beware of religious fervency which is not grounded in Divine truth.
12. (8:34–38) Self-denial is a primary law of true Christianity, as is taking up one’s cross “day after day after day” [καθ’ ἡμέραν, Lk. 9:23], i.e., our identification with Christ in his redemptive work and its claim upon our lives.
13. (9:7) What an experience! These three actually heard the very voice of God from heaven—the same voice that thundered from Sinai, and they never forgot this (2 Pet. 1:16–18).
14. (9:11–13) Is all Scripture literally fulfilled? The “Elijah” the Jews were expecting (Mal. 4:5–6) came in the person of John the Baptist. We must understand that our interpretation of the Old Testament is from the New Testament and not the reverse.
15. (9:14–27) The demoniac, epileptic boy healed. Our Lord called his father to faith. The father’s plaintive cry, “Lord I

believe, help thou mine unbelief!” His prayer was answered. Are we not taught to cry for more faith in the hour of trial?

16. (9:28–29) Prayer and fasting. What is the significance of fasting? It is the most basic and immediate self-denial—it furthers the force of our prayers.
17. (9:42–50) Our Lord was the foremost preacher of hell in Scripture. What a need there is for such a balanced, Christ-like ministry concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked!
18. (10:1–9) Mark our Lord’s use of the Old Testament. He recognized its full and abiding authority. Beware of those who would contrast our Lord with the Old Testament and speak only of his love, compassion and tenderness. He is also righteous and holy!
19. (10:42–45) The Christian preacher is called a “minister,” and rightly so. He is not only God’s minister, but a minister to the souls with which God has entrusted to him. This is true Christ-likeness in service.
20. (10:46–52) Blind Bartimaeus. What would it take to silence us? He cried, persevered, overcame all opposition and prevailed. What a lesson in prayer!
21. (11:17) Jesus cleanses the Temple the second time. It was meant to be a house of prayer; it had become a den of thieves. How easily the house of God is changed by those who are spiritually destitute.
22. (11:20–24) Has anyone ever had the faith to cast a mountain into the sea? This may have been a Rabbinic saying, as they called some, “remover of mountains” for those who removed issues thought unanswerable.
23. (11:27–33) Our Lord takes the Jewish leaders in their own craftiness. He forces them to give a political answer. May we have wisdom to answer according to knowledge.

24. (12:1–12) The Parable of the Vineyard and Husbandmen. A prophetic declaration of our Lord's own imminent death, emphasizing his rejection by the leaders.
25. (12:18–27) The question of the Sadducees. It was theoretical, as they did not believe in the resurrection. In his answer, our Lord reveals that men are dead only to this world, but alive in the presence of God.
26. (12:28–34) The discreet answer of the Scribe. Jesus said that he was not far from the kingdom—but this scribe thought that he was already in the kingdom! Both an encouragement and a great warning against presumption.
27. (12:41–44) Jesus observed how the people gave, not what they gave. What a great encouragement to those of us who have little, but give all to the cause of the Lord Jesus!
28. (13:1–37) As our Lord foretold the future, his watchword was—watch! We are more than mere spectators to events around us; we are necessary participants, armed with the truth of God and commissioned to faithful service.
29. (14:3–9) Mary's action of pure devotion. Time and expense are never wasted on our pure devotion to the Lord Jesus. Times of blessed communion in prayer and heart-fellowship, acts of kindness in the name of the Lord, time spent in the Scriptures with a sanctified heart and mind—such devotion to our Lord is never wasted.
30. (14:18–21) Our Lord reveals a betrayer among his own. His words are chilling, "Good it were for that man that he had never been born." Awful, unspeakable horror! But he had been born and his end would be horrible in the inescapable fire of eternal punishment.
31. (14:26) They sang a hymn before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane. What was it? It was the final *Hallels* of the Passover meal, Psalm 115–118. Read these and ponder our Lord's thoughts as he always did and spoke with all his heart. Especially the words, "I shall not die, but live and proclaim the Word of the Lord." He drew comfort in the

promise and looked through the gloom of the cross and its suffering to the glory which must follow!

32. (14:43–45) Witness the awful hypocrisy of Judas. He “covered him with kisses,” i.e., kissed him repeatedly and fervently [κατεφίλησεν]. May there not be—never be—a shred of hypocrisy or deceit in our minds, hearts and or actions before or to our Lord!
33. (15:3–14) The wickedness of mob rule. The leaders were hysterical and irrational in their rage. See how even the religious world treated our Lord. And what can we expect?
34. (15:23) Jesus refused the wine mingled with myrrh because it was narcotic to lessen the physical suffering. Our Lord suffered the agony of the scourging and the crucifixion without any mitigation because he was atoning for our sins. What a blessed Savior!
35. (15:36) Jesus moistened his mouth with the sour wine from the sponge, offsetting the dryness and agony of his physical torment to give one final cry and then voluntarily gave up his life. This signaled the fullness and finality of our redemption.
36. (16:1ff) Unbelieving, radical biblical critics have said that we owe the fiction of the resurrection to the hallucinations of Mary Magdalene, that the Disciples wanted to see our Lord rise from the dead so badly that they believed it. But this is far from the truth! The opposite was true. Their faith was shaken and all but destroyed. Our Lord had to convince them of his resurrection and then rebuke them for their unbelief. How different were these same Disciples after his resurrection, at his ascension, at Pentecost and beyond. Filled with the Spirit, facing the world and preaching the gospel.

The Gospel According to Luke

Luke and the Four Gospels

Matthew presents our Lord as the Promised Messiah and Israel's King, tracing his genealogical descent from Abraham and David (Matt. 1:1–17). Mark presents him as the Perfect Servant, with no genealogy needed (Mk. 10:45). Luke presents our Lord as the Perfect Man, tracing his ancestry back to Adam (Lk. 3:23–38).³⁴⁰ John presents him as the eternal Son of God—the Word [ὁ λόγος]—the very exegesis [ἐξηγήσατο] of God in the flesh (Jn. 1:1–3, 18), and so commences with eternity.³⁴¹ In summary:

Matthew: Behold your King!
 Mark: Behold My Servant!
 Luke: Behold the Man!
 John: Behold Your God!

Matthew is the most prominent Gospel record, emphasizing the fulfillment of prophecy. It is the Gospel of the King. Mark is the shortest Gospel account and emphasizes the practical; it is the Gospel of action. John is supplementary to the other three Gospel accounts and emphasizes our Lord's Deity.³⁴² It is preeminently the Gospel of the Son of God. John only records eight miracles and gives an eye-witness account of the crucifixion.

Luke is the longest Gospel account and the most replete as he presents our Lord and his ministry from various aspects, giving many details and incidents missing from the other Gospel accounts, especially situations of human interest, e.g.,

³⁴⁰ Matthew gives our Lord's royal genealogy through Joseph. Luke gives our Lord's natural genealogy through Mary. For a full discussion, see the section, "The Christ of the Gospels," pp. 158–164.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² The Johannine writings toward the end of the first century were in part directed at both Valentinian and Docetic Gnosticism.

the emphasis upon the poor, the use of various medical terms and perceptions, and the graphic parabolic teaching, etc. There are 631 verses dealing with incidents, miracles and lessons which are found in Luke alone.

It is the favorite Gospel of many because of its vividness and variety. It has been said that “Luke painted with words.” His Gospel account has been called, “the most literary of the Gospels” and “the most beautiful book ever written.”³⁴³ Luke himself has been termed “the most versatile of all of the New Testament writers” (A. Plummer). While all of the Synoptics deal largely with Jesus’ Galilean ministry and John emphasizes his early and intermittent Judean ministry, Luke emphasizes his Perean ministry on the final journey to Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51–19:28).

The Authorship of Luke’s Gospel Account

A Biography of Luke

Luke [Λουκᾶς, a shortened form of Λουκανός, “light-bearing, illumination.” Not to be confused with “Lucius” (Λούκιος) a Jewish believer: Acts 13:1; Rom. 16:21] is the author of almost one-fourth of the New Testament. His Gospel account is the longest New Testament book and the Book of Acts is the second-longest.³⁴⁴ Both were written in a classical, literary style with formal introductions, both more suited to the cultured Greek mind (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1:1ff).

Luke is mentioned three times in the New Testament: Col. 4:14, where he is listed separately from those of the circumcision and described as Paul’s “beloved physician”; Phlm. 24 as a “fellow-worker” [συνεργός] with Paul; and in 2 Tim. 4:11 as Paul’s only companion during his final

³⁴³ Attributed to Joseph Ernest Renan (1823–1892), French philologist and rationalistic philosopher.

³⁴⁴ Acts and Matthew are approximately the same length in the Gk. text. If Paul wrote Hebrews, he remains the author of more of the New Testament than Luke by a single, short epistle.

imprisonment. There is a fourth occurrence in the traditional postscript to 2 Cor. 13:14.³⁴⁵

Luke was evidently a Greek,³⁴⁶ an early convert to Christianity and possibly from the Syrian Antioch.³⁴⁷ As a physician by calling, he was probably educated at Tarsus in Cilicia. If so, he might have known Paul from his university days.³⁴⁸ His writings reveal an educated, literary education and the mind and accuracy of an astute historian. He was a physician, a historian, an evangelist and possibly a pastor at Philippi, and one of the greatest and most-gifted authors of the New Testament.

It is a fact that he joined the Apostle Paul at Troas and may have remained in Philippi; then joined him again at Philippi when Paul traveled on his final journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:1ff). This is noted in the “they” and the “we” sections of Acts, revealing Luke’s leaving and accompanying the Apostolic party. He remained with Paul throughout his incarceration at Caesarea for two years then accompanied him to Rome, remaining with him during his first imprisonment and then his second and final imprisonment (Acts 21:1ff; 27:1ff; 28:16ff; 2 Tim. 4:11). At least twice and possibly thrice Luke

³⁴⁵ Cf. the *Stephanus Text* or *textus receptus*.

³⁴⁶ Luke’s writings, style, education and calling point to his Grecian heritage, e.g., Acts 28:2. “barbarous” [βάρβαροι] denotes non-Greek speaking people [not uncivilized]—a Greek designation. Most of the Old Testament quotations are from the LXX.

³⁴⁷ The *Codex Beza* [D] contains the genitive absolute, *συνεστραμμένων δὲ ἡμῶν*, “when we were gathered together,” an alleged first “we” section, implying that Luke was part of the Antiochan church from the beginning and with Paul before his missionary journeys. See R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Luke’s Gospel*, pp. 6–7; Bruce M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Gk. NT*, p. 391 and most critical commentaries, NT Introductions and NT Surveys. Most scholars consider this a possibility, not a probability

³⁴⁸ The three great centers of learning and education were Alexandria in Egypt, Athens in Greece and Tarsus in Cilicia.

and John Mark were together—during both imprisonments (Plm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11), and possibly at Antioch before Paul’s first missionary journey.

Nothing is known of Luke’s subsequent life or death. Traditions vary. One early tradition states that he ended his life as an evangelist at Bithynia in Asia Minor at age 74, another that he died as a martyr in Greece at age 84.

The Sources for the Gospel according to Luke

Although this Gospel account, as the others, is anonymous, Luke has been the undisputed author from the early Christian era. Early testimonies include: Tatian’s *Diatessaron* (c. 160 AD), Irenaeus (c. 120–200 AD), Tertullian (c. 155–220 AD), the heretic Marcion [the anti-Marcion Prologue] (c. 160–180 AD), the Muratorian Canon (c. 200 AD) and the Bodmer Papyrus XIV [*p*⁷⁵] (c. 175–225 AD).

Luke was primarily guided and governed by Divine inspiration, which does not set aside research and investigation. He states that he was not an eye-witness to the events of our Lord’s life, that many had attempted to write accounts of these events, but that he had an accurate knowledge of these matters and their order (Lk. 1:1–4).³⁴⁹ His relation to John Mark gave him access to much information concerning the life and ministry of our Lord through Mark’s Gospel record, and he probably had Matthew’s Gospel account as well.

He was able, during Paul’s two years’ imprisonment at Caesarea, to move about and interview most of the original Disciples,³⁵⁰ our Lord’s immediate family (James, Jude),

³⁴⁹ Lk. 1:3, παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς, “have investigated all things from the very first accurately and in order.” He based his record on a thorough investigation of all the eye-witness and written accounts in a successive order and under Divine inspiration.

³⁵⁰ James the brother of John had been martyred. Some Disciples may have been evangelizing in other areas, but most had remained in the area of Jerusalem.

including his mother, Mary (Lk. 1:26–38), and many of the first-generation believers who had witnessed the events and had personally heard the teaching of the Lord. He had time to verify the many written accounts already in existence (Lk. 1:1ff). His Gospel account was the first volume of his great, two-volume work: The Gospel–Acts Account—“The First Church History” (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1ff).

The accuracy of Luke as a historian has been questioned by radical critics who use the dating of Josephus (c. 93 AD) concerning the census of Quirinius (Lk. 2:1ff) in 6 AD to discredit his Gospel account. This seems to be the major objection to Luke’s reliability. In answer, it may be posited that Quirinius was involved in Syrian events from c. 10 BC to 12 AD, and that Luke was accurate whereas Josephus was incorrect in his dating, confusing two incidents:

Note: Radical critics and secular historians point to this as a Lucan error in chronology. However, Luke, the first church historian, was an inspired, astute, exact and contemporary historian who investigated eye-witness accounts (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1:1ff). He would not have been guilty of such an anachronism and his contemporaries would have corrected such. The radical critics depend upon the testimony of Josephus, who wrote some thirty years later, thus discounting the accuracy of Luke’s account.

Roman history and recent investigation reveal that Quirinius was involved in Syrian affairs periodically from c. 10 BC to c. 12 AD. Luke refers to the first census, not the second, at which time Judas of Galilee caused an insurrection (Acts 5:37). He became legate governor of Syria and Judea after the removal of Herod Archelaus (Lk. 2:2). See R. C. H. Lenski, *St. Luke’s Gospel*, pp. 115–119; William Hendriksen, *Luke*, pp. 138–141; Norval Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke*, pp. 99–100.

Another approach would be to translate the Greek πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου as “before he was governor of Syria.” Further, “Luke uses the genitive absolute construction ἡγεμονεύοντος, which means “leading” and not does not necessitate the imperial office, but one having power.” Andreas J. Kostenberger, et. al, *The Cradle, The Cross and the Crown: An Introduction to the New*

Testament, p. 320, fn. 85. See John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary, Luke 1:1–9:20*, pp. 99–102; Walter L. Liefeld, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, VIII, p. 843; Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times*, pp. 134–138.

Finally, J. H. Rhoads, in a lengthy article maintains that Luke was accurate and Josephus was in error in the dating, confusing similar events, which he evidently did in other situations. See J. H. Rhoads, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 54.1 (March 2011), pp. 65–87. Also see comments on this article in Andreas Kostenberger, *Loc. cit.*

The Provenance and Date of Luke's Gospel Account

Three locations have traditionally been put forth: Caesarea, during Paul's incarceration there for two years, at Rome, during Paul's first imprisonment or in Greece after Paul's martyrdom. It is probable that Luke knew of and had read both Mark's Matthew's Gospel accounts and conferred with Mark during Paul's first Roman imprisonment and put his literary work in final form at that time: "The Gospel–Acts" History in two scrolls, c. 61–63 AD.

The Purpose and Recipients of Luke's Gospel Account

The purpose and primary recipient are both found in Luke's Gospel prologue (Lk. 1:1–4). The manifest purpose was that Theophilus might have a certain [ἀσφάλειαν] and accurate [ἀκριβῶς] knowledge of the things wherein he had already been orally instructed³⁵¹ in the life of Christ and the Christian faith. There were evidently many fragmentary written accounts being disseminated, and Luke's written account would be spiritually and historically complete and definitive.³⁵² Theophilus is addressed as "most excellent" [κράτιστε], a term reserved for

³⁵¹ κατηχήθης, literally, "catechized" by word-of-mouth.

³⁵² τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, certainty, absolute proof. The wording of 1:1–4 implies the most careful and thorough research and examination of facts through interrogation of credible eye-witnesses.

persons of high rank such as governors. Theophilus may have been Luke's wealthy patron. Some have speculated that he had been Luke's master and had freed him as a Greek physician-slave. Many Greek slaves were highly educated or trained, and faithfully served their Roman masters and even tutored their children.

The primary recipient was Theophilus; the ultimate recipients were Gentile or Greek believers, as this Gospel has a universality in its approach and message beyond the other Gospel accounts. The explanation of various places and terminologies are fitted to the Gentile or Greek mind.

Luke and John Mark

The long-lasting relationship between Luke and John Mark has been established. It is evident that Mark's Gospel was foundational to Luke's research. Luke probably had copies of the Gospel accounts of both Matthew and Mark before him when he finished his own Gospel record. There is a close relationship between the accounts of Mark and Luke. This relationship was not only personal, but literary as well. Mark's Gospel contains 678 verses in the KJV. Of these, from 368 to 395 verses occur in Luke's account with little or no change.³⁵³

Distinctive Features

Of the four evangelists, Luke alone situates his account historically, giving the various major and subordinate rulers and an accurate time-frame (2:1-2; 3:1-2; Acts 1:1-11). "He alone of the Evangelists binds the sacred narrative to secular history" (Harrison).

The Gospel of Luke is the most comprehensive Gospel account. This Gospel is universal in its scope, embracing all men as sinners in need of salvation, and thus fitted to persons of every nation. The key verse could well be 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

³⁵³ For a thorough discussion and listing of passages on Luke's use of Mark, see W. Graham Scroggie, *Op. cit.*, pp. 356-360.

Matthew's parables emphasize the kingdom; Luke's emphasize individual men and women, and proclaim the message of salvation.

The writings of Luke contain the most literary Greek of the New Testament, but include some Semitisms. Over half of Luke's Gospel are the very words of Christ himself (586 out of 1151 verses in the KJV). He gives the longest and most detailed account of the Nativity [two chapters] and the only detailed account of final Perean ministry (9:50–19:11). Luke's vivid and detailed parables are characteristic of his style, and he records eighteen parables not found elsewhere. Seven miracles are not recorded in the other Gospels.

Luke alone gives the first hymns of Christianity: the Song for Mary [*Ave Maria*] (1:28–31), the *Magnificat* of Mary (1:46–55), The *Benedictus* of Zacharias (1:67–79). Further, there are more references to “glorifying God” (2:20; 5:25ff; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43), “praising God” (2:13, 20; 19:37) and “blessing God” (1:64; 2:28; 24:53) than in the other Gospel accounts.

There is a pervading attitude of human sympathy throughout this Gospel record, often giving details of human suffering and relationships. Luke portrays our Lord as reaching out to the outcasts, sick, diseased and to the poor and lowly. There are a great number of medical terms in this Gospel and also added details and comments concerning sickness and disease which betray the physician's eye and diagnosis.

There are three terms for “forgiveness” in Κοινή Greek,³⁵⁴ and Luke uses them all. Even when the terms do not occur, the implication is often given, e.g., conscience-stricken Peter (5:8–10), the returning prodigal (15:18ff), the praying publican (18:13–14), Zacchaeus (19:5–10) and the dying thief (23:39–43).

³⁵⁴ ἀφίημι, to send or take away, the term most commonly used (Lk. 5:21); ἀπολύω, to loose from, set free from (Lk. 6:37); χαρίζομαι, to pardon (Lk. 7:43).

Luke gives a prominent place to prayer. He alone of the Gospel writers mentions our Lord's prayers and acts of prayer at critical junctures in his life and ministry, e.g., at his baptism, before choosing his Disciples, at the Transfiguration, etc. Mark the following:

1. Jesus prayed at his baptism (3:21).
2. Jesus spent much time in private prayer after a day of miracles (5:15–16).
3. Jesus spent the night in prayer before choosing his Disciples (6:12).
4. Jesus spent time in private prayer before revealing his passion to the Disciples (9:19–22).
5. Jesus prayed at his Transfiguration (9:29).
6. Jesus prayed upon the return of the Seventy (10:17–21).
7. Jesus was praying when his Disciples asked him to teach them to how to pray (11:1f).
8. Jesus was praying in an agony in Gethsemane (22:39–46).
9. Jesus prayed repeatedly on the cross (23:34, 46).

This Gospel account also emphasizes women and children, both in actual life and in our Lord's parabolic teaching. Luke also emphasizes an array of actual characters in real life, such as Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, Martha, Zacchaeus, etc., and also develops characters in his parabolic teaching, e.g., Lazarus the beggar, the rich man, the prodigal son, his father and elder brother, etc.

There are certain themes or emphases in this Gospel account which should be noted. It's Christology, in addition to the detailed Nativity account, emphasizes the compassion and interest our Lord took toward those to whom he preached or healed. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit receives emphasis, both in the Gospel record and in especially in Acts. The emphasis upon salvation has already been noted, as have been the emphasis upon worship and praise.

Material Peculiar to Luke

There are at least fifty-two passages giving incidents, parables and miracles which are peculiar to Luke and at least twenty-nine which occurred on our Lord's final journey to Jerusalem through Perea. These passages contain some of the most beautiful treasures of the Gospel record, e.g., the Annunciation and Nativity narratives, various parables, including those of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son and the ascension of our Lord.

Event, Miracle or Parable	Reference
Dedication to Theophilus	1:1-4
Promised birth of John	1:5-25
Annunciation to Mary	1:26-38
Mary's visit to Elizabeth	1:39-56
Birth of John the Baptist	1:57-80
Birth of Jesus	2:1-20
Presentation in Temple	2:21-38
Childhood visit to Jerusalem	2:41-52
Reply of John to the people	3:10-14
Natural genealogy of Jesus	3:23-38
Good News to the Poor	4:14-30
Miraculous catch of fish	5:1-11
Widow's son raised at Nain	7:11-17
Encounter with sinful woman	7:36-50
Parable of Two Debtors	7:40-43
Women who ministered to Jesus	8:1-3
Rejection at a Samaritan village	9:51-56
Rebuke of James and John	9:51-56
Simile of the Plougher	9:61-62
Sending ahead the Seventy	10:1-12
Return & report of the Seventy	10:17-20

Parable of the Good Samaritan	10:25–37
Martha cumbered & corrected	10:38–42
Parable of Importunate Friend	11:5–8
Parable of the Rich Fool	12:13–21
Parable of few & many stripes	12:47–48
Reply re those killed by Pilate	13:1–5
Parable of Barren Fig Tree	13:6–9
Sabbath cure of crippled woman	13:10–17
Reply to Pharisees re Herod	13:31–33
Sabbath healing of man with dropsy	14:1–6
Two Parables re guests & Hosts	14:7–14
Parable of the Great Supper	14:15–24
Counting the cost: two parables	14:28–33
Parable of Lost Coin, Sons	15:8–32
Parable of Unjust Steward	16:1–12
Account of Lazarus & Rich Man	16:19–31
Illust: Master & Servant	17:7–10
Cleansing of 10 lepers	17:11–19
Kingdom of God within	17:20–21
Parable of Unjust Judge	18:1–8
Parable of Pharisee & Publican	18:9–14
Conversion of Zacchaeus	19:1–10
Jesus weeps over Jerusalem	19:41–44
Reason for Peter's denial	22:31–32
The Two Swords	22:35–38
Jesus before Herod Antipas	23:6–12
Pilate: Jesus innocent	23:13–16
Sayings on the cross	23:28–31, 34, 43,46
Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus	24:13–35
Jesus appears to Disciples	24:36–49

The ascension of Jesus	24:50–53
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Omissions in Luke's Gospel

Assuming that Mark's Gospel was first and Matthew's second, and that Luke had access to both, it may be assumed that Luke need not be repetitious with some material and passages which the others had already written. There are forty-one passages from Mark which Luke omits, including several parables, confrontations, Herod's murder of John the Baptist and the "great omission" of the events of Mark 6:45—8:26, some seventy-four verses. Only John, however, records the raising of Lazarus. It has been alleged that due to the length of the scroll, Luke had to economize his space, and need not be repetitious where the other Synoptics had stated the material.³⁵⁵

The Old Testament in Luke's Gospel

Matthew's Gospel account was written specifically to the Jews and Jewish Christians, thus it contains many references [130] to the Old Testament with the purpose of demonstrating their fulfillment in our Lord, his ministry and redemptive work. Luke's account contains approximately ninety-five in the form of quotations (25), allusions (42) and "echoes" (28) of the Old Testament. These are almost all found in the words of our Lord himself in his addresses to the Jews, apart from the Annunciation and Nativity narratives.

Quotations or Citations

Luke	OT	Luke	OT
1:17	Mal. 4:5–6	10:26–27	Deut. 6:5
1:37	Gen. 18:4 (LXX)	10:27	Lev. 19:18
2:23	Ex. 13:2, 12	13:27	Psa. 6:8

³⁵⁵ Ancient scrolls were limited by length and manageability. Both Luke's Gospel and Acts filled the greatest length of their scrolls. This issue, the materials omitted and the possible reasons are fully discussed in Scroggie, *Op. cit.*, pp. 353–356.

2:24	Lev. 12:8	18:20	Ex. 20:12–14
3:4–6	Isa. 40:3–5	19:46a	Isa. 56:7
4:4	Deut. 8:3	19:46b	Jer. 7:11
4:8a	Deut. 6:13	20:17	Psa. 118:22–23
4:8b	Deut. 10:20; 1 Sam. 7:3	20:28	Deut. 25:5
4:10–11	Psa. 91:11–12	20:41–44	Psa. 110:1
4:12	Deut. 6:16	22:37	Isa. 53:12
4:18, 19, 21	Isa. 56:1–2	23:34b	Psa. 22:18
7:27	Mal. 3:1	23:46	Psa. 31:5
8:9–10	Isa. 6:9–10		

Allusions

Luke	OT	Luke	OT
1:8–10	Lev. 16:7	12:53	Mic. 7:6
1:15	Numb. 6:3	14:10	Prov. 25:6–7
1:32	Psa. 132:11; Isa. 9:7	14:11	Prov. 29:23; Ezk. 21:26
2:21	Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3	17:14	Lev. 13:2
2:22	Lev. 12:6	17:26	Gen. 7
2:23	Ex. 13:2	17:27, 29, 32	Gen. 19:23–26
2:24	Lev. 5:11; 12:8	19:10	Ezk. 34:11, 16
2:34	Isa. 8:14	19:44	Psa. 137:9
2:52	1 Sam. 2:26	20:18a	Isa. 8:14–15
4:25–26	1 Kgs. 17:1, 9	20:18b	Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45

4:27	2 Kgs. 5:14	20:37	Ex. 3:1–6, 15
5:14	Lev. 13:49	21:10–11	2 Chron. 15:6; Isa. 19:2, 17
6:3–4	1 Sam. 21:6	21:22	Isa. 34:8; 63:14; Hos. 9:7
9:30, 33	Ex.; 1 Kgs.	22:20	Ex. 24:8; Zech. 9:11
9:54	2 Kgs. 1:10, 12	22:69	Dan. 7:13
10:4	2 Kgs. 4:29	23:30	Isa. 2:19; Hos. 10:8
11:29–30	Jonah 1:17	23:34a	Isa. 53:12
11:31	1 Kgs. 10:1	23:35a	Psa. 22:7, 17
11:32	Jonah 1:2	23:35b	Isa. 42:1
11:51	Gen. 4:8; 2 Chron. 24:20–21	23:36	Psa. 119:21
12:53	Mic. 7:6		

Echoes of Old Testament Passages

Luke	OT	Luke	OT
1:46–55	1 Sam. 1:11; 2:1–8; Psa. 111:9; 79:16; Job 5:11; 12:19; Psa. 107:9; Isa. 41:8; Gen. 17:19	16:18	Deut. 24:1–4;
		17:3	Jer. 3:1
		20:9	Lev. 19:17
			Isa. 5:1–2

1:68–79	Psa. 41:13; 106:48; 2 Sam. 2:10; Psa. 106:10; 132:17; 105:8, 9; Gen. 121:3	21:24	Deut. 28:64; Psa. 129:1; Isa. 63:18; Dan 8:13; Zech. 12:3;
2:30–32	Isa. 40:5; 52:6; 46:13; 49:6; 52:10; 60:3; 25:7; 98:2	21:25	Isa. 13:10; 24:23; Ezk. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15
6:24	Amos 6:1	21:26	Isa. 34:4
6:25	Isa. 65:13–14	21:27	Dan 7:13
7:22	Isa. 35:5–6	21:35	Eccl. 9:12
10:15	Isa. 14:13–15	22:1	Ex. 12
10:19	Psa. 91:13	23:31	Ezk. 20:47
10:28	Lev. 18:5	23:49	Psa. 38:11; 88:8
13:19	Dan. 4:12, 21	24:5	Isa. 8:19
13:27	Psa. 6:8	24:27, 32	General ref.
13:34	Various refs.	24:44–45	General ref.
16:17	Deuteronomy	24:46	Isa. 53:3, 5

The Miracles Recorded by Luke

Our Lord performed countless miracles which are often recorded *en masse* (e.g., Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 12:15; 14:14; 19:2; Mk. 1:34; 3:10; Lk. 5:15; 6:17–19, etc.). Of the thirty-five specific miracles recorded in the Gospels, Matthew records 20, Luke 20, Mark 18 and John 7. Of the 20 miracles Luke records, 6 are found only in his Gospel.

Miracle	Reference
Demoniac healed	Mk. 1:23–26; Lk. 4:33–36
Peter's mother-in-law healed	Matt. 8:14–17; Mk 1:29–31; Lk. 4:38–39
First Catch of fish	Lk. 5:6–11
Leper cleansed	Matt. 8:1–4; Mk 1:40–45; Lk. 5:12–16
Paralyzed man healed	Matt. 9:1–8; Mk 2:1–12; Lk. 5:17–26
Withered hand healed	Matt. 12:9–13; Mk 3:1–5; Lk. 6:6–11
Centurion's servant healed	Matt. 8:5–13; Lk. 7:1–10
Widow's son restored to life	Lk. 7:11–16
Storm stilled	Matt. 8:23–27; Mk 4:35–41; Lk. 8:22–25
Exorcism of two men of Gadara	Matt. 8:28–34; Mk. 5:1–20; Lk. 8:26–39
Jairus' daughter raised	Matt. 9:18–26; Mk. 5:22–24; 35–43; Lk. 8:41–42, 49–56
Woman with issue of blood healed	Matt. 9:20–22; Mk. 5:25–34; Lk. 8:43–48
Blind and mute demoniac healed	Matt. 12:22–29; Lk. 11:14–22
Five Thousand fed	Matt. 14:15–21; Mk. 6:32–44; Lk. 9:12–17; Jn. 6:1–13
Epileptic boy healed	Matt. 17:14–21; Mk. 9:14–29; Lk. 9:37–43
Woman with infirmity healed	Lk. 13:10–17
Man with dropsy healed	Lk. 14:1–6
Ten lepers healed	Lk. 17:11–19
Blind Bartimaeus healed	Matt. 20:29–34; Mk. 10:46– 52; Lk. 18:35–43
Malchus' ear healed	Lk. 22:49–51

Miracles Omitted by Luke

There are 15 Miracles which Luke omits:

Miracle	Reference
Water changed into wine	Jn. 2:1–11
Nobleman's son healed	Jn. 4:46–54
Man at pool of Bethesda healed	Jn. 5:1–16
Two blind men healed	Matt. 9:27–31
Mute demoniac healed	Matt. 9:32–34
Jesus walks upon the water	Matt. 14:22–33; Mk. 6:45–52; Jn. 6:16–21
Daughter of Syro-Phoenician woman healed	Matt. 15:21–28; Mk. 7:24–30
Deaf–mute man healed	Mk. 7:31–37
Four thousand fed	Matt. 15:32–39; Mk. 8:1–9
Blind man healed	Mk. 8:22–26
Coin obtained from fish's mouth	Matt. 17:24–27
Man born blind healed	Jn. 9
Lazarus raised from the dead	Jn. 11:1–44
Fig tree cursed	Matt. 21:18–22; Mk. 11:12–14, 20–24
Second catch of fish	Jn. 21:3–6

The Parables Recorded by Luke

Luke records 35 parables, 19 of which are peculiar to Luke alone:

Parable	Reference
Parables which occur in Luke only	
The Two Debtors	Lk. 7:41–43

The Good Samaritan	Lk. 10:30–37
The Friend at Midnight	Lk. 11:5–8
The Rich Fool	Lk. 12:13–21
The Waiting and Watching Servants	Lk. 12:35–38
The Faithful Steward	Lk. 12:41–48
The Barren Fig Tree	Lk. 13:6–9
The Chief Seats	Lk. 14:7–11
The Great Supper	Lk. 14:16–24
The Unfinished Tower	Lk. 14:28–30
The Unwaged War	Lk. 14:31–32
The Lost Piece of Silver	Lk. 15:8–10
The Prodigal Son and Elder Brother	Lk. 15:11–32
The Unrighteous Steward	Lk. 16:1–13
The Account of the Rich Man and Lazarus ³⁵⁶	Lk. 16:19–31
The Unprofitable Servants	Lk. 17:7–10
The Unjust Judge	Lk. 18:1–8
The Pharisee and the Publican	Lk. 18:9–14
The Pounds	Lk. 19:11–27
Parables which occur in Only Matthew and Luke	
The Inward Light	Matt. 6:22–23; Lk 9:34–36

³⁵⁶ The account of the Rich man and Lazarus is historical, not parabolic, as our Lord never names a character in his parables. Further, if a parable, then the teaching on hell may be set aside as fictitious.

The Two Builders	Matt. 7:24–27; Lk 6:46–49
The Unclean Spirit Returns	Matt. 12:43–45; Lk 9:24–26
The Leaven in the Meal	Matt. 13:33; Lk 13:20–21
The Master and the Thief	Matt. 24:43–44; Lk 12:39–40
The Faithful and the Evil Servants	Matt. 24:45–51; Lk 12:42–46
The Lost Sheep	Matt. 18:12–14; Lk 15:3–7
Parables which occur in all Three Synoptics	
The Savorless Salt	Matt. 5:13; Mk. 9:50; Lk. 14:34– 35
The Lighted Lamp	Matt. 5:15; Mk. 6:21; Lk. 8:16– 17; 9:33
The Bride and the Bridegroom	Matt. 9:14–15; Mk. 2:19–20; Lk. 5:34–35
The New Cloth on an Old Garment	Matt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Lk. 5:36
The New Wine in Old Wineskins	Matt. 9:17; Mk. 2:22; Lk. 5:37–39
The Sower, Seed and Soils	Matt. 13:3–9, 18– 23; Mk. 4:1–9; Lk. 8:4–8
The Mustard Seed	Matt. 13:31–32; Mk. 4:30–32; Lk. 13:18–19
The Wicked Husbandmen	Matt. 21:33–41; Mk. 12:1–9; Lk. 20:9–16

The Rejected Stone	Matt. 20:42–46; Mk. 12:10–11; Lk. 20:17–19
The Sprouting Fig Tree	Matt. 24:32–35; Mk. 13:28–31; Lk. 21:29–33
Parabolic Illustrations	
Fishers of Men	Matt. 4:19; Mk 1:16–17; Lk 5:10
The Strait Gate and Shut Door	Lk 13:23–30
The Mote and the Beam	Matt. 7:1–5; Lk 6:41–42
The Good and Bad Fruit Trees	Matt. 7:16–20; Lk 6:43–45
Birds and Flowers	Matt. 6:25–34; Lk 12:22–31
The Strong Man Bound	Matt. 12:29–30; Mk 3:27; Lk 9:17–22
The Blind Guiding the Blind	Matt. 15:14; Lk 6:39
The Chief Seats at Feasts	Lk 14:7–11
Parabolic Illustrations	
Fishers of Men	Matt. 4:19; Mk 1:16–17; Lk 5:10
The Strait Gate and Shut Door	Lk 13:23–30
The Mote and the Beam	Matt. 7:1–5; Lk 6:41–42
The Good and Bad Fruit Trees	Matt. 7:16–20; Lk 6:43–45
Birds and Flowers	Matt. 6:25–34; Lk 12:22–31

The Strong Man Bound	Matt. 12:29–30; Mk 3:27; Lk 9:17–22
The Blind Guiding the Blind	Matt. 15:14; Lk 6:39
The Chief Seats at Feasts	Lk 14:7–11

Parables Omitted by Luke

There are fourteen parables omitted by Luke and also seven parabolic illustrations:

Parable	Reference
The Wheat and the Tares	Matt. 13:24–30
The Hidden Treasure	Matt. 13:44
The Pearl of Great Price	Matt. 13:45–46
The Fish Net	Matt. 13:47–50
The Householder	Matt. 13:24–30
The Unmerciful Servant	Matt. 18:24–35
The Laborers in the Vineyard	Matt. 20:1–16
The Two Sons called to Work	Matt. 21:28–32
Marriage of the King's Son	Matt. 22:2–14
The Ten Virgins	Matt. 25:1–13
The Talents	Matt. 25:14–30
The Sheep and the Goats	Matt. 25:31–34
The Seed growing Secretly	Mk. 4:26–29
The householder and Porter	Mk. 13:34–37
Parabolic Illustrations	
The Salt of the Earth	Matt. 5:13

Dogs and Swine	Matt. 7:6
Doomed Plants	Matt. 15:13
The Broad and Narrow Ways	Matt. 7:13–14
The Offending Members	Matt. 5:29–30
Good and Bad Treasures	Matt. 12:34–37
On Defilement	Mk. 7:14–23; Matt. 15:11

Organization and Structure

The purpose of Luke, adding to the prior oral and written accounts, including Mark and Matthew, was to present an accurate and detailed portrait of our Lord as the Savior of sinners, with stress upon his humanity and sympathy, as well as his Divine nature and mission. This explains both his varied emphases and the historical and sequential structure of his Gospel account, which is not usually according to the chapter divisions in the English Bible.

There are six main sections: The Beginnings or the preliminaries (1:5–4:13), the Galilean ministry (4:14–9:50), the Perean Ministry (9:51–19:44), the final Jerusalem Ministry (19:45–21:38), the Passion: from his arrest to his crucifixion and burial (22:1–23:56) and his resurrection and ascension into heaven (24:1–53).

Outline

A simple outline may enable one to grasp the essence of this Gospel account:

- A) Introduction (1:1–4).
- B) Events related to the Savior's Coming (1:5–4:13).
- C) Events related to the Savior's Ministry (4:14–21:28).
- B) Events related to the Savior's Cross (22:1–23:56).
- A) Conclusion (24:1–53).

The following outline and analysis follows the organizational structure of the Lucan account:

Introduction (1:1–4)	
I. The Advent of the Son of Man	(1:5–4:13).
A. The Annunciations and Preparation	(1:5–56).
1. The Announcement of John Baptist's birth	(1:5–25).
2. The Announcement of Christ's birth to Mary	(1:26–38).
3. The visit of Mary to Elizabeth	(1:39–56).
a. The prophetic words of Elizabeth	(1:39–45).
b. The <i>Magnificat</i> of Mary	(1:46–55).
c. Mary returns to Nazareth	(1:56).
B. The Birth Narratives	(1:57–2:20).
1. The Birth of John the Baptist	(1:57–80).
a. Birth and naming of John	(1:57–66).
b. The <i>Benedictus</i> of Zacharias	(1:67–79).
c. A summary history of John the Baptist	(1:80).
2. The Birth of the Jesus Christ	(2:1–20).
a. The historical context: the census of Quirinius	(2:1–2).
b. The journey to Bethlehem and His birth	(2:3–7).
c. The angels and the shepherds	(2:8–20).
C. The infancy of the Son of Man	(2:21–39).
1. The circumcision and naming of Jesus	(2:21).
2. The presentation at the Temple	(2:22–39).
a. The offerings prescribed by Law	(2:22–24).
b. The <i>Nunc Dimittis</i> and prophecy of aged Simeon	(2:25–35).
c. The testimony of aged Anna	(2:36–39).
D. The youth of the Son of Man	(2:40–52).
1. Jesus' early development as a child	(2:40).
2. Jesus' first Passover at Jerusalem	(2:41–50).
a. Jesus missing on the journey home	(2:43–45).
b. Jesus found in the Temple with the Doctors	(2:46–49).

- 3. Jesus returns home and is subject to his parents (2:50–52).
- E. The Forerunner: John the Baptist (3:1–20).
 - 1. The historical context for John’s ministry (3:1–2).
 - 2. The spiritual awakening through John’s ministry (3:2–6).
 - 3. The message of John (3:7–14).
 - 4. John’s prophecy of the coming Christ (3:15–18).
- F. An interlude: John imprisoned by Herod Antipas (3:19–20).
- G. The Baptism of the Son of Man (3:21–22).
 - 1. Jesus baptized by John (3:21).
 - 2. The Trinitarian witness to the Divine Sonship of Jesus (3:21–22).
- H. The Genealogy of the Son of Man (3:23–38).
- I. The Temptation of the Son of Man (4:1–13).
 - 1. Tempted as to prerogative (4:3–4).
 - 2. Tempted as to patience (4:5–8).
 - 3. Tempted as to presumption (4:9–12).
 - 4. The devil leaves Christ for a season (4:13).
- II. The Galilean Ministry of the Son of Man (4:14–9:50).
 - A. The Early Galilean Ministry (4:14–6:16).
 - 1. The Commencement of the Galilean ministry (4:14–15).
 - 2. Jesus’ rejection at Nazareth (4:16–30).
 - 3. Capernaum becomes Jesus’ headquarters (4:31–32).
 - 4. Jesus heals a demon–possessed man in the synagogue (4:33–37).
 - 5. Jesus heals Simon’s mother–in–law (4:38–39).
 - 6. Post–Sabbath healings (4:40–41).
 - 7. Ministry beyond Capernaum (4:42–44).
 - 8. First miraculous draught of fishes (5:1–9).
 - 9. Call of the first Disciples (5:10–11).
 - 10. Healing of a leper and many others (5:12–15).
 - 11. Withdrawal alone for prayer (5:16).

12. Healing reveals power to forgive sins (5:17–26).
13. Call of Matthew a Levite (5:27–27).
14. Question of feasting and fasting (5:28–35).
15. Two parables contrasting old and new (5:36–39).
16. Sabbath observance, healing of man with withered hand (6:1–11).
17. Night of prayer: Twelve Disciples chosen (6:12–16).
- B. Sermon on the Mount (6:17–49).
- C. The Middle Galilean Ministry (7:1–9:17).
 1. Centurion's servant healed (7:1–10).
 2. Widow's son raised from dead at Nain (7:11–17).
 3. John's disciples question Jesus (7:18–23).
 4. Jesus' dissertation concerning John (7:24–35).
 5. Jesus, Pharisaic host and sinful woman (7:36–50).
 6. The women who followed Jesus (8:1–3).
 7. Parables of the kingdom (8:4–18).
 8. Spiritual and physical kinship contrasted (8:19–21).
 9. Jesus calms the storm at sea (8:22–25).
10. Jesus heals the Gadarene demoniac (8:26–39).
11. Jesus heals the hemorrhagic woman (8:42–48).
12. Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead (8:41–56).
13. Jesus commissions the Twelve (9:1–6).
14. Herod's perplexity concerning Jesus (9:7–9).
15. Return of the Twelve and second retirement (9:10–11).
16. The Feeding of the 5,000 men (9:12–17).
- D. The Final Galilean Ministry (9:18–50).
 1. Jesus begins to prepare the Disciples for his passion (9:18–27).
 2. The Transfiguration (9:28–36).
 3. Healing of demoniac boy (9:37–42).
 4. Second preparation for Jesus' passion (9:43–45).
 5. Lesson concerning greatness (9:46–48).
 6. Lesson concerning tolerance (9:49–50).

- III. The Perean Ministry of the Son of Man (9:51–19:44).
 - A. The first stage of the journey (9:51–13:24).
 - 1. Rejection by a Samaritan village (9:51–56).
 - 2. Would-be disciples tested (9:57–62).
 - 3. The Seventy commissioned (10:1–12).
 - 4. The fate of the impenitent cities (10:13–16).
 - 5. The seventy return and report (10:17–20).
 - 6. Prayer of Thanksgiving (10:21–22).
 - 7. The privilege of the Disciples (10:23–24).
 - 8. Reply to Lawyer's question:
 - Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25–37).
 - 9. A question of priorities (10:38–42).
 - 10. Lessons concerning prayer (11:1–13).
 - a. The Model Prayer (11:2–4).
 - b. Importunate prayer (11:5–8).
 - c. Efficacy of prayer (11:9–13).
 - 11. Controversy over exorcism (11:14–26).
 - 12. Correctional of an emotional outburst (11:27–28).
 - 13. Rebuking demand for a sign (11:29–36).
 - a. Jonah, Queen of the south and Nineveh (11:29–32).
 - b. Answer: Parable of the Lamp (11:33–36).
 - 14. Condemnation of ritualism and hypocrisy (11:37–54).
 - a. Hypocrisy of the Pharisees condemned (11:37–44).
 - b. Hypocrisy of the Lawyers condemned (11:45–54).
 - 15. Jesus' instructions to his followers (12:1–59).
 - a. To his Disciples: a Fearless witness (12:1–12).
 - b. Warning against covetousness (12:13–21).
 - c. To his Disciples: Be responsible (12:22–53).
 - (1) Warning against anxiety (12:22–34).
 - (2) Exhortation to readiness (12:35–40).
 - (3) Admonition to faithfulness (12:41–48).
 - (4) Reminder of Jesus' divisive influence (12:49–53).
 - d. To the multitude: signs of the times (12:54–59).

- 16. A call to repentance (13:1–9).
 - a. Lesson from current tragedies (13:1–5).
 - b. Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (13:6–9).
- 17. Conflict with and rebuke of
 - synagogue leader (13:10–21).
 - a. Jesus heals a hunchback woman (13:10–13).
 - b. Refutation of synagogue ruler's objection (13:14–17).
 - c. Parables of the kingdom (13:18–21).
 - 1. Danger of exclusion from the kingdom (13:22–30).
 - 2. Jesus sends indirect message to Herod (13:31–32).
 - 3. Jesus laments over Jerusalem (13:33–35).
 - 4. Jesus a guest in home of a Pharisee (14:1–24).
 - a. Healing of man with dropsy (14:2–6).
 - b. Advice to bidden guests (14:7–11).
 - c. Advice to the host (14:12–14).
 - d. Parable of the Great Supper (14:15–24).
 - 6. Parable of Lost Things as a defense (15:1–2).
 - a. Parable of Lost Sheep (15:3–7).
 - b. Parable of Lost Silver (15:8–10).
 - c. Parable of Lost Sons (15:11–32).
 - 7. Jesus' teaching on use of wealth (16:1–31).
 - a. Parable of Unjust Steward and application (16:1–13).
 - b. Reply to reaction of the Pharisees (16:14–18).
 - c. The account of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31).
 - 8. Jesus' teaching on offences (17:1–10).
 - a. A warning against offending (16:1–4).
 - b. Parables of the mustard seed and the servant (17:5–10).
- C. The final stage of the journey (17:11–19:27).
 - 1. Through Samaria and Galilee (17:11).
 - 2. Healing of the ten lepers (17:12–19).
 - 3. Jesus' prophetic discourse re the Kingdom (17:20–37).

- a. His answer to the Pharisees (17:20–21).
 - b. His teaching to the Disciples (17:22–37).
- 4. Jesus' teaching on prayer (18:1–14).
 - a. Parable of the Unjust Judge (18:1–8).
 - b. Parable of the Pharisee and Publican (18:9–14).
- 5. Jesus' response to the disciples and little children (18:15–17).
- 6. Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler (18:18–30).
 - a. The snare of riches (18:18–23).
 - b. Discussion of riches with Disciples (18:24–30).
- 7. Jesus' third announcement of his passion (18:31–34).
- 8. Events at Jericho (18:35–19:27).
 - a. Healing of blind beggar (18:35–43).
 - b. The conversion of Zacchaeus (19:1–10).
 - c. Parable of the Pounds (19:11–27).
- IV. The Final Jerusalem Ministry of the Son of Man (19:28–21:38).
 - A. The Son of Man: Triumph and Lamentation (19:28–44).
 - 1. The end of the journey to Jerusalem (19:28).
 - 2. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (19:29–44).
 - 3. The lamentation over Jerusalem (19:41–44).
 - B. The Second Cleansing of the Temple (19:45–48).
 - C. The Rejection of the Son of Man: confrontations (20:1–21:4).
 - 1. A question of authority (20:1–8).
 - 2. Parable of husbandmen and vineyard (20:9–16).
 - 3. The rejected stone (20:17–18).
 - 4. Plot of Jewish leaders (20:19–20).
 - 5. Question of tribute to Caesar (20:21–26).
 - 6. Question of Sadducees re the resurrection (20:27–40).
 - 7. Question re Christ's Sonship (20:41–44).
 - 8. Warning against hypocrisy of Scribes (20:45–47).
 - 9. The widows two mites (21:1–4).
 - D. The Prophecies of the Son of Man (21:5–38).

1. Prophecy of destruction of the Temple (21:5–6).
2. Teaching re the end (21:7–38).
 - a. Character of the age (21:8–11).
 - b. Difficulties of the future (21:12–19).
 - c. Fall of Jerusalem and fate of nation (21:20–24).
 - d. The glorious coming of the Son of Man (21:25–28).
 - e. Exhortation to hope and vigilance (21:29–36).
- V. The Passion of the Son of Man (22:1–23:56).
 - A. Betrayal of the Son of Man by Judas (22:1–6).
 1. The plot of the Sanhedrin to kill Jesus (22:1–2).
 2. Judas' agrees to betray Jesus (22:3–6).
 - B. The Last Supper of the Son of Man (22:7–20).
 1. Preparation for and observance of the Passover (22:7–18).
 2. Institution of the Lord's Supper (22:19–20).
 3. Announcement of the betrayer (22:21–23).
 4. Jesus' response to dispute re greatness (22:24–30).
 5. Jesus predicts Peter's denial (22:31–34).
 6. Preparation for future events (22:35–38).
 - C. The Garden Agony (22:39–46).
 - D. The Betrayal and Arrest of the Son of Man (22:47–53).
 - E. The Denial of Peter (22:54–62).
 - F. The Son of Man mocked and tried before the Sanhedrin (22:63–71).
 1. Jesus mocked and mistreated by soldiers (22:63–65).
 2. Tried and condemned before the Sanhedrin (22:66–71).
 - G. The Son of Man Tried before Pilate and Herod (23:1–25).
 1. Accused before Pilate (23:1–7).
 2. Examination before Herod Antipas (23:8–12).
 3. Second hearing before Pilate (23:13–25).

- a. Pilate's efforts for acquittal (23:13–16).
 - b. Pilate surrenders to the Jews' demands (23:17–24).
 - c. Barabbas released (23:25).
- H. The Crucifixion of the Son of Man (23:26–43).
 - 1. Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear Jesus' cross (23:26).
 - 2. Lament for Daughters of Jerusalem (23:27–31).
 - 3. Two malefactors led to crucifixion with Jesus (23:32).
 - 4. Events at Calvary (23:33–49).
 - a. Crucifixion and mocking of Jesus (23:33–38).
 - b. Reactions of the two malefactors (23:39–43).
 - (1) The impenitent malefactor (23:39).
 - (2) The penitent malefactor (23:40–43).
 - c. Three hours of darkness (23:45a).
 - d. The Temple veil rent in two (23:45b).
 - Jesus voluntarily dismisses his spirit (23:46).
 - e. Confession of the centurion (23:47).
 - f. The self-righteous stance of the people (23:48).
 - g. The women followers standing afar off (23:49).
- I. The Burial of the Son of Man (23:50–56).
 - 1. Joseph of Arimathea takes Jesus' body (23:50–53a).
 - 2. Jesus' body buried in a new tomb (23:53b).
 - 3. Burial preparations interrupted by Sabbath rest (23:54–56).
- VI. The Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of Man (24:1–53).
 - A. The Resurrection of the Son of Man (24:1–12).
 - 1. The women enter the empty tomb (24:1–3a).
 - 2. Angels declare the resurrection of Jesus (24:3b–8).
 - 3. The women report to the unbelieving Disciples (24:9–11).

4. Peter runs to and enters the empty tomb (24:12).
- B. The Incident on the Road to Emmaus (24:13–35).
 1. The unrecognized traveling companion (24:13–17).
 2. The disheartened Disciples (24:18–24).
 3. Jesus' reprimand and revelation (24:25–31).
 4. The two report to the rest of the Disciples (24:32–35).
- C. The Son of Man appears to his Disciples (24:36–49).
 1. Jesus gives proofs of his resurrection (24:36–43).
 2. Jesus gives final instructions to the Disciples (24:44–49).
- D. The Ascension of the Son of Man into heaven (24:50–51).

Epilogue (24:52–53)

Survey

Introduction (1:1–4)

Luke addresses both his Gospel account (1:1–4) and the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1) to Theophilus, evidently a person of note and high rank. He immediately states his purpose and asserts his methodology and credentials as an accurate historian. There were many oral and written accounts of the life and ministry of Christ in existence at that time, but Luke's account, drawn carefully from eye-witnesses, carefully investigated, corroborated and correlated from all existing records, should prove to be the final word on both the life and ministry of our Lord [Luke's Gospel record] and the early decades of the church [the Acts of the Apostles]. John's Gospel account would be written some thirty years later to supplement the Synoptic Gospels.

The Beginnings or The Preliminaries (1:5–4:13)

The first major or preliminary section (1:5–2:52) begins with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, the

forerunner of the Messiah, to Zacharias and Elizabeth and ends with our Lord's wilderness temptation.

This section includes the angelic announcement to Mary, her subsequent visit to Elizabeth, the birth of John, the birth of our Lord at Bethlehem, the angelic visitation to the shepherds, our Lord's infancy, circumcision, dedication and a glimpse into his early childhood.

Luke gives the most detailed account of Jesus' nativity, but does not mention the magi from the east, the flight into Egypt or the slaughter of the infants by Herod. It must be noted that during this era, Messianic expectation was high, due to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24–27) and external events, such as the appearance of the star which brought the magi to Judea (Numb. 24:17; Matt. 2:1–12).

Here are the three oldest hymns: the *Magnificat* of Mary (1:46–55), the *Benedictus* of Zacharias (1:67–79) and the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon (2:25–32); and also the basis for the Romish hymn, *Ave Maria* (1:28–31).

Luke alone notes the revelation by aged Simeon, the presence of Anna the prophetess at the Temple, and Jesus' journey to Jerusalem at age twelve [*Bar Mitzva?*].³⁵⁷ He marks that at that time Jesus was conscious of his Messianic mission (2:40). The sacrifice of two doves or pigeons rather than a lamb reveals the poverty of the family of Joseph and Mary (Lk. 2:40. Cf. Lev. 12:1–8).

It should be noted that Jesus' two half-brothers, James and Jude, in their Epistles, are more steeped in the Old Testament than any other New Testament books—perhaps a testimony to the early home-life of our Lord and his earthly family.

The latter part of this section (3:1–4:13) describes the ministry of John the Baptist and the spiritual awakening produced by his preaching. He was the "Elijah" prophesied to

³⁵⁷ בֶּר מִצְוָה, "Son of the Law." A ritual for Jewish boys at age twelve, signaling the entrance into manhood.

herald the coming of the Messiah and prepare his way (Mal. 4:5; Matt. 11:12–14; 17:10–13; Mk. 9:11–13; Lk. 1:13–17; Jn. 1:19–29). This heralded the beginning of the Messianic and Gospel era (Acts 1:22). John was the “Baptizer” and the “Identifier” of the Messiah for Israel.³⁵⁸ Then follows our Lord’s natural genealogy through Mary’s lineage back to Adam, presenting our Lord as “The Perfect Man” (3:23–38).³⁵⁹

Finally, the wilderness temptation (4:1–13). He was tempted as the “Last Adam,” the “Second Man” or Representative Man (Rom. 5:11–19; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45–48) and finally and fully prepared for his messianic mission. Luke alone records that the temptation lasted throughout the forty days, and that he left Jesus until an appropriate time (Lk. 4:2, 13).³⁶⁰

The Galilean Ministry (4:14–9:50)

With the other Synoptics, Luke’s account of the Galilean ministry is divided into three phases: The early Galilean ministry (4:14–6:16), the middle Galilean ministry (7:1–9:17) and the latter or final Galilean ministry (9:18–50).

The Early Galilean Ministry begins with his rejection at Nazareth (4:16–30) and ends with the choice of the Twelve Disciples and the Sermon on the Mount (6:12–49). He centered

³⁵⁸ Baptism possesses two meanings: literal, an immersion in water; metaphorical, an identification, e.g., Matt. 20:22–23; Lk. 12:50; Acts 1:5; Rom. 6:3. This last reference refers to the believer’s identification in or union with Christ, and is spiritual, not literal. Indeed, water baptism is symbolic of this spiritual identification and union.

³⁵⁹ For a full discussion of Jesus’ two genealogies and their significance, see pp. 158–159.

³⁶⁰ v. 2, ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου... reveals that the time of temptation lasted throughout the 40 days. ὁ διάβολος ἀπέστη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἄχρι καιροῦ. v. 13, The devil left him until an appropriate time, suggesting another onslaught or attack.

his Galilean ministry in Capernaum, not Nazareth, where he was rejected (4:31).

This early ministry established our Lord as a great prophet and teacher, one who taught with authority (Matt. 7:28–29), healed, and restored many. His ministry never knew a failure, and his miracles demonstrated his absolute authority and power in every sphere. These were Messianic credentials. His fame would spread from Galilee throughout the region from Syria to Judea and beyond (Matt. 4:23–25; 9:26; Mk. 1:23–28; Lk. 4:14, 37; 5:15).

The Middle Galilean Ministry (7:1–9:17) extends from the Sermon on the Mount to the Feeding of the Five Thousand. All four evangelists make this latter incident and miracle the center and high point of our Lord's ministry (Matt. 14:14–21; Mk. 6:33–44; Lk. 9:11–17; Jn. 6:1–13).

John alone notes that the people sought to take him by force and make him a king (Jn. 6:14ff), so Jesus sent the Disciples away immediately, as they would misunderstand and would probably be carried away with the will of the people, while he himself went up into a mountain alone to pray. He would not accede to their demands. The following day many of the people began to reject his ministry; his Kingdom was spiritual not political (Jn. 6:22–66). This is the great turning point of Jesus' ministry, and John very definitely marks this out.

Some of the defining events of this ministry include the raising of the widow's only son from the dead at Nain (7:11–17). Our Lord raised three people from the dead during his ministry: the widow's son, Jairus' daughter (8:41–56) and Lazarus (Jn. 11:37–45). While the first two miracles might be questioned, there was absolutely no question concerning Lazarus, as he had been dead for four days.

Other notable incidents include Jesus' healing of the centurion's servant and his statement concerning great faith (7:1–10), his dissertation concerning John the Baptist (7:24–

35), his power and authority to read the thoughts of others and to forgive sins (7:36–50), the calming of the storm (8:22–25) and the healing of the demoniac of Gadara (8:26–39).

Note: The “Long” or “Busy Day:” various parables, e.g., Secretly Growing Seed, crossing the Sea of Galilee, calming the storm and healing the demoniacs. Demons and the swine. Parables of the Returning Unclean Spirit, the Leaven in the Meal (Mk. 3:19–5:20; Matt. 8:18, 23–34; 12:22–13:53; Lk. 8:4–39).

The final phase of our Lord’s Galilean Ministry (9:18–50) marks the beginning of Jesus preparing his Disciples for his passion (9:18–27). This preparatory teaching would characterize their private talks throughout the final journey to Jerusalem (e.g., 9:20–22, 43–45; 18:31–34). The two major events of this section are the Transfiguration (Lk. 9:28–36. Cf. Matt. 17:14–21; Mk. 9:14–29) and the healing of demoniac boy, which demonstrated the unbelief on the part of the Disciples and the sovereign power of our Lord (9:37–42).

The Perea Ministry (9:51–19:44)

Luke’s Gospel account gives the most detailed record of the final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem where our Lord was to suffer, be crucified and rise again (9:51–19:44). The usual pilgrim route, to by-pass Samaria with its dangers, social interaction and ceremonial pollution, was from Galilee at the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee [Tiberias], across the Jordan River to the eastern side, then down through the borders of Decapolis and Perea, across the Jordan River to Jericho to the west, then the steep ascent up to Jerusalem.³⁶¹

Our Lord and his Disciples did not follow this route directly, but had forays into Samaria (9:51ff; 17:11f) and perhaps had one private trip directly to Bethany and the home

³⁶¹ Jericho above the Dead Sea, was 1,000 feet below sea level; Jerusalem was 2,500 feet above sea level at the top of the mountainous rift between the Jordan River valley and the Mediterranean coastal plain.

of Martha, Mary and Lazarus (Lk. 10:38–42; Jn. 11:1–54). Our Lord spent much time in Perea publically on this final Passover pilgrimage. He taught in synagogues and was guest at several Sabbath feasts. This final journey seems to be in two stages: the first stage (9:51–13:24) and the second stage (13:22–17:10).

The first stage of the final journey reveals his rejection by a Samaritan village, as his face was set toward Jerusalem (9:51–53). It seems that he kept staring toward Jerusalem as though preoccupied with his destiny. This would be in accord with our Lord's true humanity and Luke's careful perception.

The major events are the commissioning and report of the seventy (10:1–12, 17–20), his rebuke of the cities in which his mightiest works had been done (10:13–16), the Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25–37), a short, private trip to Bethany (10:38–42), his teaching on prayer (11:1–13), the increasing opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees (11:14–26, 29–54), instructions to his Disciples (12:22–53), the healing of a hunchback woman followed by our Lord's rebuke of the synagogue leader (13:10–17) and the Parable of Lost Things: the Lost Sheep, Lost Silver and Lost Sons (15:1–32), told in self-defense for his associating with sinners. The account of Lazarus and the rich man is crucial concerning both the wrong use of riches and our Lord's teaching on hell and the afterlife (16:19–31).

The second state of this final journey to Jerusalem (17:11–19:27) finds Jesus with his final trek through Galilee and Samaria (17:11). The high points of this final stage are: the healing of the ten lepers (17:12–19), a lengthy prophetic discourse concerning the kingdom (17:20–37), our Lord's teaching on prayer: the Parables of the Unjust Judge, the Pharisee and the Publican (18:1–14), the encounter with the rich young ruler (18:18–30), his third announcement of his coming passion (18:31–34) and the events at Jericho (18:35–19:27). There, he healed two blind men (Lk. 18:35–43; Matt.

20:29–34) and met and saved Zacchaeus, the commissioner of taxes for the rich balsam trade (19:1–10).

The final Jerusalem Ministry (19:45–21:38)

Our Lord's final ministry at Jerusalem extends from his Triumphal Entry to his eschatological discourse. The notable events are: his Triumphal Entry (Lk. 19:29–44; Mk. 1:1–11; Matt. 21:1–11, 14–17),³⁶² his lamentation over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41–44; Matt. 23:37–39), the second cleansing of the Temple (Lk. 19:45–48; Mk. 11:12–18; Matt. 21:12–13, 18–19), a series of confrontations by the Jewish leaders (Lk. 21:1–22:4; Mk. 11:27–12:44; Matt. 21:23–23:39) and the final discourse concerning the destruction of the Temple, Jerusalem and the end times (Lk. 21:5–38; Mk. 13:1–37; Matt. 24:1–25:46). Here, as in other passages, the immediate future blends into the far distant future.

The Passion of the Son of Man (22:1–23:56)

This section begins with the plot to betray our Lord and ends with his crucifixion, death and burial. The salient issues are: the plot to betray our Lord (22:1–6), The last Passover and institution of the Lord's Supper (22:7–20), the Garden agony (22:39–46), the betrayal and arrest (22:47–53), Peter's denial (22:24–62), the mock trial before the Sanhedrin (22:63–71) and then Pilate and Herod (23:1–25), the crucifixion (23:26–45), death (23:46) and burial (23:50–56).

The Lord's Supper was instituted at the end of the Passover meal. To gain an adequate perspective, all four Gospel records should be studied and compared. Luke begins a new paragraph in the Greek text concerning Judas. The

³⁶² Our Lord rode the foal of an ass as the fulfillment of Scripture (Zech. 9:9) and also as a symbol of humility and peace; a horse was symbol of war, unfitting for the spiritual nature of our Lord's kingdom.

betrayer was evidently gone when this ordinance was instituted.³⁶³

John's Gospel record alone gives the detailed upper room discourse, including our Lord's High Priestly Prayer (13:31–18:1). Luke, with a physician's approach alone notes that Jesus' garden agony was absolute, with his sweat "as great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Lk. 22:44).

For most of our Lord's ministry, the Jewish leadership had sought to destroy him, but were afraid of a public scene and uprising against them. The betrayal had to apprehend our Lord in private. This was the role of Judas Iscariot, who knew Jesus' haunts and habits (Jn. 18:1–2). The Garden of Gethsemane provided the perfect setting, being both private and at night. An army of some 500 men accompanied Judas to apprehend our Lord!³⁶⁴

The Jewish phase of Jesus' trial was held and conducted illegally as to time and manner. Before the Sanhedrin, Jesus confessed under oath that he was the Son of God, which, to the Sanhedrin, substantiated the charge of blasphemy and demanded the death penalty (Lk. 22:54, 63–65; Mk. 14:53, 55–65; Matt. 26:57, 59–68). Before Pilate, however, the charge was changed to insurrectionist and revolutionary (Lk. 23:1–3; Mk. 15:2; Matt. 27:11), a guise which Pilate saw through immediately (Mk. 15:10; Matt. 27:18). Finally, the Jewish leaders told Pilate the truth (Jn. 19:6–8). Several times, Pilate pronounced him innocent (Lk. 23:4, 14, 22; Jn. 18:38; 19:4, 6), yet gave him to be scourged and crucified out of political expediency (Matt. 27:24).

The physical agonies of scourging and crucifixion were horrible,³⁶⁵ but not to be compared with our Lord's spiritual

³⁶³ For a discussion of Judas' leaving prior to the institution of the Lord's Supper, see the author's *A Catechism on Bible Doctrine*, Q. 161, pp. 310–311.

³⁶⁴ See p. 291.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 292–294.

suffering Godward as “he bore our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). These spiritual sufferings were infinite (Heb. 9:12). Luke gives three of the seven sayings of our Lord on the cross (23:34, 43, 46). Our Lord did not die by crucifixion, but gave up his life voluntarily after completing the vicarious suffering of the atonement for sinners (Lk. 23:46; Mk. 15:37; Matt. 27:50).

The “swoon theory” of radical biblical critics held that Jesus did not truly die, and that he later revived in the cold tomb and crawled forth, giving rise to the “myth” of the resurrection. But our Lord’s death was verified by John (Jn. 19:31–36)³⁶⁶ and certified by the Roman government (Mk. 15:43–45). Our Lord’s body was buried in a new tomb by Joseph of Arimathaea, but was not properly prepared for final burial, which was interrupted by the Sabbath Day observance.

The Resurrection of the Son of Man
and His Ascension into Heaven (24:1–53).

The women who had followed Joseph of Arimathaea to the tomb prepared spices for final burial and went early the morning after the Sabbath to anoint the body for final burial, only to find the stone already rolled to the side and two angels who declared our Lord’s resurrection (24:1–8). On being informed, the Disciples did not believe them (24:9–11). Peter ran to the tomb with John to investigate (Lk. 24:12; Jn. 20:3–8). John believed. In the meantime, our Lord revealed himself to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11–18), the first person to see and speak with the risen Christ.

Luke then recounts in detail the incident of the two Disciples on the road to Emmaus and their meeting Jesus and conversing with him, their eyes being limited as not to recognize him until he vanished (Lk. 24:13–35; Mk. 16:12–13). He rebuked them for their unbelief and opened the

³⁶⁶ The reference to “blood and water” signified that the blood in the left ventricle had clotted and the serum had separated, an undeniable symptom of death.

Scriptures concerning himself and his suffering. Later that evening, our Lord appears to the eleven Disciples, who were meeting in secret for fear of the Jews, as they were having supper. He rebukes them for their unbelief and reveals that he is not a spirit but has been truly resurrected (24:36–43).

Luke ends his Gospel account with our Lord giving his Disciples their final instructions and then departing from them, being taken up into heaven. They return to Jerusalem with joy, their unbelief forever cured and the promise of the Father awaiting them (24:44–53). This summary conclusion is later expanded in the introduction and first verses of Acts (Acts 1:1–12).

Notes and Observations

These notes are not repetitive of those given in the other Synoptic Gospels or previously in Luke's account.

1. (1:1–4) Luke's prologue reveals a careful historian who had carefully investigated the facts. Divine inspiration encompasses not only the personality, style and Divine revelation of the given biblical author, but also information gathered and assimilated into his writings.
2. (1:5ff) Luke begins his gospel account with Zacharias, a priest and relative of our Lord's earthly family by marriage—and his unbelief at the words of the supernatural manifestation of the angel. It is an interesting and fascinating study to investigate unbelief in Scripture. As here, it often ultimately brings glory to God when it gives way to faith (1:57–79)!
3. (1:26–38) The angelic visit to Mary. What an exceptional young woman. Yet she was completely ignorant of the Virgin Birth, which had been obscured by religious tradition (Isa. 7:14; 9:6). Often traditional religion and religious understanding robs us of Divine truth and its implications in our lives.
4. (1:46–47) What did Mary say under the influence of the Holy Spirit? She rejoiced in God her savior. The idea and

dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary [that she herself was conceived without sin] was certainly unknown to her! Every human being needs the Savior!

5. (2:1ff) Even world governments are involved in the working of Divine providence, although they realize it not. “All things are constantly working together...” (Rom. 8:28). Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, and in the fullness of time all things came together (Micah 5:2; Gal. 4:4f). Jesus grew up in Galilee and thus had a noticeable Galilean accent (Matt. 2:23; Lk. 1:26; Jn. 1:46; Jn. 7:50–52). No ruler or leader ever asked him, “Where were you born?” The errors of prejudice and presumption!
6. (2:7) Jesus was born in a kitchen or lower living quarters, not a stable or cave. The term “Inn” [κατάλυμα] is lit: the guest room or upper room of a house, which was already occupied with other relatives or guests. The kitchens had a manger at one end, with steps down to an indoor space where the animals were brought in at night for protection from thieves. How tradition has caused many to look down upon a mean, non-existent innkeeper!³⁶⁷
7. (2:8–14) Do angels sing? Again, tradition is at variance with Scripture. The angel and the subsequent host “said,” not “sang.” The only possible reference to angelic song is Job 38:7, and even here the term “sang” is lit: “Gave a shout of joy” [רָיַע].
8. (2:23–24) Joseph and Mary were poor. They offered the two doves when the usual offering was a lamb (Lev. 12:1–8).
9. (2:25–38) There were some—a small remnant—who were godly and faithful in Israel. Such were aged Simeon and Anna. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him” (Psa. 25:14).

³⁶⁷ See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, pp. 28–30.

10. (2:46–50) Jesus knew from the earliest age who and what he was. Mary in her distress and fretting had forgotten.
11. (3:1–2). Luke is always the careful historian (cf. 2:1–2). See the notes on Luke’s authorship and the credibility of Luke vs. Josephus.
12. (3:16–17) The “baptism of fire” was not Pentecost, but Divine judgment, according to the immediate context. Always be ready to question tradition.
13. (3:23–38) Luke traces our Lord’s natural genealogy back to Adam. Matthew gives his royal genealogy. See the notes on both Matthew and Luke.
14. (4:25–30) The world, and often the religious world hates the truth of Divine election. The exclusivism, prejudice and hatred of the Jews was without parallel. Saul of Tarsus is an example, and after his conversion, he suffered the same. See the notes in Acts under “The Persecution of the Jews.”
15. (5:4–6) Partial obedience and a broken net. We lose much when we think we know better than our Lord and are half-hearted in our service.
16. (5:37–39) “The old is better” not only pertains to wine, but often to biblical commentaries! The Puritans and the ancients often give out food while more modern works spend their efforts fighting errors.
17. (6:40) The student and his teacher or disciple and his master: the teacher teaches by his entire life and the student or disciple becomes a replica of his teacher when his education is complete. What an admonition to teachers and pastors!
18. (7:11–15) The raising of the widow of Nain’s son. Her situation was awful—impossible—alone and destitute, and our Lord had compassion on her. How we doubt that he cares for us?
19. (7:36–50) Dinner at the house of a Pharisee. Our Lord was only outwardly a guest; he was there to be interrogated or proved. The atmosphere was hostile. They seated him

[κατεκλίθη, pass. He evidently did not seat himself], evidently at the lowest place and did not give him the kindness of a guest: neither oil for his beard nor water for his feet. This woman, of evidently an immoral background saw all this and immediately and very shamelessly thrust herself forward to show him kindness. Our Lord read Simon's thoughts. He did not see "this woman," he only saw a sinner. Our Lord then reveals Simon's thoughts and forgives the woman her sins.³⁶⁸

20. (9:12–17) "The Feeding of the Five Thousand" [5,000 men, beside women and children]. This was the high point of our Lord's ministry, after which they tried to take him by force to make him a king (Matt. 14:22–23; Jn. 6:14–15). Most popular movements are ill-conceived and not thought through. Jesus' kingdom was spiritual. He was not a socialist or a revolutionary. The very next day most would abandon him.
21. (9:40–42) Healing of the demon-possessed epileptic boy. We never fail when we bring our failures, fears and insurmountable problems to Jesus.
22. (9:49–50) A warning against sectarianism. We often judge others unjustly because they are not of our group, denomination, association or exact persuasion. Are we always correct? We must never think that we alone have all the truth.
23. (9:52–56) The misplaced zeal of James and John. They were zealous for Christ's honor and fancied they had Elijah's faith, but they completely misconstrued the essence of Christ's ministry—to save, not to destroy. How easily does religious zeal become distorted.
24. (10:13–15). The Lord knows all things, not only those in the world of reality, but what could have been—and yet never was! This only intensified the judgment upon the

³⁶⁸ See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Op. cit.*, pp. 239–260.

unbelief of those cities which had witnessed his greatest works.

25. (10:23–24) Have we ever considered our privileged place in history, especially redemptive history?
26. (10:25–37) The Parable of the Good Samaritan. He had every reason not to help but he did. The priest and Levite had every reason to help, and did not. There is also a lesson in theology: We must begin with the “What saith the Scripture? How readest thou?” [exegesis and hermeneutics] and we must end with “Go and do thou likewise!” Sound, scriptural theology always ends with the consistent and practical!
27. (10:38–42) Some things, although necessary in the mundane issues of life and service, never reach the true spiritual level. Even these mundane necessities should lead to the truly spiritual and not contend with it.
28. (11:1–13). Our Lord’s second lesson on prayer. One stands at the beginning of his ministry (Matt. 6:9–15), the other toward the end of this ministry (Lk. 11:1–4). His final lesson would be to ask in his name. The Disciples seemed to sense what we all instinctively know—that we always seem to need additional lessons in prayer. Further, mark how our Lord always encouraged his own to pray by revealing the attitude of the Father toward those who sincerely seek him.
29. (11:37–54) A dinner guest who told the truth. This list of woes against the leaders of traditional, external religion were highly offended because our Lord told the truth. Religious hypocrisy cannot stand in the light of truth.
30. (12:4–5) Every sane, intelligent person fears something or someone. It is part of living in a fallen, sinful world. Religiously, we are to fear God and not those who can only harm us in this life but cannot touch us in the life to come. The long history of martyrs teaches us that the fear of God cures the fear of man.

31. (12:11–12) Spontaneous, Spirit-led testimony. What a great encouragement that the Holy Spirit may give us the words to speak and the boldness to speak them in the hour of trial!
32. (12:16–21). Do we have our lives all planned out? This man was completely self-centered. He communed with his own soul, but did not take God or anyone else into consideration. What he thought, envisioned and anticipated was never to be. How different are those who are conscious that our lives are determined by God and his service.
33. (12:22–31) True Christianity has ever been at odds with materialism. The true believer has his values set on higher things. Material possessions are blessed if they further our service of the Lord.
34. (13:1–5) We naturally suppose that some are judged because of their extreme sinfulness, and that is true, but we must beware that we do not think that we are the exception. It is only the grace of God through the redemptive work of our Lord that we have acceptance before God and will not come under judgment—but we may come under Divine chastening, which is common to every one of God's children (Heb. 12:2–13).
35. (13:6–9) A young preacher was once challenged on this passage to give a sermon outline. The result? Dig it, Dung it, Delay it and Destroy it. May we not be fruitless!
36. (13:10–17) The hunchback woman healed. How self-righteous and tied to traditional religion are some who are not personally suffering, how pitiless and superior. Few things bring us to humility and thankfulness as an end to suffering. Do we rejoice when others are healed, cured, become better, or revive after sickness?
37. (13:23–30) There are sadly many who presume to have a right relationship with God who in reality have only a casual acquaintance with religion. What is relationship to the God

of the Bible? Is it through the person and work of the Lord Jesus?

38. (13:31–35) Our Lord weeps over Jerusalem. What could have been! These are some of the saddest words ever uttered. The great, Divine promised visitation which had sustained the Jewish nation for centuries was upon them and they knew it not, but condemned their own Messiah and crucified him. Is our religious thinking terribly misplaced and misdirected?
39. (14:15–24) The Parable of the Great Supper. Every excuse was baseless. They simply did not want to be bothered, and despised the host. In v. 24, our Lord applies this to those present when he stated “my supper.”
40. (14:25–35). Our Lord was open and honest. He implored them to count the cost. Have we counted the cost?
41. (15:1–32) The Parable of Lost Things: the lost sheep, the lost silver and the lost sons. Yes, both sons were lost, one in the far country and the other in the father’s house. Mark v. 25–30. He did not recognize or love his brother. He said, “your son,” not “my brother.” He told his father that he had “slaved” for him all those years and received nothing. He drew the worst possible construction on his brother’s wayward life. We can rejoice in the return of the prodigal, and lament at the elder son who was lost in his father’s house.
42. (16:19–31) The story of Lazarus. Not a parable, as Jesus never used personal names in his parabolic teaching. Further, if a fictional story, then the teaching on hell and torment may be fictional. Two points to note are: first, death determines destiny, second, that if the remaining brothers did not give ear to the Scriptures [“Moses and the prophets”], they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.
43. (17:11–19) The ten lepers cleansed; only one returned to give thanks. This is not only a lesson on thankfulness, but

also on priorities. The others were too excited, too anxious to return to their former lives, too taken up with awesomeness of their cure from an incurable, dreaded disease. Do we take time to commune with our God? To praise him daily for his loving kindness and his gracious dealings with us? Or are we too busy to take that time?

44. (17:26–27) The days of Noah. They were simply too busy with the affairs of daily life to give a thought to their own souls. To most, religion is something added to life, something to think about when things go wrong, or when there is a great need or something is wanted from God. Otherwise most are simply too busy. Are we too busy?
45. (17:32) One of the shortest verses in the Bible. “Remember Lot’s wife.” She, with Lot, had been pulled out of Sodom by the angels, but her heart remained in Sodom. How do we consider our past lives? Do we think upon them and recall our days of rebellion and sin? Let us beware that our heart is not in Sodom!
46. (18:1–8) The Parable of the Unjust Judge. The issue is persevering in prayer. God, unlike the unjust judge, gives ear to his children!
47. (18:9–14) The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican. The Pharisee is the very epitome of self-righteousness and religious presumption. No consciousness of sin or of lack. Indeed, he imputed to others, including this publican, the worst of sins! He evidently looked about to see who was watching him pray. He had to see the publican afar off. And the publican? He stood afar off, not even looking up but kept smiting himself on the chest, repeating, “God, be merciful to me the sinner!”³⁶⁹ But it was the publican, not

³⁶⁹ Lk. 18:13, ἔτυπτεν τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων· ὁ θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ. Note the use of the imperf. and the arth. use. He evidently kept repeating that prayer until God spoke peace to his soul.

the self-righteous Pharisee who went home transformed by grace, justified and reconciled!

48. (19:1–10) The story of Zacchaeus. He was physically a very small man, but he was commissioner of taxes [ἀρχιτελώνης] at Jericho, one of the richest districts in the entire Roman Empire as the center of the balsam trade. He was very rich and powerful. He wanted to see Jesus and shined up a mulberry tree ahead of the crowd of pilgrims. Jesus commanded him to come down. By the time Zacchaeus' feet hit the ground, he was a converted man! Oh! The blessedness of God's grace in sudden conversion!
- He took his stand before Jesus³⁷⁰ and declared that if he was going to give to the poor half of everything he had! And if he had taken anything from any man by false accusation, he would restore four-fold. The Law only commanded the principle and 20% interest (Ex. 22:1–4; Numb. 5:7). This was converting grace! What marks of grace do we manifest?
49. (19:13) "...Occupy till I come..." Is this not, in essence, what we are commanded to do? Occupy, lit: be about our Lord's business!
50. (19:40) The stones would cry out. All creation was pictured as anticipating the liberating effects of the cross. From the promise of Gen. 3:15 to our Lord's incarnation and passion, creation awaits its own redemption (Rom. 8:19–23).
51. (22:31–32) The sifting of Satan. Note the change from the plural to the singular. Satan wanted all of the Disciples; Our Lord gave him Peter to sift, and he did. But Peter in both his

³⁷⁰ Lk. 19:8–9, And Zacchaeus stood [σταθείς, "to take a stand or stance," implying something very important to declare. This term occurs 6 times in the NT, all in Luke's writings], and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods [ὑπαρχόντων, not merely his goods, but his very substance!] I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold. ⁹ And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

fleshly strength and spiritual weakness was restored and came into his own at Pentecost. It is not what we were but what we are by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit which God designs.

52. (22:41–46) The Garden agony. The agony and trauma of the Son of God drew the very blood from his pores. Read the Gospel accounts of this awful event and understand his extreme physical and mental state, then mark how it passes from his countenance during his arrest, trials and crucifixion. The battle was waged here in agonizing prayer. Is this true for us, even in principle, that the greatest battles are waged in time of agonizing prayer?
53. (23:1ff). The final trials before Pilate the Roman Proconsul. The Sanhedrin delivered him because of envy. Pilate delivered him out of political expediency. God the Father delivered him out of love (Jn. 3:16). What unfathomable realities are revealed at the cross!
54. (23:39–43) The conversion of the thief on the cross. The grace of God was effectually at work even in that awful, doleful place! Do we despair for those for whom we pray? Do we think that better circumstances are necessary for their salvation? Remember this thief and renew your intercessions!
55. (24:8) “And they remembered his words.” A short verse, but pregnant with meaning! Is this not what we must do? “When trials o’er take us and foes all unite,” we must remember our Lord’s words. When we are sinking in heart and weary in service, we must remember his words. There alone is our balm and hope and glory...in the Words of the Lord Jesus!
56. (24:13–35). On the road to Emmaus. Our Lord was with them, but they knew it not. Their eyes were dimmed, their expectation did not allow it; their thoughts could not rise to it. When we do not realize and rejoice in the felt presence of our Lord, it is doubtless our limitations which keep us from

enjoying such holy communion and fellowship as we might find with him.

57. (24:25–27) What a message, sermon, instruction that must have been! Our Lord opened the whole of Scripture concerning himself! What a subject to hear and contemplate on a country walk! In times of reading, study, meditation and prayer, do we not in some small measure experience the same?
58. (24:45–53) Luke ends his gospel account where his second work would take it up (Acts 1:1–11). What a wonderful, glorious task was such research and writing! And he would ultimately be an eye-witness to much which the ascended and glorified Christ would do through his Apostles.

The Gospel According to John

Introduction

The Gospel account of the Apostle John was the last to be written, some thirty years after the last of the Synoptic accounts, after the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, amid Roman state persecution and the early rise of Gnosticism.³⁷¹

It is supplementary to the Synoptics in substance and content, yet it is much more. There is a finality and appeal about the Gospel account of John, the last living Apostle, which sets it apart in its scope, content, focus and appeal. It is preeminently the Gospel of belief (e.g., Jn. 1:7, 12–13; 4:21, 42; 5:47; 6:29, 69; 7:39; 8:24, 45; 9:35–38; 10:26; 11:15; 40–42; 16:30–31; 17:20–21; 19:35; 20:31). Some parts are poetical in form and might even be reduced to strophes, e.g., the Prologue (1:1–5) and the High Priestly Prayer (17:1–26).

Of the Synoptic Gospel accounts, Luke stands the closest to John. Some have opined that John may have had Luke's Gospel before him as he wrote the Fourth Gospel. The two Gospel records seem to fit together in a complementary fashion by both inclusion and omission. John, writing decades later, puts the final touches on the Gospel narrative.³⁷²

This final Gospel account is evangelistic to the core (20:30–31) and suited for all ages in its simplicity of style. John 3:16 is the most-quoted verse in the Bible, and has been called "The Gospel in a nutshell." It is usually the first biblical book recommended to and read by new Christians. It's intimate

³⁷¹ See "Gnosticism" in this volume, pp. 118–125. The Apostle Paul may have written against an early form of Gnosticism in Colossians. The Prologue of John's Gospels seems directed against Cerinthian Gnosticism, which denied the Deity of our Lord and the Johannine Epistles reference Docetic Gnosticism which denied his true humanity.

³⁷² See W. Graham Scroggie, *Guide to the Gospels*, pp. 437–446.

interviews with Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1–21) and the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:4–26) are thoroughly evangelistic, yet simple in expression. The sudden spiritual awakening among the hated Samaritans was the one of the greatest of Jesus' earthly ministry (Jn. 4:27–42).

John's Gospel contains no parables and only eight miracles or "signs" [σημεία], each designed to elicit faith. The final discourses of our Lord with his Disciples are extremely striking and reveal the very soul of the Savior (Jn. 13:1–17:26), especially his encouragements and what has been called his "High Priestly Prayer" (Jn. 17:1–26).

In this final Gospel account the heart of our Lord is revealed both emotionally and in terms of both close human and redemptive relationships (e.g., Jn. 11:5, 36; 13:1, 23, 34–35; 14:21, 15:9, 12; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).

The following quotations and references reveal its high standing throughout the history of Christianity: in ancient history: Clement of Alexandria (150–215), "while the other Gospels set forth 'physical things,' John wrote a 'spiritual Gospel.'" Origen (185–254), "Th[is] Gospel is the consummation of the Gospels as the Gospels are of the Scriptures." Jerome (347–420), "John excels in the depths of Divine mysteries."

In Reformation history: Luther (1483–1546), "The Gospel of John is unique in loveliness, and of a truth the principal gospel, far, far superior to the other three, and much to be preferred." Calvin (1509–1564), "while the Synoptic Gospels reveal the body of Jesus, the Gospel of John reveals the soul of Jesus."

Modern writers and scholars are equal in their accolades: A. T. Pierson (1837–1911), "It touches the heart of Christ. If Matthew corresponds to the court of Israel, Mark to the court of the priests, and Luke to the court of the Gentiles, John leads us past the veil into the Holy of Holies." Alfred Plummer (1841–1926), "a book which stands alone in Christian

literature, as its author stands alone among Christian teachers.” A. T. Robertson (1863–1934), “the most wonderful of all books.” Culross, “I believe that the writings of John have been blotted by more penitents’ tears and have won more hearts for the Redeemer than all the rest put together.”

W. Graham Scroggie (1877–1958), “In his Gospel, John shows that the Man of Galilee was God; his Epistles show that it was God who became Man; and the Revelation shows that ultimate universal victory over all forces of evil will be through and for the God–Man.” J. Sidlow Baxter (1903–1999), “Is there anywhere a more exquisite compound of infinite profundity and lingual simplicity? Was there ever a sublimer subject more ingeniously interpreted?” Jensen (1981), “It is distinct from the other three Gospels and serves as a capstone revelation of the life and ministry of Christ.” Hendriksen (1900–1982), “The most amazing book that was ever written.” Kostenberger (1957–), “John’s Gospel soars like an eagle over the canonical landscape.”

The Authorship of John’s Gospel Account

Biographical Notes on the Apostle John

The Apostle John,³⁷³ self-described as the Disciple “whom Jesus loved” (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), was evidently a cousin of our Lord, a life-long acquaintance, and his closest companion during his earthly ministry. His elder brother, James, was the first of the Disciples to be martyred and John was the last of the Disciples to die (Acts 12:1–2).

Jesus named James and John, the sons of Zebedee, “The Sons of Thunder,” referring to their youthful zeal and temperament (Mk. 3:17³⁷⁴; 10:35–37; Lk. 9:49–50, 52–56). With age and experience, John’s temperament became more moderate, as revealed in his writings, though he was bold when

³⁷³ See the section, “The Twelve Disciples and the Gospels,” p. 199.

³⁷⁴ βοανηργής, ὃ ἐστὶν υἱοὶ βροντῆς.

occasion demanded it (1 Jn. 2:22; 3:8, 15; 4:20). “As Christ tamed his ardor and purified it of unrestrained violence, John became the apostle of love, whose devotion was not excelled by that of any other writer of the New Testament.” (Tenney).

John was from a family of fishermen, which had a large, profitable business, which included hired servants and business partners, Simon Peter and Andrew. It was located at Bethsaida, along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 1:20; Lk. 5:10). John was, then, a man of means. He had become a Disciple of John the Baptist and was one of the first two to become a Disciple of our Lord (Jn. 1:35–42). That John frequently traveled to Jerusalem, possibly for the fishing business, and was known to the High Priest seems evident. He may have had a home there (Jn. 18:15–17; 19:25–27).

He was a member of the inner circle of our Lord’s Disciples with Peter and James. He is mentioned, directly or indirectly more often than any other Disciple except Peter. These alone witnessed the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:36–38; Lk. 8:50ff), the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1ff; Mk. 9:1ff; Lk. 9:28ff) and were the closest to our Lord in his Garden agony (Matt. 26:28ff; Mk. 14:32–34).

John was the only Disciple who witnessed the crucifixion when the others had fled and were in hiding. In the greatest hour of trial, he did not forsake his Lord. Our Lord delivered his mother into John’s keeping just before he died (Jn. 19:26–27). He was the first Disciple to truly believe in our Lord’s resurrection (Jn. 20:1–10).

The last biblical reference to John, apart from his writings (Rev. 1:9) is Gal. 2:9, which places him in Jerusalem as a pillar of that church during Paul’s ministry. Tradition states that many Christians left Jerusalem just prior to the destruction of the Temple and city in 70 AD. The center of Christian work and missionary enterprise was first at Jerusalem, then the Syrian Antioch, then at Ephesus.

John was established there until his exile to the tiny Island of Patmos 65 miles southwest of Ephesus during the reign of Domitian (81–96). From Ephesus, he had a relationship to the

seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 1–3). John authored five books of the New Testament canon: The fourth Gospel record, three Epistles and the Book of Revelation. Early tradition from Irenaeus (c. 130–202) and Tertullian (c. 156–240) states that John died at Ephesus at about 100 years of age during the reign of Trajan (98–117) and was known by Polycarp, who was his disciple (c. 69–155).

The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel

All four Gospels are anonymous, the authors being well-known to the first and second generation of believers. Although the Fourth Gospel has been highly praised for its nature, approach and insight, the question of authorship remains one of the most controversial issues in New Testament criticism. This is the result of modern radical or liberal criticism, which seems to seek any alternative to the accepted authorship.³⁷⁵

Various theories have been offered: the “beloved Disciple” was someone other than John, there were two “Johns” at Ephesus, the “Apostle” and the “Elder,” and the latter wrote the Fourth Gospel; the Epilogue (Jn. 21) and possibly other parts were written by the “Johannine community” after the Apostle’s death, etc. Authorship criticism is based upon two types of evidence: external and internal:

External Evidence

This evidence derives from the early Church Fathers, ancient manuscripts and heretical testimonies. The Earliest is from Irenaeus (c. 130–202), who claimed the Johannine authorship through the testimony of Polycarp (c. 69–155) who had known and been discipled by John the Apostle. This testimony is followed by Tertullian (c. 156–240). Other early testimonies through allusions, quotations or controversy, include: Ignatius (martyred c. 116), Justin Martyr (c. 150), Tatian (c. 170), the Gnostic Marcion (c. 140) and the Rylands

³⁷⁵ See the section, “The Necessity for and Importance of One’s Presuppositions,” pp. 28–34.

papyri [^P52] (c. 125–175).³⁷⁶ The traditional Johannine authorship remained largely unchallenged until nineteenth century radical criticism sought other alternatives.

Note: The one exception, and the origin of the “two John” theory was promulgated by Eusebius (263–339) who, referring to the writings of Papias (c. 70–163), sought to prove that there were two named “John,” the Apostle and an “Elder” at Ephesus, and that the latter wrote the Fourth Gospel. The interpretation of Eusebius is questionable, as was his motive, as he opposed the chiliasm of the book of Revelation.³⁷⁷

Internal Evidence

The internal evidence itself usually follows the classic defense by B. F. Westcott (1880), et. al., who gathered adequate evidences for each step of his investigation: first, the author was a Jew, as revealed in his Semitic style of Greek and accurate knowledge of Jewish customs.

Second, a Palestinian Jew, very familiar with geographical locations, description of the Temple and other sites.

Third, an eye-witness of the events he described, including the area of Jerusalem and the Temple in the pre-Jewish War era and the events which transpired at our Lord’s trials and crucifixion.

Fourth, he was an Apostle, as noted in the various intimate details, discourses and relationships he describes.

Fifth, the author was the Apostle John. He never referred to himself by name, but in the third person, and finally identifies himself (Jn. 21:20–24). Further, the style is in accord with the entire Johannine corpus.

³⁷⁶ The *Rylands Greek Papyri 457* is a codex fragment measuring 3.5 X 2.5 inches. The front contains parts of Jn. 18:31–33, and the back contains parts of 18:37–38.

³⁷⁷ For a full discussion of the issues authorship of the Fourth Gospel, including the possible motive of Eusebius, see Hiebert, *Op. cit.*, pp. 192–210.

Provenance and Date

The traditional and universally-held place of writing is Ephesus. According to early tradition (Irenaeus, *et. al.*), The Apostle John was exiled to the Island of Patmos by Emperor Domitian (81–96), freed by his successor, Nerva (96–98), about the year 96 and lived into the reign of Trajan (98–117). The Johannine writings are traditionally dated in the last decade of the first century.

Purpose and Theme

The purpose is stated clearly in Jn. 20:30–31:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John's purpose was to elicit faith in Jesus Christ as the eternal, impeccable Son of God.

From this statement, it is noted that John's Gospel account is selective, and thus supplementary of the Synoptics (v. 30), and that what he did write was both for the evangelism of unbelievers and the edification of believers (v. 31). These considerations determined his choice of material from a much larger body of truth and the manner in which these particular facts and events were written (21:24–25).

The Prologue clearly established the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal God in the flesh, the very "exegesis" of God (Jn. 1:1–18).³⁷⁸ The eight miracles are designated as "signs" [σημεία] and so chosen by John, to evoke faith in demonstrating the sovereign power of the Son of God over every realm. The absolute pronouncements of the "I AMs" of John's account (e.g., 6:51; 8:24, 28, 58; 10:36) were a

³⁷⁸ See the section "The Christ of the Gospels," pp. 158–164. Note v. 18, "declared," ἐξηγήσατο, is the verb form of "exegesis," a revelation and representation of the original.

declaration of Deity, as the Jews well-understood. From the historical context the Prologue and the Johannine corpus, early Gnosticism was also a consideration.

The major theme is found in the terms “believe” and “believing,” as contained in the stated purpose. These terms occur 101 times in the Fourth Gospel, thirty more occurrences than in all the Synoptic Gospels combined. The term “Witness” is also a key term, occurring twenty-one times concerning John the Baptist, the major characters, the Apostle himself and our Lord. The “I AM” declarations form a key element in the overall theme.

Distinctive Characteristics of the Fourth Gospel

It has been said that “almost all the features of this Gospel are distinctive” (Scroggie). The vocabulary, style and sentence structure are relatively simple in comparison with the writings of Luke and Paul. There is an abundance of symbolism in the teaching of our Lord that the Synoptics lack.

There is also the use of significant spiritual terms, such as “light” contrasted with “darkness,” “the true light” (1:4–8), “Way,” “truth,” “life,” (14:6), “from above...from beneath” (Jn. 8:23) and a great emphasis upon “love,” which is mentioned forty-two times in a positive sense. Love is considered in intimate relationships (e.g., 11:5; 13:1, 23; 19:26), in the form of commandment (e.g., 13:34–35; 14:15) and as distinctive of the Christian character (e.g., 14:21, 23; 17:26).

The term “world” is most important. It occurs seventy-nine times, in contrast to the Synoptics, where it occurs only twenty-three times in Matthew, ten times in Luke and once in Mark. Every occurrence is the translation of κόσμος³⁷⁹ except in

³⁷⁹ There are three terms translated “world” in the New Testament: αἰῶν, or “age;” οἰκουμένη, the inhabited earth and κόσμος, the world as arrangement, order; used of mankind as comprised of Jews and Gentiles. This is the meaning given by our Lord and understood by Nicodemus (Jn. 3:16–17).

9:32, where it is αἰῶν, or “age.” Only in the Fourth Gospel does the emphatic, solemn “Verily, Verily” [ἀμὴν ἀμὴν] occur. Our Lord used it twenty–five times.

Of the forty–six different titles and names of our Lord, John uses sixteen in this Gospel.³⁸⁰ Thirty–one times Jesus referred to the Father as the One “having sent me.” This reference does not occur in the Synoptics. John uses the term “the Jews” repeatedly to refer to the Jewish leaders, the priests, Scribes and Pharisees, who were openly antagonistic to him, especially at Jerusalem (e.g., 1:19; 2:18; 5:10, 15–18; 7:11; 8:57; 9:22; 11:8, etc.).³⁸¹

There are no parables, and only eight miracles or “signs” [σημεῖα] in John’s Gospel account, each emphasizing Divine power and prerogative. Six of these signs are peculiar to John. Even pertaining to the “Feeding of the Five Thousand,” only John reveals this event as the high–point of Jesus’ public ministry and the desire of the people to make him king, then subsequently leaving him because of the spiritual nature of his teaching (Jn. 6:24–66).

The Fourth Gospel is also distinctive in what is excluded and what is included. 92% of the contents of the Fourth Gospel are not found in the Synoptics. The Fourth Gospel deals thoroughly with the early (2:13–4:3), intermittent (5:1–47; 7:10–21; 22–40) and final (12:1–20:31) Judean ministries and omits most of the Galilean ministries which the Synoptics emphasize. There is no nativity account, no wilderness Temptation, no record of the Transfiguration, the Garden agony or the Olivet Discourse. While the “Kingdom of God” or “Kingdom of Heaven” is a major theme with the Synoptics,

³⁸⁰ See the section, “Names and Titles of our Lord,” pp. 164–173.

³⁸¹ The Fourth Gospel uses the term “the Jews” 64 times. At least 45 occurrences refer to the Jewish leaders in their opposition to our Lord.

John only mentions the “Kingdom of God” twice (Jn. 3:3, 5) and a general reference to his kingdom once (18:36–37).

What is included is the magisterial Prologue (1:1–18), wherein the Lord Jesus Christ is unquestionably called God, the series of the “I AM” statements pointing emphatically to his Deity, and the detailed discourses, both with various characters such as Nicodemus (3:1–21), the Samaritan woman (4:7–26), the man born blind (9:1–41) and with his Disciples, including our Lord’s High Priestly Prayer (13:1–17:26). John gives twenty–seven interviews, twelve discourses and five miracles not recorded elsewhere.

The Fourth Gospel teaches more concerning the Holy Spirit than do the Synoptics. The Holy Spirit is the instrument in regeneration or the “new birth,” the “Comforter” or Παράκλητος to be sent by our Lord after his ascension.

John is more concerned with revealing the Son while the Synoptics tend to conceal him. The Synoptics emphasize Jesus as “The Son of Man,” whereas John emphasizes Jesus as “The Son of God,” yet there are aspects of our Lord’s humanity and inner consciousness that only John emphasizes (e.g., 4:6–7; 11:33–35). Finally, the Father–Son relationship pervades the Fourth Gospel: our Lord was sent by the Father, performed the works of the Father and is one with the Father.

The “I AM” Declarations in the Fourth Gospel

The self–revealing, self–asserting claims of Deity by the Lord Jesus Christ publically to the Jews and privately to his Disciples, focusing on the emphatic use of “I am” [ἐγώ εἰμι] were clearly understood.³⁸² These declarations in given contexts made him equal with God the Father, and revealed his unique relationship to the Father as the eternal Son of God, a

³⁸² The Gk. ἐγώ εἰμι is emphatic “I Am.” The pers. pron. ἐγώ is emph. The pron. εἰμι by itself is “I am.” ἐγώ εἰμι is literally, “I, I am.”

further revelation of the Deity of Jesus Christ as first revealed in the Prologue (1:1–18). Thus, the Jews accused him of blasphemy because he made himself God (Jn. 10:33). These self-revelations form a part of the revelatory core of the Fourth Gospel.

There are several necessary considerations and observations: first, these “I am” revelations are grounded in Old Testament revelation. The first key passage is Ex. 3:10–14, spoken by Yahweh to Moses at the burning bush:

¹⁰ Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. ¹¹ And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? ¹² And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. ¹³ And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them? ¹⁴ And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

The Hebrew for “I AM THAT I AM” in v. 14 is אֲהִיָּה אֲהִיָּה אֲנִי. The verb אֲהִיָּה is the imperfect of הָיָה, “to be,” implying both the future and a continual state of being. The second “I AM” is אֲהִיָּה, an abbreviated repetition of the first. The LXX reads: ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὄν, “I, I am the Being,” a combination of the emphatic ἐγὼ εἰμι, “I, I am” and the pres. arth. ptc. ὁ ὄν, “The Being.” The second “I AM” in v. 14 is ὁ ὄν, “The Being,” again implying continual, unchanging existence.

Second, the Divine Name יְהוָה, “Yahweh” [“Jehovah”] also derives from הָיָה, “to be,” and denotes the Self-Existent, Unchangeable God. The LXX translates this with Κύριος, “Lord.” The use of this title with reference to the Lord Jesus

Christ, especially after his resurrection is an attestation of his Deity.

Third, the revelatory name of God in the Old Testament as “I am [he].” Note Isa. 41:4; 43:10,13; 46:4; 48:12 and 52:6. The Hebrew reads: **אֲנִי־הוּא**. The independent personal [and so emph.] pron. **אֲנִי** [or **אֲנֹכִי**, a lengthened form] denotes “I am.” The second word, **הוּא**, is the independent [and thus emph.] pron. “He.” This construction is only used of the Self-Revelation of God. The LXX always translates this with the emph. ἐγώ εἰμι. In 43:25, the LXX reads: ἐγώ εἰμι ἐγώ εἰμι... The emph. pron. **אֲנִי** [or **אֲנֹכִי**] is also used with Yahweh: **אֲנִי יְהוָה** in Isa. 42:8; the LXX reads: ἐγὼ κύριος. Thus, our Lord’s use of the emphatic ἐγώ εἰμι is a revelation and declaration of his Deity and equality with God his Father, as the Jews clearly understood.

The “I Am” declarations of the Lord Jesus can be classified in two categories: first, those with a predicate nominative.³⁸³ This list is comprised of those declarations usually numbered in the great “I Am” statements of John’s Gospel, each reading the emph. ἐγώ εἰμι.

1. “I am the Bread of Life” [ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς] (Jn. 6:35, 41, 48, 51).
2. “I am the Light of the World” [ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου] (Jn. 8:12; 9:5).
3. “I am the Door of the Sheep” [ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων] (Jn. 10:7, 9).
4. “I am the Good Shepherd” [Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός] (Jn. 10:11, 14).
5. “I am the Resurrection and the Life” [ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ] (Jn. 11:25).

³⁸³ Transitive verbs take a direct object. Intransitive [“to be”] verbs take a predicate nominative.

6. “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” [ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ] (Jn. 14:6).
7. “I am the True Vine” [Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή] (Jn. 15:1).

Two additional texts fit into this category:

1. “I am one that bears witness of myself” (Jn. 8:18).
2. “I am from above” (Jn. 8:23).

The second category consists of the “I Am” declarations without a predicate nominative; the “I Am” stands alone. There are two groups: first, those in which the predicate is inferred from the context, e.g.,

1. Jn. 4:26, Lit: “I am [ἐγώ εἰμι], the one speaking to you.”
2. Jn. 6:20, “It is I [ἐγώ εἰμι], stop being afraid.”
3. Jn. 18:5, 6, 8. When the Roman cohort with Judas arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and he said, “I am he” [ἐγώ εἰμι], they all fell backward to the ground—an assertion and demonstration of Divine power.³⁸⁴

The second group, in which no predicate may be derived from the context; the “I Am” stands alone, as an absolute:

1. Jn. 8:24, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he* [ἐγώ εἰμι], ye shall die in your sins.”
2. Jn. 8:28, “...When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he* [ἐγώ εἰμι]...”
3. Jn. 8:58, “...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am [ἐγώ εἰμι]...”³⁸⁵
4. Jn. 13:19, “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he* [ἐγώ εἰμι].”

It is without doubt that these “I Am” declarations of the Lord Jesus Christ were claims to Deity and equality with the

³⁸⁴ A Roman cohort [σπεῖρα] was comprised of 480 soldiers, their officers, and here, with the Temple guard and other officials.

³⁸⁵ In Jn. 8:58, the contrast is extreme between γενέσθαι and ἐγώ εἰμι. “Before Abraham came into existence, ‘I am’”

Father, and that both the Jews and his Disciples clearly understood his meaning.

Added Notes on the Deity of Jesus Christ

There are corollary passages that further support these declarations. E.g., Jn. 10:30, “I and *my* Father are one,” ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἔσμεν. The emph. pers. pron. ἐγὼ is used and the term “one” [ἓν] is emph. by position. This term is neut., not masc., “one in essence, not Person—a very precise theological declaration which retains the distinction of the two Persons and one essence.

The following confrontation in v. 31–36 demonstrates a vital point: that Jesus’ claim to be “The Son of God” was a claim of equality with God. The Jews clearly understood this claim and its implications, as did the Disciples. It must also be noted that the titles “Son of God” and “Son of Man” do not refer to his two natures, i.e., “Son of Man” does not point to his humanity but is itself a Messianic Title which approaches Deity and is grounded in Old Testament prophecy (Dan. 7:13–14). This was the most common title used by our Lord referring to himself.

Also note Jn. 14:9, “...the one having seen me has seen the Father...” ὁ ἑώρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα. The two perf. vbs. and the emph. pron. ἐμὲ identify Jesus and the Father in a very strong and unmistakable sense. Our Lord received the acclamation of Thomas, when he exclaimed to our resurrected Lord before the Disciples, having seen the nail prints, “my Lord and my God!” [ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου].³⁸⁶

Apart from the Gospel of John, the New Testament testimony to the Deity of our Lord is unquestionable in the various titles, especially that of “Lord.” Mark also such

³⁸⁶ ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου. Both titles are articular, making them identical, an open declaration of Jesus’ Deity.

passages as 2 Cor. 4:5³⁸⁷; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:8. Several passages need comment:

1. Philippians 2:5–11. This sweeping passage reaches from eternity past to eternity future. The critical verse is seven, “he emptied himself” [ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν]. The modern “Kenosis Theory” holds that our Lord became less than God or Deity in the incarnation. He laid aside his pre-incarnate glory and the independent exercise of his attributes in his incarnate subordination to the Father, not his Divine nature.
2. Titus 2:13, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This entire verse is comprised of two Gk. consts. in which the second substantive is identical with the first. Note the following

When the copulative καί connects two nouns of the same case, if the article ὁ or any of its cases precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle; i.e., it denotes a further description of the first-named person.³⁸⁸

This passage reads: προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The words “blessed hope” are articular and “glorious appearing” are anarth. [anarthrous, without the def. art.], and thus refer to the same eschatological entity.

Further, the “the great God” and “Savior,” in the same const. refer to the same person—a grammatical testimony to the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

³⁸⁷ 2 Cor. 2:5, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον, The predicate use of the double acc., lit: “Jesus Christ as Lord.”

³⁸⁸ Dana & Mantey, *A Manual of The Greek New Testament*, p. 147. This has been called the “Granville Sharp rule” [named after the scholar who formulated it], and holds consistently true throughout the New Testament.

4. Jude 4, “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Note carefully the final clause: τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι. The words “Lord God” are arth.; the words “Lord Jesus Christ” are anarth., thus referring to the same Person.
5. Colossians 1:13–17:

...the kingdom of his dear Son...Who is the image of the invisible God [ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου], the firstborn over all creation [πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως]. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [συνέστηκεν, continually cohere].

The term εἰκὼν denotes a reflection or visible manifestation: in this immediate context, of the God who is invisible [emph. rest. att. const.]. πρωτότοκος in this context denotes preeminence—Jesus Christ is both the originator and conclusion of creation (See Eph. 1:1–11, 19–23).

5. Hebrews 1:3. “Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power...”

These clauses must be considered in the context of Heb. 1:1–12, which is clearly descriptive of the Deity of the Son. Note: ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, i.e., “the effulgence of His glory” καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, i.e., the exact impress, representation or reproduction of God’s essence. φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, i.e., “continually upholding all things by the utterance of his power.”

Human language strains to adequately represent the Deity and glory of the Son of God in his ascended and exalted glory and power.

6. Revelation 3:14, "...These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God..."

The term "beginning, ἡ ἀρχή, possesses the sense of being, cause and authority. This either refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as the cause [Creator] of all creation, or to him as the beginning of the New Creation as the firstborn from the dead and the glorified God-Man (Rev. 1:5; 21:5; 22:6).

The pervasive witness of Scripture is that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God, the eternal Son of God, God incarnate and at his ascension and glorification, forever the glorified God-Man, the "Cosmic Christ" ruling sovereignly over all things in heaven and upon earth and in this age and the one to come, and through him all things in all created reality are upheld and in him cohere (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:10–11, 19–23; Col. 1:13–17; 2:9; Heb. 1:3–12).

Textual Issues

Textual issues, unless unavoidable, are not considered in a survey. There are three texts in the Fourth Gospel which textual critics omit as without sufficient textual evidence: 5:3b–4; 7:53–8:11 and 21:1–25.

Jn. 5:3b–4 seems to be a gloss which has slipped into the text as an explanation for the moving of the water. It is lacking in textual support in the oldest mss., but was known by Tertullian (c. 156–240) and referred to by later Church Fathers. There was evidently a reason as to why the multitude was waiting at the Pool of Bethesda for the moving of the water. The crippled man had been there for years in expectation.

Jn. 7:53–8:11, the woman taken in adultery: the *pericope adulterae*. Critics consider this an insertion by a later hand. This incident possesses all the marks of being a genuine

incident in the life and ministry of our Lord, and has been located in various places: after Lk. 21:38 or 24:53; after Jn. 7:36 or 7:44 and also after Jn. 21:15. This has been termed “a text searching for a context.”³⁸⁹

John. 21:1–25. This is the epilogue to the Gospel, giving otherwise unknown information. Some suggest, because of their radical, critical views, that this was added later by a redactor or the “Johannine community.” This epilogue simply is culminative of our Lord’s post–resurrection activities.

Old Testament References in the Fourth Gospel

The Fourth Gospel is saturated with quotations and allusions to the Old Testament Scriptures. These approximately 124 references—twenty quotations and 104 allusions—are in the form of imagery, quotations, allusions, and language. Seven times reference is made to the Scriptures being fulfilled (12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 18:9; 19:24, 28, 36). There is also a close relationship with the second part of Isaiah.

Old Testament Quotations

John	Old Testament		John	Old Testament
1:23	Isa. 40:3		12:14–15	Zech. 9:7
1:51	Gen. 28:2		12:27	Psa. 6:3; 42:6
2:17	Psa. 69:9		12:38	Isa. 53:1
6:31–32	Ex. 16:4, 15; Psa. 78:24–25		12:39–41	Isa. 6:9–10
6:45	Isa. 54:13		13:18	Psa. 41:9
8:17	Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Numb. 35:30		15:25	Psa. 35:19; 69:4

³⁸⁹ See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 219–222. It is assigned a high rating [{A}, {B}], and “...has all the earmarks of historical veracity.”

10:16	Ezk. 34:23; 37:24		16:22	Isa. 66:14
10:34–35	Psa. 82:6		19:24	Psa. 22:8
12:13	Psa. 118:25		19:36	Ex. 12:46; Numb. 9:12
12:14–15	Zech. 9:7		19:37	Zech. 12:10

Examples of Old Testament Allusions

John	Old Testament		John	Old Testament
3:14	Numb. 21:8–9		8:5	Lev. 20:10
4:20	Deut. 27:4, 12		8:33, 39	Gen. 12; 15
4:37	Job 31:8; Mic 6:15		8:39–40	Gen. 12 (Gal. 3:7, 9)
5:10	Jer. 17:21–22, 27		8:52–53	Zech. 1:5
5:45–47	Deut. 18:15		8:56	Gen. 22:14
6:49	Ex. 16:15		8:57	Abraham
7:2	Lev. 23:34		8:58	Ex. 3:14
7:22–23	Lev. 12:3		9:28–29	Moses
7:37–38	Prov. 18:4; Isa. 12:3; 58:11		9:31	Prov. 28:9
7:42a	Psa. 89:3–4		12:34	Psa. 89:4; 110:4; Isa. 9:7
7:42b	Mic. 5:2		17:12	Psa. 51:9; 109: 8, 17
7:41, 52	Isa. 9:1–2 (Matt. 4:15–16)		19:28– 29	Psa. 69:21

Miracles in the Fourth Gospel

John’s Gospel account contains no parables. The discourse on “The Good Shepherd” (10:1–16) is an allegory. John gives a vivid account of eight miracles, called “signs,” that point to his Messianic identity and Deity with sovereign power over the elements, sickness and death. All these were meant to elicit faith in our Lord. Two of these miracles—the Feeding of the

5,000 and walking on water—are recorded in the Synoptics; the other six are peculiar to the Fourth Gospel.

Of the seven signs performed before his passion three were performed in Judea in the vicinity of Jerusalem and each caused a great reaction and division. The raising of Lazarus from the dead, an unquestionable miracle of the greatest significance, is connected with our Lord's Triumphal Entry in John's Gospel and finalized the plot of the Sanhedrin to have him killed (Jn. 12:1–19). Another "sign" was Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (2:13–22). When asked by the Jews for a sign he spoke of his body as the "temple," a reference hidden from them and the Disciples until his resurrection.

John	The "Sign"	Location	The Reaction
2:1–11	Water turned into Wine	Cana in Galilee	The servants knew; the Disciples believed
5:1–19	The paralytic healed	Jerusalem	Jews sought to stone Christ for breaking the Sabbath and making himself God
6:1–15	Feeding of the 5,000	Galilee	Multitude sought to make Jesus a king by force
6:15–21	Walking on water during a storm	Galilee	Disciples convinced that Jesus is the Son of God
9:1–41	Man born blind given sight	Jerusalem	Jews refuse Jesus, as he broke their Sabbath tradition and excommunicated the man

11:1–44	Lazarus raised from the Dead	Bethany, outside Jerusalem	Many believed, but some went to the Sanhedrin, which plotted to kill Jesus
21:1–14	Second Miraculous draught of fish	Galilee	Jesus reveals himself to the Disciples and questions Peter’s love

Organization and Structure

The Fourth Gospel is structured after its major theme, which is given in 20:30–31: to elicit faith in unbelievers and encourage and confirm the faith of believers, i.e., to both evangelize and edify:

³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

This key–passages reveal the major thrust and plan of the author and also reveals his selective process (1:1–18; 20:30–31). The Synoptics had earlier surveyed our Lord’s identity, life, ministry, miracles, teaching and credentials. It was left to the aged Apostle John, the “beloved Disciple,” to add his eye–witness testimony and inspired recollection (21:24–25).

He begins in eternity with the Prologue (1:1–18), which fully reveals the Deity of the Son of God, the incarnation of the eternal Λόγος.

He progresses with evangelistic interviews (Nicodemus, 3:1–21; the Samaritan woman, 4:4–29; the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda, 5:1–19; the man born blind, 9:1–44) and the various “signs,” which culminate in the raising of Lazarus (11:1–44); the continual and increasing public disputes with “the Jews” and our Lord’s unmistakable claims to Deity in the

“I AM” and other declarations of equality and unity with the Father.

Then to the final weeks of our Lord’s earthly life and ministry: the Triumphal Entry (12:1ff), the private discourses with our Lord’s Disciples (13:1–17:26), his eye–witness testimony at the cross (19:1–42) and his resurrection and post–resurrection appearances (21:1–25). These fully and finally portray the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah and the very Son of God.

As the Synoptics are occupied with the Galilean ministry, John traces our Lord’s journeys to Jerusalem and their subsequent events and increasing clashes with “the Jews:” the First Passover (2:13ff), an Unnamed Feast (5:1ff), the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2ff), the Feast of Dedication (10:22) and the final Passover (13:1ff).

In essence, the profound Prologue (1:1–18) is followed by selections from the public ministry of our Lord (1:19–12:50), then the private ministry to his own Disciples (13:1–17:26), and finally, the passion and resurrection of our Lord (18:1–20:31). The Gospel accounts ends with a post–resurrection Epilogue (21:1–25).

Outline

A simple, summary outline enables one to grasp the essence and movement of this Fourth Gospel account:

- A) The Prologue (1:1–18).
- B) The Public manifestation by “Signs” (1:19–12:50).
- C) The Private Indoctrination of the Disciples (13:1–17:26).
- B) The Public manifestation in Suffering (18:1–20:31).
- A) The Epilogue (21:1–25).

A detailed analysis which takes into consideration the selective principle, the eight “signs” and geographical locations:

- I. The Prologue (1:1–18).
- A. The Preincarnate Word (1:1–2).

- B. The Word and Creation (1:3–5).
 - C. The Word and John the Baptist (1:6–8).
 - D. The Word Incarnate Received (1:9–14).
 - E. The Word in Fullness (1:15–18).
- II. The Preliminary Ministry: Galilee, Judea and Samaria (1:19–4:30).
- A. The Testimony of John (1:19–34).
 - B. The Testimony of the First Disciples: (Andrew, John, Peter and Nathaniel) (1:35–51).
 - C. Christ as the Creator (2:1–12).
The First “Sign:” water changed into wine.
- Early Judean Ministry
- D. Christ as the Restorer (2:13–25).
 - 1. The first cleansing of the Temple (2:13–22).
 - 2. The first public ministry at Jerusalem (2:23–25).
 - E. Christ as the Savior (3:1–36).
 - 1. The interview with Nicodemus (3:1–21).
 - a. The general acknowledgement of Nicodemus (3:1–2).
 - b. Jesus’ teaching on regeneration (3:3–7).
 - c. Jesus’ rebuke of Nicodemus (3:8–13).
 - d. The brazen serpent: a point-of-contact (3:14–15).
 - e. The Gospel received by faith by all (3:16–21).
 - 2. The testimony of John the Baptist (3:22–36).
 - a. A question concerning seeming competition (3:22–26).
 - b. The gracious testimony of John to Christ (3:27–35).
 - c. A stern warning (3:36).
- The Samaritan Ministry
- F. Christ as the Water of Life (4:1–30).
 - 1. The necessity of the journey through Samaria (4:1–4).

2. The conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:5–26).
 - a. Jesus engages the woman about living water (4:5–15).
 - b. Jesus reveals her sinfulness (4:16–18).
 - c. The woman questions her religion (4:19–20).
 - d. Jesus reveals both the truth and himself as the Christ (4:21–26).
 - e. Jesus explains to his Disciples his satisfaction in doing the Father’s will (4:31–34).
3. The testimony of the Samaritan woman (4:28–30).
- III. The Public Ministry to Multitudes (4:31–12:50).
 - A. Christ as Savior to the Samaritans (4:31–44).
 1. Jesus reveals the impending spiritual harvest to the Disciples (4:31–38).
 2. The spiritual awakening among the Samaritans (4:39–44).
 - Ministry in Galilee
 3. *Second “Sign:” Nobleman’s son healed* (4:46–54).
 - Ministry in Jerusalem
 - B. Christ as Judge (5:1–47).
 1. An unnamed feast: Jesus in Jerusalem (5:1–4).
 2. *Third “Sign:” Healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath* (5:5–15).
 3. Controversy with “the Jews” over Jesus’ Person and healing on the Sabbath (5:16–47).
 - Ministry in Galilee
 - C. Christ the Bread of Life (6:1–71).
 1. *Fourth “Sign:” Feeding of the 5,000* (6:1–13).

[This marks the apex of Jesus' ministry]

2. The People seek to take Jesus by force to make him king (6:14–15).
3. Jesus forces his Disciples to go by ship back to Capernaum while he dismisses the multitudes³⁹⁰ (6:16–17).
4. *Fifth "Sign:" Jesus walks on water* (6:18–21).
5. The Discourse on the Bread of Life (6:22–65).
 - a. Jesus reveals the true motive of the people (6:22–27).
 - b. Jesus reveals himself as the true Bread of life (6:28–40).
 - c. The Jews murmur against Jesus' claims of Deity (6:41–42).
 - d. Jesus' spiritual metaphor misunderstood (6:43–65).
6. Jesus is abandoned by many of his followers (6:66).
7. His truth was spiritual; their perception was grossly physical (6:60–66).
8. Jesus' Disciples aver their faith (6:67–71).
9. Jesus remains in Galilee for at least six months, unaccounted for by John (7:1).

Ministry in Judea

- D. Christ the Divider (7:2–52).
 1. Feast of Tabernacles (7:2).
 2. The unbelief of his brethren (7:2–10).
 3. A division among the people at the feast (7:11–13).
 4. A great confrontation in the middle of the feast (7:14–36).
 5. Jesus' proclamation and division at the end of the feast (7:37–44).
 6. The emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin (7:45–52).

³⁹⁰ Cf. Matt. 14:21–23.

- 7. The question of Nicodemus (7:50–51).
[His first recorded public stand for Christ and truth]
- E. Christ the Light of the World (7:53–9:44).
 - 1. *Excursus*: The Woman taken in Adultery (7:53–8:11).
 - a. Scribes and Pharisees intrude upon Jesus as he taught in the Temple (8:1–3).
 - b. The charge of adultery: where was the man? (8:4–5).
 - c. They continued to question Jesus to embarrass him publically (8:5–7).
 - d. He refused to act the part of judge, but quoted Moses (8:7–8).
 - e. Convicted by their consciences, they left in embarrassment (8:9).
 - f. Jesus does not condemn this woman, but admonishes her not to commit this sin again (8:10–11).
 - 2. Discourse on the Light of the World (8:12–59).
 - a. Jesus' initial declaration in the Temple when the morning Temple Lamps were lit (8:12).
 - b. Controversial exchange with the Pharisees (8:13–20).
 - c. Culminative controversy with Jesus' claim to Deity (8:21–59).
 - 3. *Sixth "Sign:" Healing of man born blind* and the renewed Sabbath controversy (9:1–44).
 - a. Man born blind healed on the Sabbath (9:1–7).
 - b. Division among the Jews because of Jesus healing on the Sabbath (9:8–17).
 - c. Parents in fear let their son answer (9:18–23).
 - d. Man boldly challenges the Jews (9:24–33).

- e. The Jews excommunicate the man (9:34).
- f. Jesus reveals himself to the man as the Son of God (9:35–38).
- g. A warning to the Pharisees (9:39–44).
- F. Christ the Good Shepherd (10:1–42).
- 1. Discourse on the Good Shepherd (10:1–18).
- 2. Controversy and opposition from “the Jews” concerning Jesus’ claim to Deity (10:19–21).
- G. Christ and Controversy (10:22–42).
- The Feast of Dedication: 3 months between 10:21 and 10:22 unaccounted for by John (10:22–42).

Final Judean Ministry

(Perean Ministry barely mentioned by John)

- G. Christ the Resurrection and Life (11:1–57).
- 1. *Seventh “Sign;” The raising of Lazarus from the dead* (11:1–46).
- a. The plea of the sisters (11:1–3).
- b. The seeming delay of Jesus (11:4–6).
- c. Jesus tells the Disciples to return to Judea and that Lazarus is dead (11:7–15).
- d. Thomas voices a martyr’s attitude (11:16).
- e. Jesus arrives four days after Lazarus’ death (11:17–19).
- f. Martha meets with Jesus, voices her disappointment (11:20–22).
- g. Martha clung to doctrine; Jesus pointed to himself (11:23–28).
- h. Mary voices her disappointment to a greater degree (11:28–32).
- i. Jesus is moved with compassion and goes to the tomb (11:33–38).
- j. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (11:39–44).
- k. Reaction of the Jews: belief and unbelief (11:45–46).

- 2. Renewed conspiracy of the Sanhedrin to kill Jesus (11:47–57).
- H. Christ and His Triumphal Entry (12:1–50).
 - 1. Supper at Bethany (12:1–8).
 - a. The loving action of Mary (12:1–3).
 - b. The deceitful objection of Judas Iscariot (12:4–6).
 - c. Jesus' rebuke and defense of Mary (12:7–8).
 - 2. Mixed reactions to Jesus' and Lazarus' presence (12:9–11).
 - 3. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (12:12–18).
 - 4. Reaction of the Pharisees (12:19).
 - 5. Certain Greeks seek to see Jesus (12:20–23).
 - 6. Anticipation of the Cross (12:24–36).
 - 7. A commentary on Jesus' final rejection (12:37–50).
 - a. A cumulative commentary on the nation's unbelief and rejection of our Lord as prophesied by Isaiah (12:37–43).
 - b. Jesus' final public declaration (12:44–50).
- IV. The Private Ministry to His Disciples (13:1–17:26).
 - A. Christ the Servant (13:1–38).
 - 1. The Last Supper; Judas' heart-betrayal (13:1–2).
 - 2. Jesus washes the Disciples' feet; explains his actions (13:3–17).
 - 3. Jesus reveals the betrayer; Judas leaves the supper (13:18–30).
 - 4. Jesus instructs his Disciples concerning true Christian love (13:31–35).
 - 5. Jesus foretells Peter's denial (13:36–38).
 - B. Christ the Comforter (14:1–31).
 - 1. Jesus' first words of comfort (14:1–4).
 - 2. Thomas' question, Jesus' answer (14:5–7).
 - 3. Philip's request, Jesus answer (14:8–15).

4. First discourse concerning the Comforter (14:16–21).
5. Judas’ [not Iscariot] question (14:22).
6. Jesus’ second discourse concerning the Comforter (14:23–31).
- C. Christ the Vine (15:1–16:33).
 1. The vine and the branches: abiding in Christ (15:1–8).
 2. The love of the Father and the Son (15:9–12).
 3. Friends, not servants (15:13–17).
 4. The hatred of the world against believers (15:18–25).
 5. The testimony of the Comforter (15:26–27).
 6. The future unfolded; the Comforter given (16:1–16).
 7. The Disciples questions; the future revealed in proverbs (16:17–28).
 8. A word of explanation and admonition (16:29–33).
- D. Christ the Intercessor: “High Priestly Prayer” (17:1–26).
 1. Prayer for glorification (17:1–5).
 2. Prayer for preservation (17:6–16).
 3. Prayer for sanctification (17:17–19).
 4. Prayer for unification (17:20–23).
 5. Prayer for habitation (17:24–26).
- V. The Passion and Resurrection (18:1–20:31).
 - A. Christ the Sacrifice (18:1–19:42).
 1. The betrayal and arrest of Jesus (18:1–11).
 2. Jesus’ religious trials (18:12–27).
 - a. Trial before Annas (18:13–23).
 - b. Peter’s first denial (18:15–18).
 - c. Trial before Caiaphas (18:24).
 - d. Peter’s second and third denials (18:25–27).
 3. Jesus’ civil trials (18:28–19:15).
 - a. Jesus first trial before Pilate (18:28–40).

- b. First charge: Jesus professed to be a king (18:29–37).
- c. Pilate finds him innocent (18:38).
- d. Pilate seeks to release Jesus; multitude demands Barabas (18:39–40).
- e. Pilate has Jesus scourged and mocked (19:1–3).
- f. Pilate declares Jesus innocent again (19:4–5).
- g. Second charge: Blasphemy: claiming to be the Son of God (19:6–7).
- h. Fearful Pilate questions Jesus, but he gets no answer (19:8–9).
- i. Pilate seeks to release Jesus, but to no avail (19:10–15).
- j. Jesus delivered to be crucified on first charge: claiming to be a king (19:16–17).
- 4. The crucifixion (19:18–37).
 - a. Jesus crucified with two criminals (19:18).
 - b. The dispute over Jesus' accusation (19:19–22).
 - c. Soldiers unwittingly fulfill prophecy in casting lots for Jesus' garments (19:23–24).
 - d. Jesus gives his mother into the care of John (19:25–27).
 - e. Jesus gives his two final utterances and dismisses his spirit (19:28–30).
 - f. The Jews demand that the legs be broken to hasten death because of the approaching Sabbath (19:31–32).
 - g. Jesus was already dead; no bones broken (19:33–37).

- h. John's eye-witness testimony to the riven side and coagulated blood: certain sign of death (19:34–35).
 - 5. Jesus' burial (19:38–42).
 - a. Joseph of Arimathaea takes the body of Jesus (19:38).
 - b. Joseph and Nicodemus prepare and put the body of Jesus into the sepulcher (19:39–42).
 - B. Christ the Victor: the resurrection (20:1–31).
 - 1. The Mystery of the empty tomb (20:1–10).
 - a. Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty and informs Peter and John (20:1–2).
 - b. The two Disciples go to the empty tomb (20:3–7).
 - c. John sees and believes (20:8).
 - d. The two disciples return home (20:9–10).
 - 2. Appearance to Mary (20:11–18).
 - a. The appearance of two angels (20:11–13).
 - b. Jesus appears to Mary (20:14–17).
 - c. Mary informs the Disciples that Jesus is risen and has spoken to her (20:18).
 - 3. Appearance to ten Disciples (20:19–23).
 - 4. Appearance to Thomas (20:24–31).
- VI. The Epilogue (21:1–25).
 - A. *Eighth Sign: Miraculous catch of fish* (2:1–14).
 - B. Challenge to Peter's love for Christ (21:15–17).
 - C. A prophecy of destinies: Peter and John (21:18–23).
 - D. Concluding statement (21:24–25).
 - 1. John reveals himself and his certain testimony (21:24).
 - 2. The final reiteration concerning acts of our Lord (21:25).

Survey

This survey comments on the foregoing outline with its six-fold division:

The Prologue (1:1-18)

The theme of the Fourth Gospel is belief (20:30–31) and the Prologue begins with the one great Object of faith: the co-eternal, co-equal Son of God: fully Deity (1:1), who is the Creator of all things without exception (1:2–3), the Source of life (1:4) and the true light which separates man from the brute (1:9); the very “exegesis” [ἐξηγήσατο] of God (1:18). This truth is reiterated throughout this Gospel account in the repeated “I AM” revelations and declarations.

The testimony of John the Baptist was critical to identify the Son of God (1:6–8, 15). His own people rejected our Lord (1:10–11), but those who were spiritually prepared received him (1:12–13). The eternal Λόγος became incarnate for the work of redemption (1:14). The critical portions of the Prologue have been exegeted in the section, “The Christ of the Gospels,” pp. 158–164.

The Preliminary Ministry

in Galilee, Judea and Samaria (1:19–4:30)

This section begins with the testimony of John the Baptist which reveals the imminent appearance of the Christ, the Son of God, whom John identified at his baptism (1:19–34). Through his testimony, the first Disciples are converted and their faith confirmed (1:35–51).

This second section is concerned with our Lord’s preliminary ministry in Galilee with the conversion of his first Disciples, the opening of his public ministry in Jerusalem and the interviews with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. John has laid the evangelistic foundation of his Gospel account and its essential elements with these first two personal interviews.

At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, Jesus changes the water into wine: *the First “Sign”* which further confirmed the

faith of his Disciples (2:1–11). These confirmations of faith continue at certain points through John’s account. Afterward, Jesus moved his headquarters to Capernaum (2:12).

John emphasizes Jesus’ journeys to Jerusalem and the continued, progressive opposition from the Jewish leaders. His public ministry begins in Jerusalem with the first cleansing of the Temple and the many signs which he wrought (2:13–25). The onlookers “gawked” [θεωροῦντες, v. 23] at the miracles, but the effect was sadly temporary. Evidently, only one person further investigated our Lord: Nicodemus (3:1ff). He came to Jesus by night to interview him and was stripped of his traditional, external religion and converted (3:1–21).

The Gospel truths of regeneration, the cross, God’s redemptive love and the necessity of a living faith are all evidenced in this interview. The final testimony of John the Baptist is given 3:22–36, concluding with both a promise and a warning.

4:1–42 describes Jesus’ ministry among the Samaritans or *Cuthim*, a mixed people hated by the Jews, with a religious center at the ruins of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim, outside the city of Sychar, which had been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, the great Jewish Hasmonaean or Maccabean prince, in 106 BC. These had a vague concept of and hope in the Messiah.

Jesus seeks out a Samaritan woman and engages her in an evangelistic conversation which results in her conversion, and through her a multitude of Samaritans are converted, which signals the commencement of Jesus’ public preaching ministry. The first “I am” occurs in his exchange with the Samaritan woman [see 4:26 in the Gk, ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι].

The Public Ministry

of Christ to the Multitudes (4:31–12:50)

After the spiritual awakening in Samaria, Jesus and his Disciples return to Galilee (4:43ff). The Galileans, who had seen the miracles at the feast in Jerusalem, received him. John

describes *the Second “Sign,”* the healing of the Nobleman’s son (4:46–54).

The next section (5:1–47) finds Jesus back in Jerusalem for an unnamed feast, where he heals a paralytic man on the Sabbath: *the Third “Sign”* (5:1–15). This further intensifies the Jewish opposition to his teaching and his claim that God was his Father, making him equal to God (5:16–47).

The scene shifts back to Galilee (6:1–7:1) and *the Fourth “Sign,”* the Feeding of the vast multitude [5,000 men besides women and children]. This miracle, described in detail by all four evangelists (Mk. 6:30–44; Matt. 14:13–21; Lk. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–13), marks the high-point of our Lord’s ministry and popularity.

Only John notes that the multitude, moved by the miracle, sought to take Jesus by force and make him a king (6:14–15). Matthew and Mark note that Jesus forced his Disciples to get into a boat and immediately depart while he sent the multitudes away (Matt. 14:22; Mk. 6:45). They were evidently of the same mind and thought that making Jesus a king would fulfill their purpose and his Messianic mission. They were in danger of insurrection. The safest place for them was in the boat and in the storm (Matt. 14:23–33; Mk. 6:46–51; Jn. 6:16–21)! *The Fifth “Sign,”* Jesus walking on water, occurred in the storm in the presence of his Disciples.

The next day, at the synagogue in Capernaum, the people reject Jesus’ ministry and message because of his claims of Deity and the spiritual nature of his message and kingdom, which they could not comprehend because of their literalism and external religion. Many of his followers then left him (6:21–66). This marks the first series of Jesus’ “I am” declarations (6:20, 35, 41, 48, 51).

This marks the beginning of his loss of popularity with the people and the intensification of the opposition of “the Jews.” In answer to his question to the Disciples, they reaffirm their faith in him as the Son of God (6:67–71). Jesus then spends several months in Galilee, of which John gives no account, not

returning to Jerusalem because the Jews were seeking to kill him (7:1). This time is described in the Synoptics, and probably includes the ministry to the far north of Galilee to Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 14:34–18:35; Mk. 6:53–9:50; Lk. 9:18–9:62).

Jesus returns to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2ff). He did not travel openly, but privately (7:2–10). The common people were divided in their opinions about our Lord (7:11–13). Jesus begins to publically teach at the Temple in the middle of the feast, which raises the ire of the Jews and an intense confrontation occurs over his person and their intention to kill him (7:14–36).

At the last, great day of the feast, when the priests drew water and ceremoniously poured it out on a large stone before the people, Jesus stood and cried, with a message which prophetically and symbolically fulfilled their ceremony (7:37–39). This was a Messianic act and declaration, which again divided the people (7:40–44). The Temple guard was sent to arrest him, but was cowered by his words. The Sanhedrin met, deriding the “mob,” and Nicodemus made his first public, meek stand (7:44–52).

John 7:53–8:11, “a text looking for a context,” bears all the marks of a genuine incident in the ministry of our Lord. Its exact context is questionable. It has been placed after Lk. 21:38 or 24:53; after Jn. 7:36 or 7:44 and also after Jn. 21:15.³⁹¹

When Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world” (8:12), he evidently did so early in the morning during the Feast when the priests lit the Temple lights—a dramatic moment! Then follows the most violent exchange yet between our Lord and the Jews and the second series of “I am” declarations (8:12, 18, 23, 24, 28, 58). He speaks first in esoteric terms, then openly claims his relationship to the Father, making himself equal with God. This vehement clash ends with Jesus’ declaration, “Before Abraham was [γενέσθαι, existed, came into being], “I

³⁹¹ See p.406 and footnote.

am [ἐγὼ εἰμὶ]!” (7:58). The Jews sought to stone him but he escaped (7:59).

Jesus and his Disciples encounter a man born blind, *the Sixth “Sign”* (9:1ff). The Jews believed in prenatal sins committed by the soul before birth. Jesus corrects their thinking, makes clay of his spittle and sends the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam. He obeys and returns seeing (9:4–7). Then follows a repeated interrogation by the Jews with this man, then his parents, then the man again.

The issue: this miracle was performed on the Sabbath. The man becomes bold and is excommunicated from their synagogue (9:8–34). Jesus brings him to faith in himself (9:35–38). The Pharisees in the crowd are warned of their refusal to see (9:39–41). John 10:1–21 is the discourse on “The Good Shepherd,” evidently also given in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This marks the third series of the “I am” declarations (10:7, 9, 11, 14). The reaction was again, a division among the people (10:19–21).

John then moves from the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication, a period of at least three months separate 10:21 from 10:22 unaccounted for by John. The Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights [*Channukah*, observing the dedication of the Temple in 165 BC after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC] was during the winter [December] Jesus was once again in Jerusalem. This is the next to the last open, public confrontation between our Lord and the Jews concerning his claim to equality with God. He escaped and removed beyond Jordan [the Perea ministry described by Luke] (10:24–42).

Jesus returns to Bethany, outside Jerusalem, to raise Lazarus from the dead, *the Seventh “Sign”* (11:1–44). Although he heard from the sisters of Lazarus’ sickness, he did not immediately come to cure Lazarus; his purpose was to raise him from the dead for the glory of God. After explaining to his Disciples that Lazarus was dead, he returned to Bethany.

Thomas was resigned to go and die with Jesus as a martyr (11:11–16).

Martha and Mary’s disappointment in our Lord and their expression of grief reads the same in the English, but not in the Greek. Mary’s disappointment and grief are much more expressive and heartfelt (11:21, 32). This is a public miracle without dispute, a manifestation of Divine power (11:33–44), yet though many believed, some went to the Sanhedrin to report (11:45–46)! The Sanhedrin holds a meeting and plots Jesus’ death (11:47–53). Jesus leaves the area and does not return until his Triumphal Entry. The Jews seek to take him (11:54–57).

Jesus returns for the Passover, staying first at Bethany (12:1–9). The character of Judas Iscariot becomes more manifest in his deceitfulness, and he is rebuked by our Lord (11:4–8).

John connects the reaction of the people to the raising of Lazarus to their enthusiasm at Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (12:9–18). Some Greeks seek Jesus—an anticipation of the future outreach of the Gospel to the nations (12:21–23). John does not mention the second cleansing of the Temple, but emphasizes the final public confrontation between our Lord and the Jews, then closes this section with a summary and condemnation of the unbelief of the nation (12:23–50).

The Private Ministry
of Christ to his Disciples (13:1–17:26)

This lengthy section gives the details of the final night, the “Last Supper” and the closing discourses of Jesus to his Disciples, preparing them for his passion just before his arrest. The supper commemorated the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a high Sabbath, the next day was the Feast of Passover and the day of crucifixion and the next day, the weekly Sabbath—three consecutive “Sabbaths.”

These discourses contain the fourth and most intimate series of the “I am” declarations (13:19; 14:3, 6; 15:1, 5; 17:14, 16, 24). Jesus washes the Disciples’ feet to give them a lesson

and example in humility and service (13:1–17). He then reveals Judas Iscariot as the Betrayer, although no one perceived this at the time (13:18–30). He foretells his departure in esoteric terms and gives them the commandment of true Christian love (13:31–35). Peter avows the extremity of his love, but is informed that he would deny his Lord (13:36–38).

Immediately our Lord gives comfort to his own through a series of revelations concerning himself as the only way to the Father and his union with and relation to the Father, including the promise of the Comforter whom he would send in his place. The Holy Spirit would give them the spiritual ability to remember all things that Jesus had said (14:1–31).

From the context, it seems that 15:1–17:26 were spoken as they made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. John 15 contains the discourse on Jesus as the True Vine [Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, in contrast to national Israel which was symbolized by the vine] and the utter necessity of abiding in him as the sole source of life, power, usefulness and fruit-bearing. This discourse is interwoven with comments about his and the Father's love to them, instructions on praying in his name, his work through them in a hostile world and the promise of the Comforter.

In 16:1–28, our Lord admittedly speaks to his Disciples in esoteric terms, preparing them for his passion and resurrection and their future of suffering and persecution. When the Disciples reply that they understood, he warns them of their unbelief and departure from him in the hour of his trial, yet he also gives them comfort (16:29–33).

17:1–26 is our Lord's "High Priestly Prayer" which he prays for his own: his own glorification (17:1–5), for the preservation, faith, unity and sanctification of the Disciples (17:6–19) and for those who would believe through their testimony: for unity, perfection in love and for the future glory of all believers (17:20–26).

The Passion and Resurrection
of Christ (18:1–20:31)

The arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane marks the final series of the “I am” declarations which resulted in a sudden and dramatic manifestation of Divine power—our Lord was in complete control and willingly gave himself into the hands of the soldiers (18:5, 6, 8). Twice more there is an “I am” declaration during his Jewish trials, but these are found in Mk. 14:62 and in a response in Lk. 22:70.

The following trials were illegal and a mockery of justice by the unbelieving and prejudiced Jewish leaders. Pilate repeatedly found him innocent on all accounts, yet had him scourged and condemned him to death out of political expediency.

The charges were that he made himself a king, then the Son of God, then once again, a king—from insurrection to blasphemy to insurrection. In 18:15–18, 25–27, we note the denials of Peter. After the civil trial, in which the Jewish leaders disavowed their Messianic hope and expectation (19:14–15), Jesus was led to Golgotha, the place of crucifixion, bearing his cross (19:16–17).

The crucifixion took place on Golgotha, a skull-shaped hill immediately outside Jerusalem (19:17). Jesus was crucified between two criminals. For six hours, our Lord hung on the cross, already half-dead from the scourging.³⁹² The Jews protested to Pilate concerning the accusation nailed to Jesus’ cross; Pilate refused to change it (19:19–22). Strange are the ways of Divine providence! The soldiers cast lots for his outer garment, unknowingly fulfilling Scripture (19:23–24).

Our Lord’s mother and other women were present. Jesus gives his mother into the care of his closest earthly friend, John (19:25–27).

³⁹² For a graphic description of the Roman method of scourging and crucifixion, see the section on Matthew, pp. 292–294.

At the end of the horrible six hours, after suffering the complete wrath and judicial forsaking of God for our sins—his spiritual suffering infinitely exceeding his physical suffering—Jesus cried out because of his awful thirst, and, having cleared his mouth and throat with the soldiers’ sour wine, gave out a cry of victory [τετέλεσται]—the most significant word uttered between creation and glory—and then handed his spirit back [παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα] to God. The evangelist is careful note that our Lord’s death was voluntary (Matt. 27:50; Jn. 10:17–18; 19:30).

The legs of the other two were broken to hasten death, as the evening was approaching, signaling another day, a high Sabbath. Jesus was already dead (19:31–33). That our Lord actually died and did not merely swoon, John testifies that when the soldier pierced his side both blood and water came out, medically, the blood in the area of the pericardium had clotted, a certain sign of death and also the fulfillment of Scripture (19:33–37).

Of the seven sayings of our Lord on the cross, Matthew and Mark record only one: “My God! My God! Why me hast thou forsaken?!” (Matt.27:46 [Gk.]; Mk. 15:34). Luke records three: concerning the soldiers, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” To the repentant thief, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” In prayer to his Father, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Lk. 23:34, 43, 46) and John, the only eye-witness among the Disciples, records four: Jesus to his mother, “Woman, behold thy son!” To his beloved Disciple and closest friend, John, “Behold thy mother!” To the soldiers, “I thirst.” And to all and everyone, “It is finished!” (Jn. 19:26–27, 28, 30).

Joseph of Arimathaea, a member of the Sanhedrin and secret follower of Jesus came and took our Lord’s body with the permission of Pilate. Nicodemus helped in preparing it for burial, placing it in a new tomb (19:38–42). These two Jewish leaders, members of the Sanhedrin, denied their traditional faith to willfully contaminate themselves ceremonially by

touching a dead corpse (Numb. 9:6–13)—They took a decided stand while the Disciples hid out of fear! During the Sabbath day, everyone rested until the first day of the week.

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb to find the stone removed and the tomb empty. She informs Peter and John, who also run to the tomb and see the burial clothing neatly arranged. John believes—the first of the Disciples to truly believe in the resurrection (20:1–9). As they return to their home, Our Lord appears to Mary after two angels commune with her. He tells her “to stop clinging to him” [μή μου ἄπτου, pres. imp. prohib.] as he has not yet ascended to the Father. She rushes to tell this to the Disciples (20:10–18).

Our Lord appears to the ten that evening, gives evidence of his person, gives to them the Holy Spirit by a symbolic gesture and gives them power to declare the forgiveness or retention of sins (20:19–23). Thomas was absent, but present a week later and his unbelief was cured by seeing the resurrected Lord. His confession and exclamation leave no doubt concerning his faith as he openly acknowledges the Deity of his Lord and God (20:24–29). This chapter closes with the theme of this Gospel account clearly stated (20:30–31).

The Epilogue (21:1–25)

This chapter is concerned with the third post-resurrection appearance of our Lord to his Disciples and the challenge he makes to Peter who, until commissioned to evangelize through the endowment of the Spirit (see Acts 1–2) was returning to the fishing business with this former partners (21:1–3). After a night’s labor with no fish, Jesus appears to them and tells them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and they took in 153 large fish. They eat with our Lord, who had already prepared a meal for them (21:4–14).

Our Lord then challenges Peter’s love. Peter’s answer reveals that he is very enthusiastic and spontaneous in his love [σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλω σε], but the Lord desires a settled, sacrificial, constant love capable of intelligent fulfillment

[ἀγαπᾶς με], which is needed for faithful service. Jesus then predicts with what death he would glorify God. Peter queries as to the future of John, and our Lord's answer raised speculation which John discounts (21:18–23).

John closes his Gospel account by identifying himself and reiterating his principle of selection in view of the greatness and number of Jesus' works and acts (21:24–25).

Notes and Observations

1. (1:1) An ascending, syllogistic argument for the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ: The Eternity of the Word [Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος], the Equality of the Word [καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν] and the Deity of the Word [καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος]. The Gk. is much stronger and more exact than the English. See notes on “The Christ of the Gospels.”
2. (1:1–18) The prologue to John's gospel is amazing, gathering up eternity and entering into time. The Jesus of the Gospels is the eternal God descending into the realm of time to effect redemption. V. 18: Jesus Christ is the “exegesis” [ἐξηγήσατο] of God—the revelation and representation of the original.
3. (1:12–13) Free and sovereign grace is clearly proclaimed in these verses. Behind and before the sinner's reception of the gospel is the effectual grace of God.
4. (1:16) “...grace for grace.” [χάρις ἀντὶ χάριτος], i.e., grace facing grace, grace upon grace, grace from every aspect and direction, amazing grace! As one has written, “Grace like the waves of the sea, one wave upon another like an incoming tide.”
5. (1:29, 35–36) “Behold the lamb of God!” J. C. Ryle observed that if a message is worth preaching once, it is worth preaching twice! Through thousands of years the promise and challenge of Gen. 3:15 is finally fulfilled. This is the gospel in a condensed version.

6. (1:42) "...and he brought him to Jesus." A suitable text for what God has called us to do—bring others to Jesus.
7. (1:45–51) Our Lord and Nathaniel. One word from our Lord and Nathaniel's life was changed. This is still true today.
8. (2:1–11). The miracle of the water turned to wine. It was real wine, aged to perfection. This was a miracle in many ways when we contemplate it.
9. (2:13–22). The ministry of our Lord began in Galilee and was pursued during the Pilgrim Feasts at Jerusalem. The first cleansing of the Temple resulted in the first of many confrontations with the Jewish leaders. Four Passovers later they would crucify him.
10. (2:23–25). The multitudes gawked [θεωροῦντες] at the miracles over the days of the feast, but these made no lasting impression. Sadly, human nature, even if religious, is prone to temporary impressions which soon dissipate.
11. (3:1–2) Nicodemus was impressed and followed up his amazement by seeking out our Lord for a private interview. In the Gk., there is a connecting particle [δέ] which connects 2:23–25 with 3:1ff. He made a general statement which was perceptive, but our Lord drew him into an intense, evangelistic conversation.
12. (3:3ff). Our Lord draws Nicodemus in to a personal interest and spiritual confrontation. If we would learn how to win souls, we should study the approach of our Lord in such cases: Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the Rich Young Ruler, the demoniac of Gadara, the man born blind, etc. Each case is extremely informative and edifying.
13. (3:5) "...born of water and the Spirit..." Jesus implies that Nicodemus, known as "The Teacher of Israel," should have known (3:9–10). Rabbis usually had titles and were very proud of them. The source of this saying is found in Jer. 31:31–34; Ezk. 11:19–20 and Ezk. 36:25–27. Although

couched in Old Testament language, it is a gospel prophecy and promise.

14. (3:14–16) Jesus finds a point-of-contact in the brazen serpent of Moses (Numb. 21:4–9). The simple, clear gospel [good news] was “Look and live!”—a message of faith. Then our Lord applies it to himself. Nicodemus is astounded. The “world” [κόσμος] was comprised of Jews and Gentiles, and the only thought of God toward the Gentiles was judgment; salvation was for the Jews only. Thus, our Lord reveals to Nicodemus the world-wide scope of redemption in v. 17ff.

Two notes are essential: first, the word “whosoever” is simply not in this text. It is very specific: “every single one without exception,” then, second, “constantly exercising faith in him” [πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν].³⁹³ The emphasis is upon a personal, consistent faith which is nothing less than a complete and utter submission to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

15. (3:18–21, 36) Men are sinners by nature and so under Divine condemnation. Is it not strange that, in attempting to convey the love of God toward sinners, many would neglect this solemn truth? The love of God is immutable and exists in a covenant context.
16. (4:3–43) Our Lord and the Samaritan woman. One of the classic evangelistic events in Scripture. Study this passage and see how he was believable in his claims, how he brought this soiled woman to conviction of sin, lifted up the conversation, as he had with Nicodemus, from a literal to a

³⁹³ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν. Lit: πᾶς ὁ followed by the ptc., “every single one without exception,” very personal and specific. πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν, “believing into him. This construction was used in Gk. long before the gospel. It meant to sell one’s self into slavery to a temple god. True, saving faith is utter, unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. See Acts 2:36, which emphasizes the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

spiritual level, how he kindly revealed to her that salvation was not by place nor by race but by grace. And to this Samaritan woman, he calls God “Father.”

This woman was perhaps the only one who could speak with the men, and God chose to use her in the great spiritual awakening which followed! The people, dressed in white for laboring in the heat and fields were continuing to stream out [ἤρχοντο, imperf.] of the city to him—a great spiritual harvest!

17. (4:51–53) We have already discussed the miracle of the nobleman’s son. Now, just pointing out that his faith was such that he spent the night on the road on the way home. He did not hurry in grief or doubt—this was faith expressed in action!
18. (5:1–18) The healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. Our Lord healed just one individual and then went his way. When he finally left the healed man, he told him, “Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee.” (v.14). But he was an invalid, how could he sin? The hearts, minds and imaginations of men are only evil continually. All sin begins in the heart, mind and imagination! The warning applies to all.
19. (5:39) The imperative and indicative are the same in form. Either a command to search the Scriptures, or an acknowledgment that they were searching the Scriptures. With all their religion, they could not come to truth because their external religion and its tradition had obscured the way of salvation. Is it possible that your religion has obscured the way to salvation? Perhaps you have received a substitute which has made you religious but you have not been saved from yourself or the reigning power of your sin.
20. (6:1–69) The “Feeding of the 5,000” and the resulting sermon. This has been discussed previously. At the conclusion many of his followers left him. Why? They thought in literal terms and remained spiritually blind. Mark carefully that Peter, as usual, answered for all the Disciples.

“To whom shall we go away [to]?” His answer reveals that the Disciples trusted him, and therefore accepted what he had said. Is not this the true method? We trust the Lord and then we can learn. Mark the perfs.: “we have come to believe [πεπιστεύκαμεν]” “and come to know [ἐγνώκαμεν].” May we so progress in faith and knowledge!

21. (7:2–9) The burden and pain of having an unconverted family. Some of our Lord’s brethren would be converted after his resurrection. James would become the leading elder in the Jerusalem church and he and Jude would write Epistles. But at that time, they were unbelievers. Yes, even our Lord had a divided family—yet he persevered and remained faithful and undeterred. He is our example in more ways that we might at first understand.
22. (7:20–25) The falsehood and politics of mere religion. Yes, they wanted to and were plotting to kill Jesus, but publicly denied it. And to do this, they called our Lord demon-possessed and a liar. True religion and true faith do not say one thing and do another; these are consistent. Mere religion is graceless and holds truth to be relative.
23. (7:37–39) A clear, glorious Messianic declaration and prophecy of the descent and indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit (see Deut. 18:15; Isa. 12:3; 43:20; 44:3; 55:1).
24. (7:40–52) Our Lord’s identification with Nazareth and Galilee, and his Galilean accent, were ever-present obstacles to the Jews. They determined his credibility by a surface impression; Nicodemus had investigated and found life!
25. (8:1–11) The woman taken in adultery. What a graphic episode which revealed who our Lord was and how he treated sinners! See how he silenced her accusers and brought great conviction to their consciences, and how he refused to be a judge, yet admonished her to end her sinfulness. The law commanded that both the man and the

woman were to be stoned, but where was the man? They claimed she was caught in the very act, which implies that one [or more of them] present as her accuser was the perpetrator.

26. (8:12) Our Lord spoke these words early in the morning as the priests were lighting the large basins in a daily ceremony for the Feast of Lights. How precise, appropriate, timely and impressive!
27. (8:13–59) This was one of the greatest confrontations recorded by John, and should be read in the Gk., which reveals the surge of emotions and intensity. Both the Jews and our Lord were deeply stirred and he pushed back in truth as they pressed him!
28. (9:1–3) The mystery of the secret ways of God. This young man's life had been lived in blindness so his healing would glorify God on that day and he would be converted. Why God does what he does remains a mystery. We think in terms of time, and thus are usually impatient. God works in terms of cause and effect, and time is secondary.
29. (9:1–44) The man born blind. Once he received his sight, how bold and outspoken he became! His parents were in fear, but he was not. He faced the synagogue leaders and even rebuked them. What a day! He first received his sight and saw for the very first time, and not only so, but his spiritual eyes were opened and he was converted. What marks of converting grace do we manifest?
30. (10:1–30) The allegory of the Good Shepherd. Among many truths, this anticipated the conversion of the Gentiles (10:16) and revealed the sovereignty of Divine grace (10:25–29).
31. (10:30) Our Lord uses the neut. ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἓν ἐσμεν, thus both revealing and emphasizing [emph. pos.] the unity of God the Father and Son, but making a necessary distinction between their persons, had he used the masc., he

would imply that he and the Father were one person. Very clear in the Gk., but unclear in the Eng.

32. (11:1–46) The raising of Lazarus from the dead. This was the crowning “sign” of John’s Gospel account.³⁹⁴ Lazarus had been dead four days. There could be no doubt as to the nature of this miracle! Further, the news of Lazarus would spread up and down the land, and when the pilgrims would gather by the thousands in Jerusalem for the Passover, they wanted to see Lazarus at Bethany, and this became the providential impetus for our Lord’s Triumphal Entry and the multitudes who attended it from Bethany to Jerusalem (Jn. 12:9–19).
33. (11:7–16) Thomas, ever thinking on the shadow side, seems resigned to return to Jerusalem and die with our Lord as a martyr. How different his expectation when he witnesses the raising of Lazarus. How foreboding at times do circumstances seem, yet how they may result in our blessing and God’s glory.
34. (11:21, 32) Mark the differences between Martha and Mary as they voiced their disappointment in our Lord’s not being there to keep Lazarus from dying. The Eng. reads the same, but the Gk. is quite diverse.³⁹⁵ Mary is much more moved, more disappointed, more attached to her brother. Do we dare to think that our Lord would disappoint us? Even if should be so, it is only for a greater display of his goodness and glory!
35. (11:45–46) Even such an astounding, undeniable miracle would not lead some to believe; How irrational and criminal

³⁹⁴ See “Miracles in John’s Gospel,” pp. 407–408.

³⁹⁵ Martha: κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὦδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου, “Lord, if you had been here [and you were not, marking great disappointment in Jesus], would not have died my brother!” Mary: κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὦδε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός, “Lord If you had been here [and you were not, again, marking great disappointment in Jesus], not my would have died the [my] brother!”

is the unbelief of those who witness the power of God and discount it altogether!

36. (11:47–52) Note the priorities: “our place and our nation.” The former probably refers to their position. Further note that God may speak through a person unwittingly, i.e., he may speak from himself, but God governs his lips to speak truth in a way the person did not intend. How God may even use such to declare the truth!
37. (12:24) This saying of Jesus is often applied to the death of a significant believer or great Christian, but it must refer to our Lord alone.
38. (12:25–26) Being a servant is not necessarily lowly or ignoble; it depends upon whose servant you are! We are servants of the Great King Immanuel, and where he is we will be also.
39. (12:42–43) Divided loyalties, silent witnesses. Does our earthly or religious position cause us to remain silent when the truth demands that we cry out?
40. (12:45). Our Lord refers to God the Father as the one having sent him 32 times in John’s Gospel record. This designation emphasized his Messianic claims and his obedience to the Father.
41. (13:1–31) Verse 2 should read, “supper having begun [γενομένου]...” The Jews washed before the meal. When all the Gospel accounts are studied, it will become evident that Judas had left when our Lord established the Lord’s Supper. This has great implications on the nature of its observance, the participants and its relation to the church. What was the practice of the Apostolic churches in the New Testament? Is this inspired practice determinative for us? Are there areas where we have unwittingly been merely traditional?
42. (13:31–17:26) The “Upper Room Discourse.” Our Lord reveals much to his Disciples and finally prays for them and for all believers in his High Priestly Prayer (17:1–26). This is his final discourse to prepare them for his passion and for

their future lives and ministry. How comforting! How encouraging! How blessed! And how anticipatory of the world's hatred but also of the Spirit's comforting and enabling.

43. (17:17) Very emphatic in the original: ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστιν, “Sanctify them through Thy Truth, Thy Word, [I mean] Thine, Truth is!” We should often ask ourselves, “What is my interest in the Scriptures?” “Do I read out of love and desire, or merely out of duty?” “Do I love the Word of God above all else?” “Am I receiving the sanctifying ministry of Divine truth?”
44. (18:28) The hypocrisy of mere, external religion. The Jewish leaders had been plotting the death of Christ for months, and used slander and falsehood to bring him to trial, but they themselves would not ceremonially defile themselves in a Gentile court. Do we carefully observe our thoughts and actions to see if we are consistent with Scripture in thought, word and action? O Lord deliver us from any hint of hypocrisy!
45. (19:30). The greatest words ever uttered: at the very commencement of the history of the universe: “Let there be light—light was!” (Gen. 1:3).³⁹⁶ At the apex of human history redemptively: “It is finished!”³⁹⁷ An old victory shout—and the greatest single word ever uttered! It reached back to the beginning of time and sin (Gen. 3:15) and reaches into eternity future! We should bring it to our memories continually.

³⁹⁶ Gen. 1:3, וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי-אֹר

³⁹⁷ Jn. 19:30, Τετέλεσται, The perf. in Gk. is either culminative or emphasizes an action whose results continue in a state of completion—or both, as here: “It has been brought to completion and its effects will remain full and unending!” Some say this was an old Greek cry of victory—and it remains so for us.

46. (19:30). "...and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."
 Lit: "...he dismissed or handed over his spirit" [παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα]. Crucifixion did not kill our Lord. When he had completed the work of redemption, he dismissed his spirit back to the Father. His death was completely voluntary and his work was finished (Jn. 10:15–18). How blessed to speak of the "finished work" of Christ!
47. (19:38–42) Joseph of Arithmathaea and Nicodemus take our Lord's body down from the cross and place it in a tomb. By voluntarily defiling themselves with a dead body during the Passover, they put their faithfulness before all of the people and before the most solemn observances of their religion (Numb. 9:6ff; 19:11–22). What a testimony and what boldness when the Disciples were in hiding in fear!
48. (20:3–8) The "other Disciple" was John the author of this Gospel. He reveals that, seeing the empty tomb and the clothing, he believed. He was the first of the Disciples to believe in the resurrection of our Lord. What truth and reality must have dawned upon him! Soon all would witness this reality when they saw our Lord visibly, but John believed before he saw.
49. (20:19ff) Our Lord appeared to his Disciples, except for Thomas, that evening. They were behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. What a different picture they would present on the Day of Pentecost, when, filled with the Spirit, they would boldly declare the "wonderful works of God" in public to the great multitudes of pilgrims! What is ever needed for God's people is the fullness of the Spirit, taking away all fear and making believers bold and courageous in the truth.
50. (20:24–29) "Doubting Thomas." He was not given to unbelief more than the others, but they had seen and spoken with our Lord, and he had not. And when our Lord did appear to him, he immediately believed.

51. (21:15–17) Our Lord tries Peter's love. The Gk. reveals a play on words hidden from the Eng. in the first two questions, our Lord used the term for a rational love of moral quality [ἀγαπήσ με]; Peter responded with a term which betokened a spontaneous, enthusiastic affection [φιλήσ σε]. Finally our Lord came down to Peter's level. But it remains that the love [ἀγαπάω] which is rational and capable of obedience and perseverance is what our Lord wants from his servants. Spontaneous enthusiasm and affection [φιλέω] may be manifest by the young and enthusiastic, but the daily grind of service, perseverance and suffering for our Lord demands that love which is intelligent, weighs the issues and reflects the moral character and longsuffering of God.

The Acts of the Apostles

Introduction

The Book of Acts is indispensable to the New Testament canon. It forms a vital connection between the Gospels and the Epistles and it is the one historical book of the New Testament, tracing the first three decades of Christianity. Apart from Acts we would have no direct record of this critical era.

Acts thus fills a strategic position in the canon of Scripture as to the history, nature, progress and characteristics of New Testament Christianity, the first New Testament churches and the ministries of both Peter and Paul. It forms the historical context for the Pauline and General Epistles, indeed, all of the New Testament except the Johannine corpus.

Acts is a book of transitions, tracing the transition from the Gospels to the Epistles, from the personal ministry of our Lord to that of the Apostles, who were inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven by the Ascended Christ (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:44–53; Jn. 20:30–31; Acts 1:1–8).

There is the great transition from Jewish to predominantly Gentile Christianity (Acts 1:8; 11:18, 20ff; 13:1ff). The contents of Acts itself transitions from the ministry of Peter (Acts 1–12) to the ministry of Paul (Acts 13–28) and the transition from Near Eastern to European Christianity with the two final missionary journeys of Paul and his voyage to Rome.

The Acts of the Apostles is preeminently a book of firsts: a historical record of the first three decades of Christianity spreading out to the world (Acts 1:8; chaps. 2–28), the first empowering of the New Testament church at Pentecost, the prototype of all true gospel revival (Acts 1–2), the first instance of the gift of tongues (2:1–4ff), the first examples of inspired preaching by Peter (Acts 2, 3, 10), Stephen (Acts 6–7) and Paul (Acts 13, 17, 22), the first gospel revivals (Acts 2, 3, 4, 13, 17, 19) and the first apostolic miracles after our Lord's ascension (Acts 3, 4, etc).

We mark the first persecution of Christians by the Jews (Acts 3–5), the first Divine judgment upon hypocrites in the church (Acts 5), the first church discord and first deacons (Acts 6), the first Christian martyrs [Stephen (Acts 6–7) and with the execution of James, the first death of an Apostle (Acts 12)], the first mention of the name “Christian” (11:26) and the first steps toward world evangelism (Acts 1:8; 8:5ff; 10:1ff; 13:1ff).

Further, we mark the first conversion of a great enemy and persecutor (Acts 9), the first outreach to the Gentiles (Acts 10), the first missionary enterprises into the Gentile world (Acts 13ff), the first testimony of the gospel before Gentile governors (Acts 13; 24:1–26:35) and the first “Church Council” or conference (Acts 15).

We also note the first division between missionary leaders (Acts 15), the first entrance of the gospel into Europe (Acts 16), the first recorded confrontation between biblical Christianity and Greek philosophy (Acts 17), the first great confrontation of biblical Christianity with a center of magic and occult powers (Acts 19), the first testimony of the gospel before a king (Acts 25–26), the first reach of the gospel into the western Empire (Acts 27–28) and the first anticipated hearing before a Roman Caesar (Acts 25:8–12, 21; 26:32; 27:24; 28:19; Phil. 1:12–13).³⁹⁸

Title

The title, “The Acts of the Apostles,” was not used until the middle of the second century in the anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke (c. 150) and by Irenaeus (c. 130–202). The title “Acts” [Gk: Πράξεις] was a common word used to describe a collection of the great deeds and sayings of a hero or heroes. Luke’s own designation may be implied as the “second

³⁹⁸ The term “palace” [τῷ πραιτωρίῳ], refers to Caesar’s Judgment Hall, The Praetorian Court was comprised of Caesar, the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard and 20 Roman Senators who were assessors. (Acts 28:30–31). See “A Brief Chronology and Harmony of the Life of the Apostle Paul” in this section, pp. 465–475.

treatise” of “what Jesus began both to do and to teach,” the “former treatise” being the Gospel according to Luke (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1:1–2).

The Gospel: What Jesus BEGAN both to do and to teach during his earthly ministry.

The Acts: What Jesus CONTINUED both to do and to teach through his Apostles.

Various titles have been suggested by either interpretation or content: “The Acts of the Ascended Christ through the Holy Spirit,” or “through the Apostles;” “The Acts of Peter and Paul,” as the book deals mainly with these two Apostles: Peter (Chaps. 1–12) and Paul (Chaps. 13–28), and only incidentally with the other Apostles; “The Acts of the Ascended Christ,” “The Acts of the Holy Spirit,” “A Record of the Mind and Might of the Holy Spirit,” “The Growth of the Gospel through the Church,” and finally, “What Jesus Continued to Do and to Teach.”

The traditional title, however, seems appropriate as it emphasizes the transition from the earthly ministry of our Lord to the earthly ministry of his Apostles, with emphasis upon the ministries of Peter and Paul.

The Acts [latter treatise] was separated from the Gospel of Luke [former treatise] in the canon because the Gospels were grouped together as revealing, recording and exploring the earthly life and ministry of our Lord and would include the Johannine corpus, written toward the close of the first century.

The Acts of the Apostles naturally revealed the first three decades of Apostolic Christianity, its history and its expansion throughout the empire. Acts reveals the great racial, cultural and biblical transition from Jewish to predominantly Gentile Christianity, and forms a natural and logical transition to the Epistles.

Authorship

The authorship of “Luke–Acts” has been previously and thoroughly considered in the section on the authorship of the

Gospel according to Luke.”³⁹⁹ The Gospels and Acts were all originally anonymous, but from the earliest decades their authors have been named and universally upheld. Luke has been universally held to be the author of the two–scroll work, “Luke–Acts,”⁴⁰⁰ comprising almost one fourth of the New Testament.

This was unquestioned until more recent times and the rise of radical biblical criticism. The Acts of the Apostles has been subjected to the most grueling scrutiny by a variety of radical critics as to its genuineness, authenticity, unity and historicity. This storm has subsided. If one’s presuppositions are coherent and valid, and the presuppositions of the radical critics are examined, then Luke, the first church historian, the long–time companion of and physician to the Apostle Paul and an eye–witness to much which transpired, is plainly the author of both the Gospel which bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles.⁴⁰¹

Internal evidence, including the high quality of the Greek grammar, terminology and the occurrence of over fifty words which occur only in Luke and Acts in the New Testament, and external evidence of the earliest church fathers attest to Luke’s authorship.

Key Verses, Key Words and Structure

Considering the Lucan writing of “Luke–Acts,” the key verses are: Lk. 24:44–49; Acts 1:1–5, 8. These overlap historically and anticipate the advent of the Holy Spirit and empowerment of the New Testament church, continuing the

³⁹⁹ For the Lucan authorship, see “The Gospel According to Luke” under “authorship,” pp. 340–344 of this volume.

⁴⁰⁰ According to the size of the ancient papyrus scrolls, Luke’s two–fold work completely filled two full scrolls, each being approximately 22 feet in length.

⁴⁰¹ For orthodox Christian presuppositions, see pp. 28–32 for a description of radical biblical criticism and the various approaches, see this same section.

work commenced by the Lord Jesus Christ and continued through the Holy Spirit and the Apostolic ministry. Pertaining to the Book of Acts itself, the key verse is 1:8, which summarizes Spirit-empowered Christianity in its spread throughout the world: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”⁴⁰²

The Scope of the Witness: The entirety of the life.⁴⁰³

The Source of the Witness: The power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰⁴

The Subject of the Witness: The Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sphere of the Witness: To the uttermost part of the earth.

This last, the sphere of the witness forms the development of the Acts: “Jerusalem and all Judea” (Chaps. 1–7), “and in Samaria” (Chap. 8), “and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Chaps. 9–28).

The structure of the book historically is either two-fold: Emphasis on the ministry of Peter (Chaps. 1–12), then emphasis on the ministry of Paul (Chaps. 13–28); or three-fold: predominantly Jewish Christianity (Chaps. 1–7), an era of transition (Chaps. 8–12) and finally, the transition to predominantly Gentile Christianity (Chaps. 13–28). The so-called “we” sections of the second part of the book are determinative for the content, but not for the overall structure.

⁴⁰² The term “witness” [vb: μαρτυρέω, n. μαρτυρία, μαρτύριον, μάρτυς, etc.] and its cognates [“witnessed,” “testify,” “bear record,” “give testimony,” “martyr,” etc.] is a key-word in Acts, occurring twenty-eight times.

⁴⁰³ Not “ye shall witness for me,” but “ye shall be witnesses unto me...” ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες, the use of the noun implies that the entire life is a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ—not an activity, but a life.

⁴⁰⁴ The Holy Spirit is mentioned over 50 times in Acts—more than any other book in the New Testament.

Date, Provenance and Purpose

The Lucan corpus [“Luke–Acts”] was written c. 61–63 AD. It is possible that there was a given time between the Gospel account and the Acts, but not necessarily. The Acts ends at the termination of Paul’s first imprisonment (cf. Phil. 1:24–26; 2:19–24; Phlm. 22) (c. 63 AD), and was evidently written in Rome.⁴⁰⁵

The purpose is stated in the opening verses—a continuation of the Luke’s Gospel account as the ascended Lord Jesus continued his work through the Spirit–empowered Apostles (Acts 1:1–8). The faith and understanding of Theophilus would be grounded in historical accuracy, doctrinal orthodoxy and a right biblical theology.

Subsidiary or additional purposes have been rightly advanced: to give a general account of the first three decades of Apostolic Christianity. Further, to give an accurate account of the work of the Holy Spirit leading and empowering the Apostolic ministry, tracing its extension throughout the empire [e.g., Pentecost, chap. 2; The leading of the Spirit with both Peter and Cornelius in opening the gospel to the Gentiles, Acts 10; the leading of the Spirit in the call of Barnabas and Paul to their mission to the Gentiles, Acts 13ff; The moving of the Spirit to bring the gospel into Europe, Acts 16; the providential work through Paul in bringing him before the Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus, Agrippa and Caesar, etc.].

There is also an apologetic or polemical purpose in demonstrating the great animosity and persecution of the Jews against the Christians (e.g., Acts Chaps. 3–5, 8–9, 13–14, 17, 19, 22–26) and the reality that Christianity was no political threat to the Roman government.

⁴⁰⁵ See “The Provenance and Date of Luke’s Gospel Account” in the section on Luke’s Gospel, p. 344.

The Sources of Luke the Historian

As Luke was not present for the first fifteen chapters of the history of Acts [before and apart from the various “we” sections], he had to have various sources, either oral or written, for his information. Contrary to the radical theories of “Source Criticism,” Divine inspiration is inclusive of research and the accumulation and selection of materials, as well as personal style, grammar, vocabulary and doctrinal emphases.

Luke, it has been noted, was an astute historian and was inspired to write his account. His sources evidently came from first-hand interviews with the Apostles, our Lord’s immediate family, John Mark, who was an eye-witness to some of the events of both the Gospel account and the early chapters of Acts, and many others during Paul’s Caesarean imprisonment and later from Paul himself and his other companions as he re-visited the many cities and churches which had been previously established.

He was also with the Apostle during his two Roman imprisonments. In addition, he had access to written documents such as the Epistle from the church conference (Acts 15), possibly a copy of the letter from the Chiliarch Claudius Lysias to the Proconsul Felix (23:25–30) and Paul’s Epistles.⁴⁰⁶

The Distinctive Characteristics of Acts

Historical, Geographical and Textual Issues

The Acts of the Apostles is the one and only historical narrative and account of early New Testament Christianity in the canon of Scripture. It has been previously noted that Acts is a book of transitions, of firsts, of emphasis upon the Holy Spirit and his empowering and guidance. The breadth of Luke as a historian, traveler and biographer are unmatched in Scripture. He mentions more than thirty countries and districts, over sixty towns and cities, numerous islands, and about one

⁴⁰⁶ See “The Sources for the Gospel according to Luke” in this volume, pp. 342–344.

hundred persons, sixty of whom are not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament.⁴⁰⁷ He traces the land and sea travel routes of the Mediterranean world.

He alone of the New Testament writers assembles his material with reference to governmental and historical data, accurately designating officers and dignitaries. Luke's record is necessarily fragmented, as he aims at preciseness and economy of words, while emphasizing those realities and facts which serve his selective purpose. Textual issues are beyond the scope and purpose of this Survey.⁴⁰⁸

Sermons and Speeches

It is the only record of Apostolic sermons or speeches. More than twenty-four sermons or speeches are either fully or partially recorded: nine by Peter: at the prayer meeting (1:16–22), at Pentecost (2:14–41), at Solomon's Porch in the Temple (3:12–26), before the Sanhedrin (4:8–12; 5:29–32), to Simon the Sorcerer (8:20–25), at the house of Cornelius (10:34–43), to the Jerusalem church as a defense (11:5–17) and before the Apostles and leaders at the Jerusalem conference (15:7–11).

Nine sermons or speeches by Paul: at Antioch in Pisidia (13:14–43), the abbreviated declaration to the people of Lystra (14:14–17), before the philosophical council in Athens (17:22–34), his farewell address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (20:17–38), his defense to the mob in Jerusalem (22:1–22), his

⁴⁰⁷ See Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, p. 195.

⁴⁰⁸ Textual issues are usually beyond the scope of this Survey. The major textual issue concerning Acts is that the Western type text, D [*Bezae Cantabrigiensis*] is approximately 8.5 percent longer than the other Uncials \aleph [*Sinaiticus*] and B [*Vaticanus*], with words, phrases and sentences leading to speculation that Luke may have written a revision of the original with added material or that these were early additions to the text. This is a matter for textual criticism and one's presuppositions, and must not interfere with veracity and self-attesting nature of Scripture. See the sections on one's presuppositions and textual criticism.

doctrinal teaching before Felix (24:10–21), his defense before Festus and Herod Agrippa II (26:1–24), his encouragement to the passengers and sailors aboard the ship (27:21–26) and to the Jewish elders at Rome (28:17–20).

We also must note the preaching of Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–35)⁴⁰⁹ and the speech of James at the church conference in Jerusalem (15:1–21) and the masterful sermon by Stephen, the deacon, before the Sanhedrin (7:2–53). There are at least twelve addresses by others, including, Gamaliel (5:35–39), Demetrius (19:25–27), the town clerk at Ephesus (19:35–40) and Festus, the Roman Proconsul (25:24–27). These last are important in revealing the attitude of others toward Christianity, spiritual matters, the gospel and personally toward Paul.

Miracles and Prayers

It is also a record of the signs and miracles of the Apostles and others (3:1–10; 4:30; 5:1–10, 12; 6:8; 8:5–8; 9:17–18, 33–35, 36–42; 13:6–12; 14:3, 8–10; 16:16–18; 19:6, 11–12; 20:9–12; 28:3–6, 8–9). The prayers of God’s people and leaders also permeate the book (1:14; 2:42; 3:1; 4:24; 6:4; 7:60; 8:15; 9:11; 10:2; 11:5; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 27:35; 28:15). Further, Luke was well-versed in nautical language and terminology, as was Paul, revealed in Paul’s Epistles and in the sea voyages, especially the final one to Rome and the shipwreck which occurred at Malta.⁴¹⁰

The various Designations of Christians in Acts

The name “Christian” has historically been used to designate believers in Christ and believers of the Gospel. The New Testament uses the terms “believer” and “brother” as the common names. Note the following chart:

⁴⁰⁹ Philip’s preaching must have been very substantial, as the Eunuch was brought to faith and immediately wanted baptism.

⁴¹⁰ See the classic, technical work, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul* by James Smith, a reprint of the 1880 third ed.

Designation	Reference
Believers	1:15; 2:44; 4:32; 5:12; 9:41; 10:45; 15:2, 23; 16:1, 15; 21:25
The Church	5:11; 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:22; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23; 15:3, 4, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 20:17
Disciples	6:1–2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 26, 36; 11:29; 13:52; 14:20–22; 18:23; 19:9; 21:4– 5, 16
Brother and Brethren	6:3; 9:17, 30; 10:23; 11:1, 29; 12:17; 14:2; 15:3, 22, 32–33, 36; 16:2, 40; 17:6, 10; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14–15
The Way	9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:22
The Lord's People	9:32
Christians	11:26; 26:28
Sect of the Nazarene	24:5
Followers	17:34; 22:4; 24:14
The Flock	20:28–29

A Missionary Document

A most important fact is that Acts is a missionary document, as previously noted in the oft-used terms for “witness” and “testimony” and also in the missionary methods of the Apostles and early churches.

Acts furnishes the background for at least ten of Paul's Epistles: 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon. Acts lists many names of persons associated with the work of the gospel in the early churches and helpers to the Apostle Paul. Finally, only Mark (16:19) and Luke record the ascension of our Lord into heaven (Lk. 24:46–53; Acts 1:1–11).

Acts: Missionary Principles and Practices

The New Testament is the inspired pattern for New Testament churches. The Acts of the Apostles is a missionary treatise, and unfolding and development of its key-verse: 1:8. Sadly, church history over the past twenty centuries and more is not a reflection of this inspired pattern, but a sad departure from it, as witnessed by the early rise of ecclesiasticism and a host of traditions which have obscured the clear truth and teaching of the New Testament.

Missionaries were directly called by God through the ministry of the local church (Acts 13:1ff). These were mature and proven ministers, not novices. They were ordained and sent out by the local church, not a mission agency or board.⁴¹¹ On their return, they reported to their home church (Acts 14:26–27).

It is important to note that Jerusalem was never the great missionary church it should and could have been, in spite of the presence and ministry of most of the original Apostles, but was limited by its racial and cultural distinctives. The true, missionary church was the Antiochan church, which was predominantly Gentile and had a much wider vision.

The Jewish *Diaspora* [διασπορά]⁴¹² providentially provided preaching places throughout the Roman Empire. Synagogues were located in almost every commercial city and town. Paul's customary procedure was "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16), i.e., he customarily traveled to the central or more commercial cities and first preached in the local synagogue, which provided a hearing with those who had some biblical knowledge of God, the Scriptures and the promises (Acts 13:14ff; 14:1ff; 16:12–13;¹ 17:1–4,¹ 10–12, 16–

⁴¹¹ It has been said, with a note of truth, that the only "boards" in the New Testament were those on which survivors floated ashore in Paul's shipwreck (27:44).

⁴¹² Διασπορά, lit: "sown throughout," referring to the Jews scattered throughout the empire (1 Pet. 1:1).

17; 18:1–6, 18–20; 19:8–10). Jewish and proselyte converts were then separated—usually because of Jewish opposition—and organized into a church.

Persecution by the Jews

It is very important to note that persecution against the Christians until the Neronian Roman State persecution (c. 64–68 AD) was of Jewish origin (Jn. 20:19; Acts 4:1–3, 15–21; 5:17–33, 46; 6:8–15; 7:54–59; 8:1–3; 9:1–2, 23; 12:3, 11; 13:45–51; 14:2, 4–6, 19; 17:5–9, 13; 18:12–17; 19:29–33; 20:1–3, 17–19, 22–23; 21:10–14, 27–31; 22:21–23, 30; 23:12–13, 20–21, 30; 24:5–9, 27; 25:1–3, 7, 14–16, 24–25; 26:2, 21; 28:19, 22; 2 Cor. 11:24; 1 Thess. 2:14–16).

To the Jews, Jesus had been an imposter, a false messiah and blasphemer who deserved to die the death, in spite of his credentialed ministry through signs and wonders (Matt. 26:59–66; 27:11–14, 22, 39–43; Mk. 14:55–66; 15:3, 12–13, 29–32; Lk. 22:63–71; 23:4–5, 21–23; Jn. 18:29–31, 35; 19:6–8, 12). Jewish Christians were thus apostates, followers of “the sect of the Nazarene” [followers of Jesus of Nazareth] or “The Way,” who should be put to death without mercy. The evangelistic success in the synagogues, and the signs and wonders done by the Apostles and others, who were all Jews, only infuriated the Jewish leaders.

The Jewish view of the world was that God loved the Jewish nation, and the Gentiles [τὰ ἔθνη, “the nations,” i.e., all non-Jews] were only fit for Divine judgment. This was for them a life-and-death matter (Acts 22:21–23; 23:12–13; 25:24). Jewish Messianic expectation was national and political, not spiritual. Its idea of the kingdom was the same (Deut. 28:13). This is clearly seen in the interview between our Lord and Nicodemus and the correcting dissertation of our Lord to Nicodemus and to the Samaritan woman (Jn. 3:1–21; 4:3–26).

Jewish exclusiveness, which excluded all Gentiles and a traditional jealousy concerning the Law of Moses,

circumcision, the “Tradition of the Elders,” rituals and ceremonies, tainted even the Jerusalem Church and called forth the first church council or conference (Acts 11:1–18; 15:1–32; 21:17–21).

Note: The Jews were the troublesome people of the Roman Republic and later Empire because of their Scriptures, strict monotheism and religious, social and moral practices (Acts 18:2). They were accommodated by Rome and given the status of a *religio licita* or legal religion (c. 63 BC), despite their refusal to accommodate polytheistic idolatry and acknowledge Emperor worship, an integral part of Greco–Roman polytheistic society and culture. Christianity, however, as it revealed itself as distinct from and not a mere sect of Judaism, was considered a *religio illicita*, or illegal religion. During the later Roman Imperial persecutions of Christianity (c. 64–313 AD), the test of loyalty or persecution and death was either *Καίσαρ Κύριος* [“Caesar is Lord”] or *Χρῖστος Κύριος* [“Christ is Lord”].

Religion brings out both the best and the worst in fallen, sinful mankind—the deepest, greatest, self–sacrificing love or the greatest hatred and inhumane actions toward fellow–man. The history of most religions is steeped in blood. Consider the imprisonment, torture rack and burning stake for those apart from the Romish medieval state church and the awful persecution, mutilations and executions of Christians in and by modern Islamic states.

Tongues: Pentecostal or Corinthian?

The supernatural gift of tongues at Pentecost was unique. The Disciples were all Galileans, clearly spoke with a Galilean accent (Acts 2:1–15ff), yet were enabled to intelligently preach “the wonderful works of God” in at least eighteen different languages without any prior knowledge or interpreter. Such an incident was and has never been repeated. The gift of tongues was anticipated in Mark’s Gospel (Mk. 16:17), is noted again at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:46) and at Ephesus (Acts 19:6).

In these last two instances, nothing is stated concerning whether or not these tongues needed an interpreter; in both instances, the tongues were self-authenticating. In these latter cases, tongues were a sign, not to the speakers themselves, but to the Jews who were witnesses and needed to confirm the conversion of the Gentiles—a great departure from Jewish expectation and religious, racial and cultural norms (Acts 11:1–18).

The problematic passage is 1 Cor. Chapters 12–14. This seems to be the only church where speaking in tongues caused disruption and confusion. Carefully note the following: first, tongues was a minor gift and may have been imitated by some who wanted to be thought “spiritual.” These evidently had no idea of what they were saying (1 Cor. 12:3–11, 29–31).

Second, the word “unknown” in its six occurrences associated with “tongues” is italicized, and must be omitted from the text. The reference is not to ecstatic utterances, but to definite languages or the interpretation would be completely arbitrary (1 Cor. 14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27).

Third, tongues was evidently a temporary gift, to be exercised in the infancy of the church before the establishment and maturity of the Christian religion in the world and the completion of the scriptural canon (1 Cor. 13:1, 8–13).

Fourth, a continuing gift of tongues would be a continuation of Divine revelation and a denial of the completed canon of Scripture.

In Chapter 14, and fifth, the best and greatest gifts should be desired—prophecy [i.e., intelligent preaching], not tongues (1 Cor. 14:1–5).

Sixth, the gift was meaningless to others unless the tongue was interpreted (14:5–18), and it was better, i.e., more profitable to speak five words with understanding to edify others than ten thousands words in a meaningless occurrence which could not edify (14:19).

Seventh, prophesying or intelligent preaching was for the persuasion of unbelievers. If there were gibberish [ecstatic utterances], he would think the speakers were insane (14:22–26)!

Eighth, speaking had to be done in order, with interpreters present to interpret; if there were no interpreter present, the speaker had to refrain himself, which necessarily meant that the speakers had and exhibited self-control (14:26–33).

Ninth, the women were not allowed to speak out in the assembly, but were to remain silent. This would also evidently include speaking in tongues (14:34–35). This was in accord with 1 Tim. 2:8–14 and Titus 2:3–5.

Note: The place of women in the church has been a constant source of debate. Scripture must not be pitted against Scripture, or its self-attesting nature and its authority would be denied. In 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul writes “but to teach [διδάσκειν], a woman, I do not allow, nor to usurp authority over the man.” This is emphatic by word-order, and the comma in the Eng. Version designates two issues: A woman is not to be in a teaching position in the church, and she is not to usurp the man’s authority. In Tit. 2:3–5, the context is clearly practical teaching by example or encouragement and not officially to be in a teaching position. Scripture is coherent; not contradictory.

Concluding observations and remarks: first, nowhere in these accounts is “speaking in tongues” equated with “the baptism in or with the Holy Spirit” except Pentecost. To designate this as the common experience of such a “baptism” was simply unscriptural.

Second, tongues were never promoted as a means of assurance, i.e., one was “saved,” then later “sanctified”—a two-stage Christian experience.

Third, such gifts were only to be exercised by the men of the assembly; women were to remain silent.

Fourth, concerning the “baptism in or with the Holy Spirit:” The Lord Jesus Christ was the administrator, not the Holy Spirit. He baptized in or with the Holy Spirit, not the reverse. 1 Cor. 12:13 has been misinterpreted (Matt. 3:11; Mk.

1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:15–17). Those passages which assume the reverse, i.e., that “the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the body of Christ” (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27–28; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:11–13) refer to the believer’s union with Christ under the figure of baptism or identification.

Finally, the modern tongues phenomenon is Corinthian, not Pentecostal; it is based on the descendants of Wesleyan perfectionist teaching, which gave rise to the modern holiness movements.

Miracles, Signs and Wonders

The earthly ministry of our Lord was characterized by miracles [δύναμις, “power, a mighty work”], wonders [τέρας, “a wonder or sign”] and signs [σημεῖον, “sign, token, miracle”] (Jn. 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:48; 6:2, 26; 7:31; 9:16; 11:47; 12:37; Acts 2:22; 10:38), to credential his claims as the promised Messiah and Son of God (Acts 2:22; 10:38–43). This element of the miraculous and supernatural was necessary for the Jews, who “required a sign” as evidence of a Divine commission and message (Jn. 2:18; 4:47–50; 6:30; 20:30–31; 1 Cor. 1:22–23).

The Apostolic ministry, empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit sent down from the ascended Christ (Acts 1:1–2; 2:32–36) was necessarily accompanied by such phenomena to credential both the ministry and the gospel message.

Such supernatural works were performed through the impulse and leading of the Holy Spirit—not the initiative of the person himself—and used of God to mightily impress both Jews and Gentiles, further credential the gospel ministry and demonstrate the superior power of God over the magical arts and occultism of paganism (13:6–12; 19:11–20).

There are four realities to consider: first, these were temporary gifts which would cease with the establishment of Christianity and the completion of the canon of Scripture (1 Cor. 13:8–13). Second, it must be noted that in addition to the Apostles, Stephen performed miracles (4:29–31; 6:8; 13:50–14:3). Third, many miracles, signs and wonders are stated *en*

masse (2:43; 4:30–31; 5:12–16; 6:8; 8:6–7; 14:3; 19:11–20; 28:8–9; 2 Cor. 12:12).

Finally, other miracles are considered in a given context individually for vividness and attention according to Luke's purpose and emphasis: the miracle of eighteen different discernable languages spoken at Pentecost and the conversion of 3,000 (2:1ff), the healing of the man lame from birth and the conversion of 5,000 (3:1–11; 4:4), the healing of Aeneas by Peter and the conversion of two cities (9:32–35), the raising of Dorcas from the dead and the subsequent conversion of a multitude (9:36–42).

The negative miracle: Elymas the sorcerer was stricken with blindness by Paul, led and Spirit-filled, and the result was the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul of Cyprus (13:6–12), the healing of the man lame from birth at Lystra and the subsequent events (14:8–18), the demon cast out of the demon-possessed girl, the subsequent beating, conversion of the jailer and the establishment of the church at Philippi (16:16–40), the raising of Eutychus from the dead (20:9–12) and the non-effect of the serpent's bite on Paul and the resultant healing ministry and kindness of the native people at Malta (2:3–10).

The Major Events in Acts

As the Acts of the Apostles is a historical work and arranged as the narrative of the first three decades of New Testament Christianity, there are certain events which are pivotal. The first is the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost which was the empowering of the New Testament church as the God-ordained institution for this gospel economy (Acts Chap. 2). As with the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 40) and Solomon's Temple (1 Kgs. 8), the Spirit of God, as had the *Shekinah*, marked out the institution of the already-existent New Testament church. This spiritual empowerment was absolutely essential for the fulfillment of the Divine purpose and the world-wide destiny of the gospel (1:8).

The next event was the beginning of the Jewish persecution of Christianity, which would ultimately end with the destruction of Jerusalem (c. 70–72). Such persecution reveals the true nature of mere religion devoid of spiritual truth and life. The truth of the gospel must be opposed, and often opposed by religion!

The third great and perhaps the most significant event was the conversion and call of Saul of Tarsus the persecutor to become the greatest Apostle and author of most of the New Testament (Acts Chap. 9). Paul's conversion and subsequent ministry stand as a testimony to the free and sovereign grace of God in salvation and the purpose of God worked out in faithful, self-sacrificing Christian service (1 Tim. 1:16).

The fourth event was the beginning of the first of the missionary journeys of Paul and his associates, revealing the inspired pattern for world missions (Acts Chap. 13).

The fifth great and pivotal event was the transition from Jewish to predominantly Gentile Christianity (Acts Chaps. 8, 10, 13ff). Judaism had become a dead religion, steeped in tradition, narrowed by race, culture, religious exclusivism and devoid of spiritual life.

This narrowness and an Old Testament mentality even affected the Jerusalem church. The great evangelistic and missionary church was in Antioch of Syria. This led to the Jerusalem council or conference which sought to deal with the Judaizing party and teaching (Acts Chap. 15). This conference proved to be a failure as the Judaizers followed Paul's ministry, sought to pervert the gospel and seduce his converts (e.g., the Galatian Epistle, 2 Cor. 11, etc.).

The final pivotal event was the entrance of the gospel into Europe (Acts 16). This would ultimately determine both the future of Christianity and that of Western Civilization, led to the fall of pagan Rome, spread throughout the continent and Britain through various groups separate from the Romish state church, prepared for the Sixteenth Century Reformation, the

great evangelical revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From Western Christianity, the great missionary movements would begin which have circled the globe.

The western movement of Christianity was all the more strategic with the later rise of Islam in the sixth century and its domination throughout the Middle and Near East, Northern Africa and to the eastern and southern borders of Europe. See what a single event might ultimately mean—Paul’s vision and short sailing trip across the Aegean Sea from Troas to Philippi—through the leading of the Spirit in the overall purpose of God.

The Apostles Peter and Paul

The Book of Acts, as has been noted, can be divided into two parts according to the ministries and prominence of these two Apostles: Peter (Chapters 1–12) and Paul (Chapters 13–28). Baxter⁴¹³ has an interesting parallel of the two Apostles:

Peter	Paul
First recorded Sermon (2:14–40)	First recorded Sermon (13:15–41)
Lame Man Healed (3:1–8)	Lame Man Healed (14:8–10)
Simon the Sorcerer (8:10– 13, 18–24)	Elymas the Sorcerer (13:6–11)
Healing influence of a shadow (5:12–16)	Healing influence of a handkerchief (19:11–12)
Laying on of Hands (8:14–17)	Laying on of Hands (19:1–7)
Peter Worshipped (10:24–26)	Paul Worshipped (14:11–18)
Tabitha Raised from the Dead (12:36–42)	Eutychus Raised from the Dead (20:7–12)

⁴¹³ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, VI, p. 12.

Peter Imprisoned (12:3–10)	Paul Imprisoned (24:27ff; 28:30–31)
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Peter: A Brief Chronology and Harmony

The predominant personalities in Acts are the Apostles Peter and Paul. The other Apostles are incidentally mentioned in the first chapter by name (1:13–14) and later collectively (2:14; 6:2–3, 6; 8:1, 14; 9:27; 11:1; 15:2ff). At times, John is mentioned with Peter (Chaps. 3–4, 8). Even the book itself may be divided between the respective ministries of these two Apostles: Peter (Chaps. 1–12) and Paul (Chaps. 13–28).

The events of the later life and ministry of Peter are largely based on early tradition from the church fathers. The time markers: his conversion and call at the beginning of Christ's ministry (c. 26–27 AD), Christ's passion and resurrection (30 AD), the Jerusalem Church Council (50 AD) and the traditional date of his martyrdom (c. 64 AD).

1: Early Life (c. 6 BC?–26 AD)

Harmony: Mk. 1:16, 29–30; Lk. 5:10; Jn. 1:40, 44;
1 Cor. 9:5.⁴¹⁴

Simon Peter (Σίμων) derives from “Simeon” (Heb: שִׁמְעוֹן, “heard”) whom our Lord named “Peter,” (Gk: Πέτρος) or “Cephas” (Aram: קֶפָּחַס, “rock, stone, pebble”) was the son of Jonas, a fisherman by trade and evidently in a prosperous business with his brother, Andrew, and James and John the sons of Zebedee.

He was married and had a commodious home on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum. His age is unknown, but it may be assumed that he was close to the age of our Lord [born c. 6–4 BC?]. Tradition holds him to be almost forty years of age when converted and called by our Lord [?].

⁴¹⁴ Some hold that the leading about of a wife referred to their wives accompanying them on their later missionary sojourns; others, to the idea of having a wife and being her head or leader.

2: Conversion and Call (26–27 AD)

Harmony: Matt. 4:18; Mk. 3:14–16; Lk. 5:1–11;
6:13–14; Jn. 1:40–42.

The conversion of Peter occurred on his first meeting with our Lord through the testimony of his brother, Andrew. Jesus named him “Peter,” a “rock.” Both were later called as Disciples and immediately left their occupations and followed him. Peter evidently left the fishing business to members of his family or to his partners.

3: As a Disciple

during Jesus’ Earthly Ministry (27–30 AD)

Harmony: There are many more references [113]
to Simon Peter in the Gospels than any other Disciple.

He was perhaps the oldest and was the natural leader among the Disciples, and often their spokesman. Peter, together with James and John, formed the inner circle of our Lord’s Disciples.

Their life–long, close friendship continued. They alone were with him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–9; Mk. 9:1–9; Lk. 9:28–36), at the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:36–43; Lk. 8:46–53), and closest to him during his garden agony (Mk. 14:32–35). Peter and John were the first to reach the tomb after the resurrection (Jn. 20:1–8). And there was a personal concern and closeness between the two (Jn. 13:21–24; 21:17–24).

By nature, Peter was transparent, bold (Matt. 14:25–32), impetuous (e.g., Jn. 13:4–10), at times very courageous to the point of irrationality;⁴¹⁵ at other times cowardly (Jn. 18:16–27), usually the first to speak out (Matt. 16:13–17; Mk. 8:27–30), vehement in repentance (Matt. 26:69–75; Lk. 22:31–34, 54–62) and manifesting a great devotion to our Lord (Matt. 16:13–23).

⁴¹⁵ At Jesus’ arrest he single–handedly faced an army of over 500 men and was ready to die, later he was unwilling to live for our Lord, denying him. Without grace, we are all weak.

Satan attacked Peter at the very height of his devotion to and concern for our Lord, and he was severely rebuked (Matt. 16:20–23). In a time of weakness and self-confidence, Peter denied our Lord thrice, then repented in bitter tears (Matt. 26:58, 69–75; Lk. 22:54–62).

Peter and John, often noted together, were the first to reach the tomb after the women's report (Lk. 24:12; Jn. 20:1–7). With the uncertainty of the immediate future after our Lord's resurrection, Peter returned to his fishing business and Lord met with him and the other Disciples, testing Peter's love (Jn. 21:1–22). After forty days of teaching and association, Jesus takes Peter and the other ten Disciples outside Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, commissions them and then ascends into heaven (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:19–20; Lk. 24:44–53; Acts 1:1–11).

4: From Jesus' Ascension to the Jerusalem Council (30–50 AD)

Harmony: Acts 1:1–11, 13–22; 2:1–40; 3:1–26; 4:1–23;
5:1–15, 29–33; 8:14–25; 9:32–43; 10:5–48; 11:1–18;
12:3–18; 15:7–11; Gal. 1:18; 2:7–22.

Peter, who had been the spokesman for and preeminent among the Disciples during our Lord's earthly ministry, assumed a leading role in the life and ministry of the early church at Jerusalem. He was the inspired preacher on the day of Pentecost when 3,000 were converted (Acts 2), the Spirit-filled healer of the impotent man in Acts 3, and followed this with a great sermon at which 5,000 men were converted.

He was the chief spokesman before the Sanhedrin, defending the truth of the gospel and suffering at their hands (Chaps. 4–5). He was led of the Spirit to confront and question Ananias and Sapphira and declare their immediate death under Divine judgment (5:1–11). He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to work uncommon miracles as the leader in Jerusalem (5:12–16). Peter was the leading Apostle who confronted Simon the Sorcerer in Samaria with his great sin of seeking to purchase the power of God (8:14–25).

After the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and the end of the first Jewish persecution, the churches in Judea, Samaria and Galilee were given a reprieve (9:26–31). Peter traveled throughout Judea preaching and saw two great spiritual awakenings at Lydda and Saron and beyond as the result of the healing of Aeneas (9:32–36) and the raising of Dorcas from the dead (9:36–43).

He was used of God to open the door to the Gentiles with the gospel through conversion of the household of Cornelius (10:1–48; 15:7–11). The Lord had to prepare both Cornelius and Peter for this momentous event, overcoming the narrow religious, racial and cultural barriers. Peter had to defend himself upon his return to the church at Jerusalem (11:1–18).

After the martyrdom of James, Peter was imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I, and was scheduled to be executed after the Passover (12:1–4). Intercessory prayer was constantly offered up for him by the Jerusalem church and he was delivered just hours before his scheduled execution. He then departed to another place (12:5–17).

The next time he is mentioned in Acts is at the first church council or conference (15:7–11). He had a later meeting in Jerusalem with Paul and another meeting with him at Antioch, when Paul confronted him concerning the racial and cultural implications of the gospel (Gal. 2:1–22). Peter's final word concerning Paul referred to him as "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Pet. 3:15–16).

5: From the Jerusalem Council to His Martyrdom (c. 50–64 AD)

Harmony: 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 1 Pet. 1:1; 5:13;
2 Pet. 3:15–16; Epistles of 1 & 2 Peter.

The later life of Peter is unknown in Scripture, except for the reference to "Babylon" (1 Pet. 5:13). Babylon was the great eastern center of Judaism and was home to a vast number of Jews. Peter evidently evangelized in that area of the Middle East. At the end of his life, he wrote his two Epistles addressed

to the churches of Asia Minor, implying his relation and possible ministry to them (1 Pet. 1:1). From various references, it is possible that he even visited Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5). Early tradition [end of first century–second century] states that Peter was brought to Rome and crucified during the Neronian persecution (Jn. 21:18–19).

Note: the Gospel according to Mark was written by John Mark (Acts 12:12, 15; 15:37–39; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:13), who traditionally put in writing the inspired reminiscences of Peter concerning the life and ministry of our Lord (Jn. 14:26; 16:13–15).

Note: The church is not built upon Peter or his profession, but upon the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The play on words is from “Peter” [σὸν εἶ Πέτρος] a rock or pebble to “this rock” [ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ], referring to a great slab of bedrock (Matt. 16:13–19). Paul reinforces this latter meaning (1 Cor. 3:11).

Note: Matt. 16:19 does *not* speak of Papal prerogative or infallibility. The two periphrastic constructions, each with a fut. equitive vb. and a perf. pass. ptc. should be translated: “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have [already] been bound in heaven [ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς] : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have [already] been loosed in heaven [ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς].” The actions of the church are always responsive and obedient, never causative or initiatory.

Note: Romish tradition has Peter in Rome for 25 years [c. 40–64 AD] as the first Pontiff, and crucified there upside down, c. 64 AD. Paul, however, in his Epistle to the Romans (c. 58 AD) never mentions him, which would have been incomprehensible had Peter been the Bishop at Rome and of Rome (Rom. 16:3–16).

Note: The attempt to have Peter in Rome by spiritualizing “Babylon” (1 Pet. 5:13) would make Rome “the harlot of the earth,” and would hardly fit the Romish tradition (Rev. 17:5; 18:2,10, 21). The idea that “Babylon” is Rome has led to a Western paradigm for eschatology rather than a Middle Eastern paradigm. The rise of modern Islam as a political and religious world power should cause many to re–think the Western paradigm.

Paul: A Brief Chronology and Harmony

This brief biographical chronology and harmony have approximate dates. Paul was about the same age as our Lord and probably died c. 68 AD toward the end of the Neronian Persecution (c. 64–68). The six time markers are: the crucifixion (c. 30), the conversion of Paul (c. 33), the death of Herod Agrippa I (44), the expulsion of the Jews from Rome (52), the arrival of Porcius Festus as Procurator of Judea (59) and the Neronian Persecution (64–68).⁴¹⁶

Introduction

The single greatest event in Christianity after the Incarnation, earthly ministry, crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. In this one event, Christianity would lose its greatest persecutor, gain its greatest Apostle and the author of most of the New Testament.⁴¹⁷ Paul would preach more, suffer more (2 Cor. 11:21–33), write more, travel more and establish more churches than any other preacher of the first century—or any other century—by the grace of God (1 Cor. 15:8–10).

1: The Pre-Conversion Life of Paul (c. 4 BC–33 AD)

Harmony: Acts 22:27–29; 26:5–12; Gal. 1:16–17; Phil. 3:4–6.

Paul (Heb. name: ^אפ^לול^וס, “asked for;” Lat: *Paulus*; Gk. Παῦλος, “little”) was born “a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee” (Acts 23:6), the strictest sect of Judaism, from the Tribe of Benjamin (Acts 26:5; Phil. 3:4–6¹). His family had been granted Roman citizenship for some great service to the Emperor (Acts 22:27–29). Thus, his family had high social and political standing.

⁴¹⁶ Nero committed suicide in June of 68 AD.

⁴¹⁷ If Paul authored Hebrews, then he surpassed the writings of Luke by one short Epistle.

He was born and spent his formative years in Tarsus of Cilicia, one of the three great university cities of the empire [Tarsus, Athens and Alexandria]. Daily in the agora, as he plied the family trade, he would have seen and heard the philosophers and orators expounding their views.

Paul himself, especially after his conversion, was an accomplished orator and philosopher, revealing a breadth of learning, oratorical prowess and a keen mind which always grasped the given situation (e.g., Acts 17:22–34; 23:6; 26:1–29), in addition to being Divinely-inspired in given circumstances. He may have attended the university or debated the philosophers in the several silent years between his conversion, three years in Arabia and his removal to Antioch in addition to his early evangelistic labors (Gal. 1:16–17; Acts 11:22–26).

Note: Before the philosophical Council at Athens, Paul declared Christianity as a world-and-life-view, quoted several minor Greek poets and concisely brought “Jesus and the resurrection” into their redemptive and historical context in sweeping terms (Cf. Acts 17:18). Before Porcius Festus and King Agrippa II, Paul spoke in a powerful, elevated, prophetic manner of declaration [ἀποφθέγγομαι],⁴¹⁸ then challenged Agrippa, turned the latter’s ‘play on words’ upon himself and then dramatically lifted his hands to emphasize his chains.

Every Jew had at least three obligations to his son: to circumcise him, to teach him the law and to teach him a trade. Paul entered the family business of working *cilicium*, the dark goat’s hair cloth, about age six. *Cilicium* was used for outer garments and tents (2 Tim. 2:15). Paul plied this trade throughout his later missionary journeys, often supporting himself and his associates (Acts 18:3; 20:34).

Traditionally, young men began to train for the rabbinical office at age thirteen. Paul went to Jerusalem to train at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest rabbinical teacher of that era (Acts

⁴¹⁸ See p. 497 and note 6.

5:34ff; 22:3). Rabbis had to be steeped in the Scriptures both in Hebrew and Greek, all of the intricacies of Judaism and the Tradition of the Elders. They also had to be conversant in the various Greek philosophies to defend their beliefs. God was preparing Paul for his future life's work, though he knew it not.

The debate with and stoning of Stephen (c. 33). Paul, in his late thirties at the time, and evidently the Rabbi of the Libertine and Cilician Synagogue, lost his one and only debate. He could not prevail against the young, Spirit-filled Stephen (Acts 6:8–15). This humiliating defeat and his own self-righteousness moved him to become the great, intractable persecutor of Christians (Acts 7:54–60; 26:9–11).

Contemporary persons: Caesar Tiberias (14–37), Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea (26–36); Joseph Caiaphas, Jewish High Priest (c. 25–36). Contemporary events: The crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord (c. 30) (Matt. 27–28 ; Mk. 15–16 ; Lk. 23–24 ; Jn. 18–21) and the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (c. 30) (Acts 2); the Sadduceean persecution of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 4–5); the stoning of Stephen (c. 33) (Acts 7: 51–8:1a) and Saul's systematic persecution of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 8:1–4).

2: The Conversion and Call of Paul (c. 33 AD)

Harmony: Acts 9:1–16, 20–25; 22:6–16; 26:13–18;
1 Cor. 15:8–10; 2 Cor. 11:32–33; Gal. 1:22–24.

Armed with letters of authority from the chief priests, Saul journeyed to Damascus to arrest Christians and have them brought bound to Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto Saul in a blinding light at noonday, revealing himself as very Lord and God.⁴¹⁹ Saul's life was immediately transformed. Saul's conversion and commission as an Apostle

⁴¹⁹ Paul's great claim to Apostleship was that he had personally seen and heard the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8–10) and manifested apostolic power and authority (2 Cor. 12:12).

to the Gentiles were immediate and conjoined. Upon his conversion he went into Arabia for three years, then returned to Damascus where his bold, short ministry infuriated the Jews and forced him to escape by a basket let down over the city wall (Acts 9:20–25; 2 Cor. 11:32–33).

3: The Interlude and Home Missions of Paul (c. 36–47 AD)

Harmony: Gal. 1:17–24; Acts 9:20–25, 30; 11:22–30; 22:17–21; 2 Cor. 4:5–18; 11:22–28; 12:1–9; Phil. 1:20–24.

After his return from Arabia and escape from Damascus, Saul went to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18–21), then returned to Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:30; 22:17–21; Gal. 1:19–21). He remained at Tarsus for several years.⁴²⁰

It is during these formative years he had the heavenly translation into the third heaven,⁴²¹ and suffered some of the privations, great trials and persecutions he later recounted to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:22–28; 12:1–9). The heavenly transport into the third heaven so affected him that his remaining life was little compared to the glory of heaven; this prepared him to endure and persevere in his life of suffering (2 Cor. 4:5–18; Phil. 1:20–24).

Barnabas sought out Paul at Tarsus and brought him to help in the ministry at Antioch. This continued for about one year (Acts 11:29–26). Paul made his second trip to Jerusalem with relief for its church (Acts 11:27–30).

Contemporary persons and events: Caesars: death of Tiberius (14–37) and accession of Gaius [Caligula] (37–41), death of Caligula and accession of Claudius (41–54). Roman Procurators of Judea: Cuspius Fadus, (44–46), Tiberias Julius

⁴²⁰ The estimates of this time period vary from 5 to 10 years.

⁴²¹ Paul's transport into the third heaven to view unspeakable realities prepared him for and sustained through his ministry with its awful sufferings and his attitude toward life and death (Phil. 1:19–23; 2 Cor. 4:8–18).

Alexander (46–48). Jewish High Priests: Jonathan ben Ananus (36–37), Theophilus ben Ananus (37–41), Simon Cantatheras ben Boethus (41–43), Matthias ben Ananus (43), Elioneus ben Simon Cantatheras (43–44), Jonathan ben Ananus (restored, 44), Josephus ben Camyodus (44–46), Ananias ben Nebedeus (46–58). Martyrdom of James the Brother of John (Acts 12:1–2) (44). Death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:18–23) (44). **The Epistle of James** (44–46).

4: The First Missionary Journey of Paul
(c. 48–49 AD)

Harmony: Acts 13:1–14:26; Galatians; 2 Tim. 3:10–12; 4:9–12.

The thrust toward world missions moved from Jerusalem to the Syrian Antioch, a predominantly Gentile church. The Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas for a missionary ministry. After prayer, laying on of hands and being sent by the church, they departed by ship for Cyprus and regions beyond. They took John Mark as their attendant,⁴²² but he left from Paphos in Cyprus and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:1–13).

Their mission took them to Cyprus and to the regions of Southern Galatia⁴²³—Pamphlyia, Pisidia, Phrygia and Lycaonia. Cities: Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Their ministry was beset by both great success and great opposition. Paul was stoned and left for dead at Lystra by the Jews. Paul and Barnabas re-visited these new churches and established them in the faith, then returned to the Syrian Antioch and reported to the church.

Contemporary persons and events: Ventidius Cumanus, Roman Procurator of Judea (48–53). Herod Agrippa II made King of Chalcis (48). **The Epistle to the Galatians** (48–49).

⁴²² John Mark took care of peripheral and incidental matters as their attendant or helper [ὑπηρέτης]. He had not been set aside by either God or the church to this ministry.

⁴²³ The Southern Galatian view is in accord with geography; the old Northern Galatian theory is not.

5: The Jerusalem Council (c. 50 AD)

Harmony: Acts 15:1-35; Gal. 2:1-21.

The “first Church Council” was called to deal with the Judaizing Party⁴²⁴ from Jerusalem which sought to require circumcision of Gentile converts, perverting the Gospel of grace. The Apostles and church messengers concluded that such was heresy. However, the Judaizers continued to dog the steps of Paul and sought to subvert his ministry among the Gentles. Thus, the Jerusalem conference failed to end the controversy. After the Jerusalem conference, Peter came down to Antioch and was reproved by Paul for his inconsistency (Gal. 2:11-21).

6: The Second Missionary Journey of Paul
(c. 51-53 AD)

Harmony: Acts 15:36-18:22; Rom. 16:3, 21-23;
1 Thess. 2:1-14; 2 Thess. 1 Tim. 1:2; 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:2, 5-6.

Paul’s second missionary journey was much more extensive than the first. At the outset, Paul and Barnabas part company because the latter was adamant on taking John Mark once again. Paul then took Silas⁴²⁵ and visited the churches established on the first journey. They began in Cilicia, possibly with churches established by Paul early in his years at Tarsus. In the region of Lycaonia, they added Timothy to their party (Acts 16:1ff).

After going throughout the region and being forbidden by the Spirit to go into Asia Minor, they continued to Troas (Acts 16:4-8). Here, through a vision, Paul sailed into Europe. At Philippi Luke was added to the missionary group. There Paul

⁴²⁴ The Judaizers or the Circumcision Party” demanded that Gentile believers be circumcised, or become Jews to become Christians (1 Cor. 15:1ff). These continued to follow Paul’s ministry and sought to subvert it.

⁴²⁵ Silas was a Roman citizen. Barnabas may not have been; this was providential, as Paul and his companion would receive equal treatment (Acts 16:37).

and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, but the Lord established the first church in Europe (Acts 16:9–40). They traveled south to Thessalonica and experienced both a spiritual awakening and Jewish opposition (Acts 17:1–10), from there to Berea (Acts 17:10–14), from Berea, again because of Jewish opposition, Paul left the group and was taken to Athens by ship (Acts 17:15–34).

At Athens, Paul evangelized daily in the agora, then was taken before the Areopagus to give an account of his teaching. He delivered a masterful oration¹ on Christianity as a world–and–life view, gave a biblical philosophy of human history, declared the true nature of God, quoted several minor Greek poets and put “Jesus and the resurrection” in their rightful historical and redemptive context. Some mocked. Some procrastinated. Some believed.

He may have planted a church at Athens, although no epistle was ever sent to the believers there. From Athens, he sailed to Corinth where he met Aquilla and Priscilla who were also workers of *cilicium*. There he remained for almost two years after an encouraging vision (Acts 18:9–10), and witnessed the establishment of several churches. From Corinth, he wrote two Epistles to the Thessalonians.

Note: From his second missionary journey onward through his two Roman imprisonments, Paul used his associates to carry his letters to the various churches.

Paul’s stay at Corinth ended some time after a riot instigated by Jewish opposition. The Greeks beat the leading rabbi of the synagogue. Paul, with Aquilla and Priscilla, sailed to Syria with a short stay at Ephesus, intending to return after the Feast at Jerusalem (Acts 18:19–23).

Contemporary persons and events: Marcus Antonius Felix, Roman Procurator of Judea (51–59). Emperor Claudius Caesar commands all Jews to depart from Rome (52). Martyrdom of Philip the Apostle (53). **Epistles of 1 & 2 Thessalonians** (51–52). **The Gospel of Mark** (50–55).

7: The Third Missionary Journey of Paul
(c. 53–57)

Harmony: Acts 18:23–21:15; Rom. 15:18–29; 16:1–23;
1 Cor. 1:11–16; 3:1–12; 4:6; 5:1–11; 16:1–9;
2 Cor. 1:8; 2:12–13; 7:5–16; 8:1–24; 9:1–16;
2 Tim. 4:11, 19–20; Tit. 3:12–13.

The third and final missionary journey of the Apostle Paul was the longest in time and most encompassing in distance. He re-visited almost all the churches from his previous journeys in the southern regions and settled for three years at Ephesus. There he experienced a great spiritual awakening, the sixth under his ministry.⁴²⁶ While at Ephesus, he wrote three Epistles to the Corinthian Church.⁴²⁷ He had determined to leave and go through Macedonia before going to Jerusalem for the feast before the uproar of Demetrius and the silversmiths occurred (Acts 19:23–20:1).

A conspiracy of the Jews caused him to go through Macedonia [from Philippi to Corinth] and then re-trace his steps. While at Corinth, he dictated the Epistle to the Romans. This was his *magnum opus*, a true philosophy of the Christian religion.⁴²⁸ He sailed back toward Syria stopping at Troas, Assos, Mitylene and Miletus to bid farewell to and admonish the Ephesian elders, then to Rhodes and Patara, across to Tyre, by-passing Cyprus. He landed at Tyre, then to Ptolemais, and finally at Caesarea. He went up to Jerusalem, in spite of continual prophetic warnings (Acts 20:22–24; 21:4, 10–14).

Contemporary persons and events: Nero, Caesar (54–68).
Epistles: **1 & 2 Corinthians** (53–57), **Romans** (57–58).

⁴²⁶ Paul experienced spiritual awakenings or revivals at the Pisidian Antioch (13:14–49), Iconium (14:1ff), Thessalonica (17:1–4), Berea (17:10–12), Corinth (18:1–11) and Ephesus (19:1–20).

⁴²⁷ The first Epistle, now lost (1Cor. 5:9), then 1 & 2 Corinthians in our NT Canon.

⁴²⁸ Although not as profound as Ephesians, Romans is the most inclusive and thorough of Paul's Epistles.

8: The First Prison Ministry of Paul
(c. 57–63 AD)

Harmony: Acts 20:22–26; 21:4, 10–14, 27–28:31;
Rom. 15:25–31; Eph. 6:18–24; Phil. 1:12–26;
2:17–30; 4:10–22; Col. 4:7–18; 2 Tim. 1:3, 11–18;
Tit. 1:5, 12–16; Phlm. 22–24.

Paul was seized by the Jews on suspicion of desecrating the Temple; the charge was false, but he remained in prison through intrigue, attempted assassination and political expediency for some three years at Caesarea (57–60), and he was finally forced to appeal to Caesar as a Roman citizen. After a hazardous sailing trip and shipwreck at Malta, he was held at Rome for more than two more years (61–63).

During this first Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote his most profound Epistles: Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians, with a personal letter to Philemon. In the latter two, he implies his expected acquittal. At this point, the Book of Acts ends.

Note: According to Phil. 1:12–13, Paul stood before the Praetorian Court [πραιτώριον],⁴²⁹ which was comprised of Caesar, the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard and twenty Roman Senators as assessors. Evidently Paul declared to them his gospel. Thus, he would be well-known to Nero as a ringleader of the Christians when the persecution against Christians began a year later.

Contemporary persons and events: Roman Procurators of Judea: Porcius Festus (59–61), Albinus (61–65). Jewish High Priests: Ananias ben Nebedeus (46–58), Jonathan (58), Ishmael ben Fabus (restored? 58–62), Joseph Cabi ben Simon (62–63), Ananus ben Ananus (63), Joshua ben Damneus (63) and Joshua ben Gamla (63–64). Martyrdom of James the Just (61). Biblical Books: **The Gospel of Luke** (58–61), **The Gospel of Matthew**

⁴²⁹ The term “palace” [τῷ πραιτωρίῳ] in Phil. 1:12–13 is the Praetorium, where Paul stood as a Roman, not the Praetorian Guard barracks. He was in his own rented house (Acts 28:30–31).

(60–66), **Acts** (63). The Pauline Epistles: **Colossians** (61–62), **Ephesians** (62–63), **Philippians** (63) and **Philemon** (63).

9: The Interlude (c. 64–67 AD)

Harmony: Phil. 1:19–26; 2:19–24; 1 Tim. 3:14–15; 4:13;
2 Tim. 4:13–15, 20; Tit. 1:5; Phlm. 22–24.

Assuming that Paul's acquittal became a reality, his intentions to re-visit the churches in Macedonia and Asia Minor were fulfilled. He evidently left Titus in Crete and wintered in Nicopolis, which reveals the extent of his travels from the Aegean to the Adriatic Sea. His anticipated visit to Spain is questionable but possible. It seems that he was re-arrested at Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:13–15) and subsequently brought to Rome.

Contemporary events: The Great Fire at Rome (64), which destroyed almost half the city. The insane Emperor Nero instigated this inferno, intending to rebuild the city and rename after himself—Neropolis. He fixed the blame upon the Christians and the first great Roman State persecution of Christians began. Christians died in the most horrible manner, often as human torches for Nero's garden parties.

Paul was evidently arrested and re-imprisoned at Rome, this time as a Christian leader (67–68). Martyrdom of Barnabas (64). Biblical Books: **1 Timothy** (63–64), **Titus** (63–64), **Hebrews** (64–66).

10: The Final Imprisonment and Martyrdom of Paul
(c. 67–68 AD)

Harmony: 2 Tim. 1:15–17; 2:8–10; 4:6–22.

Paul was now in his second and final Roman imprisonment and awaiting martyrdom as a Christian leader. The final word we possess comes from his pen to Timothy, whom he longs to see as his beloved son in the faith as he suffers from the cold in his cell—and he wants his cloak and books, especially the Scriptures! Paul was probably martyred in the spring of 68, just before Nero committed suicide (June,

68) and the first great Roman State persecution of Christians ended.

Contemporary persons and events: Nero committed suicide in June of 68. Paul and Peter were martyred during this time. The remaining Apostles and most of the companions of Paul martyred during this first government persecution: John Mark, Aristarchus, Aquilla and Priscilla, Epaphras, Andronicus, Junia, Silas, Onesiphorus, Matthias; Prochorus, Parmenas and Nicanor [three of the first deacons], Trophimus, Onesimus, etc. Biblical Books: **1 & 2 Peter** (64–68), **Jude** (67–68) and **2 Timothy** (67)

Paul’s own epitaph is a testimony to a life lived to the utmost in the service of God and for his glory: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:6–7).

Note: The language is as elegant, dramatic and as filled with pathos as any of his orations. The fullness of the Gk. with its emphatic word–order and use of the perfect tense: “For I am now ready to be poured out as a libation, and the time to pull up stakes has come upon me. The good fight I have fought up to the very last stand, the course I have run up to the finish line without slacking, the faith I have kept without the slightest deviation.”⁴³⁰

A Chronological Analysis and Survey of Acts

As the one book of the New Testament devoted to the earliest history of Christianity, a three–fold Chronological Analysis and Survey of Acts is suitable as an explanation, expansion and interpretation of the key–verse, Acts 1:8...

⁴³⁰ ⁶ Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδομαι, καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἀναλύσεώς μου ἐφέστηκεν. ⁷ τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγώνισμαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα·

- I. The Era of Jewish Christianity: (c. 30–35 AD) (Acts 1:12–8:4)
“...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...in Jerusalem ...”
- II. The Era of Transition: (c. 35–48 AD) (Acts 8:5–13:2) “...and in all Judaea, and in Samaria...”
- III. The Era of Predominantly Gentile Christianity (c. 48–63 AD) (Acts 13:2–28:31) “...and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The following chronological analysis is an expansion of the previous outline. The major events or issues are in bold print:

Introduction: Prologue (Acts 1:1-11)

- A. The Formal address to Theophilus by Luke, a continuation of his Gospel account (See Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1–2).
- B. The Time–Frame. From the Resurrection to the Ascension of our Lord (40 Days) (Acts 1:3).
- C. The post–resurrection time was spent in activities which demonstrated the reality and nature of our Lord’s resurrection and his resurrection body (Cf. Matt. 28:9–20; Mk. 16:9–20; Lk. 24:13–51; Jn. 20:14–31; 21:1–25), and in giving his parting instruction to the Apostles (Acts 1:4–8).
- D. The anticipatory, final revelation and promise: the impending empowerment or Baptism with the Holy Spirit for the evangelization of the world (Acts 1:4–8).
- E. **The ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven** (Acts 1:9).

I

The Era of Jewish Christianity: (c. 30–35 AD)

(Acts 1:12–8:4)

“...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...in Jerusalem ...”

The Predominant Personality: The Apostle Peter

- A. The Time–Frame. From the Ascension of our Lord (40 Days) to the scattering of the Jerusalem church under Jewish persecution led by Saul of Tarsus and the beginning of the Samaritan ministry.

- B. Peter remains the leader of the Apostles until the transition to the ministry of Paul and predominantly Gentile Christianity in Acts Chapter 13.
- C. The Jerusalem church held a continuous prayer meeting and a business meeting.
 1. A unified prayer meeting of the Jerusalem church, which continued for ten days until the fullness of Pentecost (1:12–14). They had a definite promise for which to pray and a necessary spiritual enablement without which they could not function evangelistically.
 2. A business meeting to choose a replacement for Judas (1:15–26). Peter was evidently moved by the Spirit and the Old Testament prophecy (Psa. 109:8; Acts 1:20) to bring the matter of Judas' replacement before the church.

Note: Pentecost was not the “Birthday of the Church,” but the empowerment of the church. The church was formed during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It functioned as a body and had all the essentials of church life before Pentecost. God recognized the business meeting and Matthias was numbered with the Twelve (6:2).

D. The Fullness of Pentecost (2:1–47): Fulfillment of prophecy and Divine empowerment. The promised Baptism with the Spirit.

1. The Spirit was poured out upon a unified, praying church (2:1–4). In the context of redemptive history and the Divine purpose, the Tabernacle was fully furnished and functional, then the Shekinah glory filled it (Ex. 40:33–35) The same was true of Solomon's Temple; it was fully furnished and functional, then the Shekinah filled it (2 Kgs. 8:10–11). Both were thus marked out as the God–ordained institution for their respective eras. Now the church, as the God–ordained institution for this gospel economy, was visibly and spiritually marked out by the descent of the Holy Spirit with tongues like as of fire and the gift of

various languages suitable to the pilgrims who attended the Feast of Pentecost (2:1–4).

Note: This was a unique event. The Pentecostal tongues were an immediate and supernatural gift which needed no previous learning or interpreter. The hearers heard in 18 different dialects “the wonderful works of God,” i.e., distinct foreign languages intelligently articulated, though each with a Galilean accent.

2. The reaction of the pilgrim masses gathered in Jerusalem (2:5–13): all were amazed, some were in doubt and some mocked.
3. **Peter’s Pentecostal Sermon (2:14–36).** The first Spirit-filled, apostolic sermon. Peter answered their objections, took Joel 2:28–32 as his text and declared the truth of the Gospel from the Old Testament as the fulfillment of prophecy. He ended with a declaration of the Lordship of Jesus Christ (v. 36).
4. The reaction of the masses (2:37–42). They were overcome with conviction of sin and Peter continued to impress upon them their need to repent and publicly identify with the name of Jesus Christ in baptism. 3,000 were converted. The genuineness of their conversion was marked by their subsequent persevering conduct (2:40–42).
5. The great revival continued, with demonstrations of power by the Apostles (2:43) and continued conversions (2:44–47).

Note: The great revival which began at Pentecost and continued for 3 decades, is the great prototype of all true gospel revivals. Mark the following principles: (1) Revival comes to and through a unified, praying people. (2) There is always an out-pouring of the Spirit in power. (3) A marked return to the principles of biblical religion. (4) A return to biblical preaching. Spirit-empowered Gospel preaching vs. the traditional Judaism. (5) Obstacles to true revival from within through false converts and misunderstanding. (6) Opposition from without in the ranks of mere professing religion. Judaism became the avowed enemy of Christianity (7) Necessary and unusual consequences

of true revival. God's people edified and made bold; multitudes—even enemies—converted. The great trophy of sovereign grace in this revival: Saul of Tarsus, who would become the greatest Christian and author of the New Testament Era.

6. **The second great sermon of Peter** following the healing of lame man: 5,000 men converted (3:1–4:4).
- E. **The Jewish persecution begins** (4:1–22). This persecution would continue unabated until the first State Persecution under Nero (64–68 AD).
1. The imprisonment of Peter and John and the threats of the Sanhedrin (4:1–22).
 2. The prayer meeting and demonstration of the Spirit in power (4:23–31).
- F. Unity and Discipline within the Jerusalem church (4:32–5:11).
1. The spirit of unity, and a community of goods within the church (4:32–37).
 2. The sin, deceit, hypocrisy and subsequent deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11).
- G. The revival increases as does Jewish opposition (5:12–42).
1. Signs and wonders done by the Apostles and the unusual miracles wrought by Peter (5:12–16).
 2. The Sadduceean persecution (5:17–33). The Sadducees denied the doctrine of the resurrection and were the foremost in their persecution.
 3. The Apostles miraculously delivered from imprisonment (5:19–26).
 3. Peter as the spokesman charges the Council with the murder of the Lord Jesus and the Sadducees plotted to kill them (5:28–33).
 4. The wise counsel of Gamaliel to leave the Apostles alone, realizing the providence and hand of God and the danger of opposing him (5:34–42).
- H. **Internal conflict in the church: neglect of Grecian widows and the office of deacon** (6:1–7).

1. The work of the ministry and care for those in need was causing a division in the church, as those Jewish believers who had taken Grecian customs were neglected (6:1).⁴³¹
 2. The Apostles summon the church, and the church as a body chose seven deacons, all Grecians by name.
- I. **The short life and ministry of Stephen**, the first martyr of the Jerusalem church (6:8–7:60).⁴³²
1. The powerful ministry of Stephen (6:8).⁴³³
 2. The Spirit-filled Stephen in debates with the rabbis (6:9–15). They had to resort to false witnesses to bring him before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:11–15).

Note: Young Saul of Tarsus, a strict Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil. 4:4–6) and a rabbi (Acts 22:3), a libertine [freeman, Roman citizen] (22:26–28) and from Cilicia (21:29; 22:) doubtless debated Stephen and lost his only debate. This would enrage him (Acts 26:9–12) to the point of becoming the first inquisitor and persecutor of Christians to bonds and death (Acts 26:9–10).

3. Stephen's powerful sermon before the Sanhedrin (6:15–7:56). He took the direction that others had taken, rehearsing the history of the nation of Israel from a spiritual perspective, pointing out their continual rebellion and unbelief. He concluded by declaring that they had always resisted the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the prophets and had murdered their Messiah. He then revealed his vision of Jesus standing at

⁴³¹ The term "Grecian" [Ἑλληνιστής] is somewhat ambiguous, as it may denote a Greek, or, as here a Jew who had taken Greek customs and so was considered less than the true "Hebrews."

⁴³² The first martyr of the New Testament era was John the Baptist. Every chronological starting-point begins with John (Jn. 11:12; Acts 1:22).

⁴³³ Stephen is the only one apart from the Apostles who performed miracles.

the right hand of God, which caused them to become insane with rage.

4. Stephen was lynched by the mob of the leaders.⁴³⁴ As Saul was the main opponent and leader, those who stoned Stephen laid down their outer garments at his feet (7:54, 57–60; 8:1a).

- J. The first widespread Jewish persecution under Saul of Tarsus** (8:1–4). The Jerusalem church was largely scattered except the Apostles. The Lord was providentially extending the gospel outreach through those who left Jerusalem, preaching the Word.

II

The Era of Transition: (c. 35–48 AD)

(Acts 8:5–13:2)

“...and in all Judaea, and in Samaria...”

The Predominant Personality: The Apostle Peter

- A. The time–frame: from the beginning of the persecution headed by Saul of Tarsus, which combined both the Sadducees and Pharisees, to Antioch as the new center of Christianity and the beginning of Paul’s missionary journeys.
- B. The burial of Stephen, the persecution under Saul of Tarsus and the scattering of the Jerusalem church (8:1–4).
 1. The Apostles remained in Jerusalem; the common people were scattered, but evangelized as they left—the providential circumstances to spread the gospel.
 2. Saul did whatever he could to destroy the church and Christianity (cf. Acts 26:9–10).
- C. **The great spiritual awakening or revival in Samaria under the preaching of Philip, the break from exclusive Jewish Christianity** (8:5–25).

⁴³⁴ For a short duration under Herod Agrippa I (c. 44 AD) the Jews were given the power of capital punishment apart from Rome.

1. Philip's ministry was accompanied by miracles to credential his message; many believed (8:5–8).
 2. The Apostles send Peter and John from Jerusalem to confirm the work and through them give the Holy Spirit to the Samaritan believers. This was evidently necessary to confirm the true conversion of the Samaritans and overcome any Jewish prejudice against the Samaritan people (Jn. 4:4, 9; Acts 8:14–17).
 3. The case of Simon Magus the sorcerer and professing believer (8:9–13, 18–24). His lack of understanding and desire to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit for money revealed his empty profession and ulterior motives.
- D. **Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch** (8:26–40). The Gospel, through this eunuch, a Jewish proselyte, will enter Africa. Often the Lord is at work when many do not perceive it. Philip preached the full gospel message, which included baptism as the symbolic union with Christ in both his death and resurrection (Cf. Rom. 6:1–5). Philip then evangelized throughout Judea (8:40).
- E. **The Conversion and Initial Ministry of Saul of Tarsus: the most important event after Pentecost** (9:1–26) (c. 33–35 AD). This would ultimately determine the nature of Gentile Christianity and the New Testament canon of Scripture.
1. God revealed his purpose and plan for Saul's life to Ananias (9:10–16). Saul's eyesight was restored and he was baptized as a believer (9:17–19; 22:10–16).
 2. This account does not mention Paul's three years in Arabia before his return to Damascus when he began preaching (Gal. 1:15–19; 2 Cor. 11:32–33), but pointedly reveals his persuasiveness and ability, so that the Jews tried to murder him (9:20–22). He escaped and went to Jerusalem (9:24–26).
- F. Paul's ministry at Jerusalem and then his return to Cilicia (9:26–30; Gal. 1:20–24).

1. Barnabas was privy to Saul's conversion and interceded for his acceptance to the believers at Jerusalem (9:26–27).
2. Once more his life was threatened and he was sent to Cilicia (9:28–30). He would remain in Cilicia for several years. He evidently established several churches in Cilicia during this time (15:23, 31). There is no other record of those churches being planted by anyone else.

Note: During these "silent years" either in Arabia or in Cilicia, Paul experienced his transport into the third heaven, which prepared him for his future ministry and life of great suffering and explains his attitude toward this earthly life and his expectation of glory (2 Cor. 4:7–18; 12:1–10; Phil. 1:20–23).

- G. The ministry of the Apostle Peter in Judea (9:32–43). Two spiritual awakenings or revivals occurred in Judea under Peter's ministry during this time of relative peace:
1. The first revival occurred as a result of the healing of Aeneas when two entire towns, Lydda and Saron, were converted (9:32–35).
 2. The second revival occurred after Peter raised Tabitha from the dead (9:36–42).
 3. Peter providentially remained at Joppa for an extended time and the Lord prepared him for the next great transition in the redemptive purpose (9:43).

H. The Conversion of the Household of Cornelius: The Door of Salvation opened to the Gentiles (10:1–48).

1. Cornelius was evidently a "God-fearer" (e.g., Acts 13:16, 26) or "Proselyte of the Gate" to Judaism (10:1–2, 22).⁴³⁵ The Lord prepared both Cornelius (10:1–9) and Peter (10:9–23) for this great transition: the inclusion of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God.

⁴³⁵ There were types of Jewish proselytes: The proselytes of righteousness who submitted to circumcision and became Jews in worship, diet, dress and ceremonial cleansings, etc. Proselytes of the Gate were monotheists, worshipping Yahweh, but remained uncircumcised.

Note: Luke takes great care to demonstrate the reality and degree of Jewish prejudice, even among Christians, against the Gentiles (10: 9–23, 28; 11:1–3), in spite of our Lord’s final commission (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:44–47; Acts 1:8).

2. Cornelius did what he possibly could to prepare for Peter’s arrival with military preciseness as an old soldier.⁴³⁶

Note: There are at least ten principles of preparation for preaching to be found in the preparation of Cornelius: (1) Earnest prayer must be offered up (10:30–32). (2) An eager anticipation to hear the Word of God (10:24). (3) A concern for others to sit under the ministry of the Word (10:24). (4) A proper perspective of the preacher (10:25–26). (5) All prejudice must be set aside (10:27–29). (6) An obedient disposition to receive the Word of God (10:32–33a). (7) A respectful punctuality in attendance to the preaching (10:33). (8) There should be a unanimity among the hearers in the congregation (v. 33). (9) There must be a true God-consciousness (v. 33). (10) There must be a readiness to receive all Divine truth (v. 33)

3. Peter was prepared by God through a thrice-repeated vision to overcome his innate Jewish prejudice (10:9–16).
 4. The result of Peter’s concise message (10:25–43) was the descent of the Holy Spirit upon these Gentiles, the tongues were a sign to the Jews who accompanied Peter that the Gentiles had received the gospel and the Holy Spirit (10:44–48; 11:15–18; 1 Cor. 1:22a).
- I. The Prejudice of the Circumcision Party in the Jerusalem church temporarily overcome and the church in general acknowledged that God had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles (11:1–18).

Note: This acknowledgment, sadly, was only temporary. The Circumcision Party would demand circumcision for

⁴³⁶ Cf. Acts 10:33, the vague equivalent of “All present and accounted for, ready to take orders!”

Gentile converts, i.e., they taught that one must be become a Jew first to become a Christian (Acts 15:1ff). This called forth the first “Church Council” or conference at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–29). This party, known as the “Judaizers,” continued to undermine and disrupt Paul’s missionary efforts among the Gentiles (Rom. 2:25–29; 3:1, 30; 4:9–12; 1 Cor. 7:18–19; 2 Cor. 11:12, 23; Gal. 2:3, 8–11; 5:2–3; 6, 11; 6:12–13; Eph. 2:11ff; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11; 3:11; Tit. 1:10).

J. The center of the Christian movement shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria (11:19–30).

1. Those who had been scattered in the persecution after Stephen and under Saul preached the Gospel to the Greeks and a spiritual awakening occurred in Syria (11:19–21).
2. Barnabas sent to investigate, and joined in the work (11:22–24).
3. Barnabas goes to Cilicia to find Saul and bring him to help in the predominantly Gentile work (11:25–26). The Disciples, followers, believers, first called “Christians” at Antioch.⁴³⁷
4. Prophets from Jerusalem predict a great dearth [lack of food]. The church at Antioch sent relief to the Jerusalem believers with Barnabas and Saul (11:27–30).

Note: This was during the reign of Claudius (41–54 AD). This was not the last time that Gentiles believers helped relieve their Jewish brethren. They evidently did so in the early years of Nero’s reign (54–68 AD) (Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:25–28; 1 Cor. 16:1–4). Paul did what he could to lessen the innate prejudice which existed between Jews and Gentiles and even affected Jewish Christians.

K. The martyrdom of James and the imprisonment and deliverance of Peter (12:1–17).

⁴³⁷ See chart on the designation of Christians in Acts. The term derives from the Lat: *Christianus*, and denotes a follower of Christ, or, a “little Christ,” i.e., an imitator of Christ. This could not have been given to the believers by the Jews, as it hearkened of the promised Messiah, but it was given by the Gentiles.

1. The martyrdom of James, the brother of John. The first Disciple and Apostle of the original Twelve to be martyred (12:1–2).
 2. The arrest, imprisonment and intended execution of Peter (12:3–4).
 3. The spontaneous, constant prayer meeting for Peter’s release (12:5).
 4. Peter’s miraculous deliverance by an angel of the Lord and the initial unbelief of those in prayer for him, then their astonishment at his release (12:6–17).⁴³⁸
- L. The Judicial Death of Herod Agrippa I (12:18–23). As his grandfather, he was given over to a horrible death.
- M. The great revival continues and increases (12:24). The focus returns to Antioch (12:25).
1. Barnabas and Saul return from Jerusalem to Antioch (12:25).
 2. They bring John Mark with them back to Antioch (12:25).

III

The Era of Predominantly Gentile Christianity

(c. 48–63 AD)

(Acts 13:2–28:31)

“...and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The Predominant Personality: The Apostle Paul

- A. The Time–frame: From the first missionary journey under the authority of the church at Antioch to the close of the Book of Acts (c. 48–63 AD).
- B. This marks both the transition from predominantly Jewish to predominantly Gentile Christianity and from the preeminence of Peter to that of Paul.**

⁴³⁸ Strangely, the two great examples of unbelieving prayer were answered: OT at Kadesh–Barnea (Numb. 13:1ff, 13:25–14:1–4, 26–29) and NT in Acts 12:3–6, 12–17).

- C. The first call to world-wide missions came to a unified, praying and fasting church (13:1–3).
1. The call was Divine, specific and under the authority of the Antiochian church (13:1–2).
 2. The ordination of the church was through fasting, prayer, laying on of hands and sending them forth.
- D. **The First Missionary Journey of Paul** (13:3–14:28) (c. 48–49 AD). This mission took Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus [Paphos, Salamis], Pamphylia [Perga], Pisidia [Antioch] and Southern Galatia [Iconium], Lycaonia [Lystra, Derbe], then back to Antioch.
1. Saul continues his ministry, which had become customary, to preach Christ in the synagogues to the Jews and proselytes, then separating converts and organizing them into churches (9:20; 13:5, 42–49; 14ff; 14:1ff; 17:1–3, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8).
 2. The ministry at Cyprus: The curse of blindness upon Elymas the sorcerer and the conversion of Sergius Paulus the Roman Pronconsul (13:4–12).
 3. Upon arriving at Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark returned to Jerusalem (13:13).
 4. Saul is now called Paul, and he becomes the leader and chief spokesman of the missionary group (13:13).
 5. Paul's sermon at the Pisidian Antioch (13:14–41).
 6. The Jews and Gentiles are divided; Paul and Barnabas go to the Gentiles (13:42–49).
 7. Jewish opposition forces them to depart for Iconium (13:50–52).
 8. The ministry at Iconium (14:1–5). A spiritual awakening occurred, but Jewish opposition forced them to flee to Lystra and Derbe (14:6–7).
 9. The ministry at Lystra (14:8–20). Paul heals a lame man (14:8–11), and he and Barnabas are hailed as gods

(14:11–13).⁴³⁹ They stop a city-wide attempt to be worshipped and declare the truth to the multitudes (14:13–18).

10. Paul was stoned by the hateful Jews who stirred up the multitude and was left for dead, but revived and re-entered the city. They departed for Derbe and then he and Barnabas retraced their steps, preaching at Perga and Atalia (14:19–25), establishing the converts and ordaining elders in every church (14:21–25).
11. They returned to Antioch and reported to the church (14:26–28). During this journey Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians (c. 48–49).

E. The Jerusalem Conference or “First Church Council” (15:1–35) (c. 50 AD). The Circumcision Party [“Judaizers”] of the Jerusalem church still maintained that Gentile converts must be circumcised to become Christians. One must be impressed with the malice of religious prejudice and the strength of tradition—even among professing Christians!

Note: Although the Apostles were all in accord that this was contrary to the reality and nature of grace and saving faith, the Judaizers continued to follow Paul’s ministry to disrupt and negate it at every opportunity, as has been previously noted. The Jerusalem Council, though well-intended, was a failure.

1. The cause for the Council: Jewish failure to understand the New or Gospel Covenant and thus seeking to substitute a ritual for regeneration and tradition for conversion.
2. The Apostles gather at Jerusalem to confer, and agree on the truth of salvation by grace alone (15:2–5). Paul and Barnabas took the opportunity to inform those along the way of the great work among the Gentiles.

⁴³⁹ In the Greco-Roman era, the old Greek gods were given Roman names. Zeus became Jupiter and Hermes, Mercurius.

3. The Judaziers were the Pharisaic party (15:5). This group would later separate from orthodox Christianity after the fall of Jerusalem (c. 70 AD–).
 4. The Apostolic leaders give testimony to the work of grace among the Gentiles apart from circumcision: Peter (15:6–11), Paul and Barnabas (15:12) and James (15:13–21).
 5. Consensus was reached and a statement was formed stating that Gentiles believers need not be circumcised, but must abstain from meat offered to idols, from things strangled⁴⁴⁰ and from fornication (15:22–29).
 6. The Letter was sent out to the predominantly Gentile churches (15:30–31).
 7. Judas and Silas went to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Judas returned, but Silas remained (15:32–35).
 8. Some time after the Jerusalem meeting, Peter came down to Antioch and Paul had to confront him about his failure to be consistent (Gal. 2:1–21).
- F. The Second Missionary Journey of Paul (15:36–18:22) (c. 51–53 AD).** This missionary journey was much more extensive than the first, beginning with a re-visiting of the former areas and churches, bordering Phrygia and Asia Minor, then to Mysia [Troas] and extending into Europe: Thrace [Neapolis], Macedonia [Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea] and Achaia [Athens, Corinth], then retracing the route back through Asia Minor [Ephesus] to Antioch.
1. The dissention and division between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (15:36–39). Such divisions may occur even between the very best of God’s servants. John Mark would later prove himself as a faithful partner with both Peter and Paul in the work of the gospel (Col. 4:10; Phlm. 24; 1 Pet. 5:13; 2 Tim. 4:11).

⁴⁴⁰ Strangled animals still had their blood, which was forbidden by both the Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9:4) and the Law of Moses (Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:12–14; 19:26).

2. Paul took Silas and they revisited the churches planted on the first mission (15:40–41).
3. Paul found and took Timothy as a helper at Lystra (16:1–3).

Note: was Timothy's circumcision a contradiction of the Jerusalem Council? No. Timothy was considered a Jew through his mother, and as a Jew, not a Christian, he had to be circumcised. Circumcision was kept up as a cultural and religious matter. Paul was simply removing any possible barriers for his ministry among the Jews. As a Jew, Paul also shaved his head with a vow, and would give way to cultural and Jewish issues if the truth of the gospel were not at stake (Acts 18:18; 21:18–26). For the issue of circumcision and the social, cultural and religious implications, see the section, "The Intertestamental Era."

4. Paul and Silas with Timothy went throughout the churches delivering the Apostolic decrees (16:4–5).
5. The Holy Spirit lead them ultimately to Troas, a seaport, forbidding them to enter into Asia Minor and Bithynia (16:6–8).
6. Paul's night vision of the man of Macedonia and the addition of Luke to the Apostolic mission (16:9–11). The beginning of the first "we" section in Acts (16:10–17), revealing the personal presence of Luke as an eye-witness. **Paul and his company take the gospel into Europe, which would determine the future direction of Christianity** (16:9–12).
7. The ministry at Philippi (16:12–40). No synagogue,⁴⁴¹ but a *proseuche* [προσευχή] or place for prayer by a riverside (16:12–13). Lydia and her household converted (16:14–15). A spirit-possessed girl healed of her possession and Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned as Jews (16:16–24). The earthquake and conversion of the Philippian jailer (16:23–34). Paul and Silas revealed their Roman citizenship and are requested to leave the area (16:40).

⁴⁴¹ Jewish tradition: wherever there were ten heads of families, a synagogue must be established.

8. The ministry at Thessalonica (17:1–9). A spiritual awakening occurred, but was bitterly opposed by the Jews who used a political assertion of political revolution to discredit the Apostles. Yet a church was established (1 & 2 Thess.).
 9. The ministry at Berea (17:10–14). Paul experienced another spiritual awakening and a much better reception for the gospel, but was again forced to leave because of Jewish persecution. Silas and Timothy remain at Berea.
 10. The ministry at Athens (17:15–34). This was the first recorded confrontation between biblical Christianity and Greek philosophy. Paul was in his element and presented Christianity to the Philosophical Council at the Areopagus in a masterful address.⁴⁴² He gained some impressive converts and left for Corinth. During this time Paul wrote the Epistles of 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
 11. The ministry at Corinth (18:1–18). Corinth was one of the two most openly wicked cities of the empire,⁴⁴³ yet Paul was enabled by the grace of God to establish a substantial church there (1 & 2 Corinthians). There he met and labored with Aquilla and Priscilla, and spent a year and a half preaching, being encouraged by a vision (18:9–11).
 12. The return to Caesarea, Jerusalem and Antioch (18:18–22).
- G. The Third Missionary Journey of Paul** (18:23–21:15) (c. 53–57 AD). This third journey was the longest in time and most encompassing in distance. It consisted of three different stages:
1. The First stage of the Third Missionary Journey: From Antioch through Cilicia into Galatia (18:23). The three years' stay at Ephesus. While there, he wrote two Epistles to the Corinthians [the first, unpreserved letter,

⁴⁴² See "Paul: A Brief Chronology and Harmony," pp. 465–475.

⁴⁴³ Corinth and Pompeii. Corinth had the gospel; Pompeii did not.

then 1 Corinthians] (19:1–20:1; 1 Cor. 5:9; 16:8, 24).

Note: Ephesus, the center of the pagan worship of Diana [Artemis], was also a center for the occult and magical arts. This was the first great confrontation between biblical Christianity and the occult. The power of the gospel completely shattered the hold of occult power over the people (Acts 19:11–20).

2. The Second stage of the Third Missionary Journey: From Ephesus to Macedonia and Greece [Achaia] (20:1–3). From Philippi [Macedonia] he wrote the Epistle of 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 13:14). During this time Paul ventured to the east of Macedonia into the region of Illyricum and evangelized (Rom. 15:19). From Corinth [Achaia] he wrote the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:27).
3. The third stage of the third missionary journey: Learning of a Jewish attempt to kill him, Paul, rather than sail directly to Syria, retraced his steps north through Macedonia with his associates (20:3–4). These gathered at Troas to begin the sea voyage back to Tyre (20:5–6). At Troas, Paul preached to the church and brought Eutychus back to life (20:6–12).
4. The Apostolic party sailed from Troas to Assos where Paul left them to travel overland while they sailed to Mitylene to wait for him (20:13–14). The second “we” section of Luke (20:5–15). Paul evidently wanted to be alone for prayer, meditation and spiritual preparation, as premonition and prophecies pointed to bonds and imprisonment at Jerusalem (20:22–24).
5. From Mitylene to Miletus, when Paul sent for the Ephesian elders and met with them for a final admonition and farewell (20:15–38). From Miletus to Patara to Tyre, Ptolemais and Caesarea by ship (21:1–8).
6. Paul and his company remain at Caesarea for a time, and there were continued warnings from his friends and from

the Jerusalem prophet Agabus (11:27–28; 21:10–11) against going up to Jerusalem, but Paul persisted in his purpose (21:9–15). The third “we” section of Luke (21:1–18).

- H. Paul at Jerusalem: the church leaders, his accommodation, his arrest and his defense to the people (21:15–22:23).
1. The Jerusalem church still retained a narrowed view of the implications of the gospel and some confusion between Jewish religious culture and Gentile Christianity. Paul, as a Jewish Christian, accommodated them, as the gospel was not at stake (21:17–26).
 2. Paul is seized by the mob of pilgrims in the Temple, supposing he had polluted the Temple by bringing in an uncircumcised Gentile, a false charge. They immediately tried to beat him to death, but were prevented by the Roman garrison stationed across from the Temple in the Tower of Antonia (21:27–32).

Note: The Temple grounds were divided between the large outer court or Court of the Gentiles and the inner building, which was separated by a wall with entrances which secluded the Court of the Women [which also contained the treasury], the Court of Israel [for Israelitish men only], the Court of the Priests and the Most Holy Place.

At each entrance was a placard in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, stating that no uncircumcised could enter on pain of death. Although the Jews might not have had the power of capital punishment without Roman approval [except during the short reign of Herod Agrippa I], this was the sole exception. Anyone who polluted the Temple could be killed immediately.

Thus, the mob of pilgrims and worshippers immediately tried to kill Paul, supposing he was a violator (21:28–31). Paul referred to this wall in both a literal and spiritual sense in Eph. 2:11–22 as “the middle wall of partition” which our Lord abolished in his redemptive work, making Jewish and Gentile believers one in Christ.

3. Paul identified himself to the Chiliarch and was granted permission to address the multitude. He gave his testimony and the people remained silent until he said the word “Gentiles” [ἔθνη, “nations,” i.e., non-Jews]. They immediately went into an uncontrollable rage and cried out for his immediate death—this is a true picture of the Jewish prejudice which constantly put Paul’s life in danger and sought to destroy his ministry.
 4. Paul was bound and the guards were set to interrogate him by scourging. He was forced to declare his Roman citizenship and the Chiliarch, both fearing because he had bound a Roman citizen and not comprehending the religious import, asked for a meeting of the Sanhedrin to clarify the matter (22:24–30).
- I. Paul’s appearance before the Sanhedrin, the conspiracy to assassinate him and the beginning of his imprisonment at Caesarea (23:1–35).
1. Paul divided the Sanhedrin with his statement and they were so vehement and physical in their respective religious convictions that he had to be rescued.
 2. A plot is discovered to assassinate Paul. Paul’s nephew informs the Chiliarch and Paul is sent down to Caesarea under heavy guard for his own protection to Felix the Proconsul. Here he began his two year incarceration until he is forced to appeal to Caesar and sent to Rome (23:33–27:1).

Note: Paul’s family. Little is revealed in Scripture concerning the family of Paul. Evidently his sister and her son were converted, considering the awful Jewish prejudice against him and their great effort to save his life. It is possible that he had other relatives who had been converted previous to his own conversion, depending on the term “kinsmen” [τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου] in Rom. 16:7, 11, 21. His “silent years” in Cilicia before his ministry at Antioch must have witnessed the evangelization of his own kinfolk.

- J. The two years' incarceration at Caesarea (23:33–27:1) (c. 57–59 AD). Paul declares the truth to both the Roman Proconsuls, Marcus Antonius Felix (51–59) and Porcius Festus (59–61).
1. Paul declares the truth to Felix and his wife Drusilla, a young Jewess, on several occasions. Felix was greatly convicted, but left Paul bound through political expediency (24:22–27).
 2. After two years, Porcius Festus arrives as Proconsul and the Jews again conspire to kill Paul (24:27–25:2). Paul is forced to appeal unto Caesar, his right as a Roman citizen (25:2–12).
 3. Paul was called to give a defense of himself before Festus and King Herod Agrippa II so Festus might have some statement to send with Paul to Caesar at Rome (25:13–27). Paul gave his testimony before the proconsul and king (26:1–32).

Note: there are times in which it may be proper to give one's testimony as a defense of Christianity. Apologetics is a rational or intelligent defense of the faith. One must take care to suit the defense to the listener[s] and deal with the objective truth of the Christian faith and experience, and not become too subjective, as one's subjective experience can be easily misunderstood by unbelievers. Paul did this on several occasions (e.g., Acts 22:1–21; 26:1–29). See "Paul: A Brief Chronology and Harmony" in this section for his oratorical skill, dramatic presentation and superior ability.

- K. The Voyage to Rome, the Shipwreck and the Roman Imprisonment: the conclusion of the Acts of the Apostles (27:1–28:31) (c. 59–63 AD). The final "we" section of Luke (27:1–28:16).
1. The ship was a large grain ship, and carried 276 passengers and crew. Ancient shipping routes kept them in sight of the shore around the Aegean Sea. The *euroclydon* was a cyclonic northeast wind. This mercilessly drove the ship for over two weeks from Crete

to Malta where the ship was finally wrecked (27:1–44).⁴⁴⁴

2. Paul, a seasoned sailor, warned the captain, owner and centurion of the dangers, as the safe sailing season was passed,⁴⁴⁵ but was ignored. Paul’s later vision and great encouragement to the passengers and crew enabled him to assume moral command of the ship (27:21–32).
3. At Melita [Malta], Paul exercised a healing ministry which gave the people great favor with the natives (28:1–10). Note that God preserved Paul’s life and also that he was very active in physical labors as well as spiritual work. He always exercised a practical Christianity (e.g., Acts 20:34; 28:2–3).
4. The voyage ended at Rome (28:16–31) where Paul was retained for two years in a rented house with great liberty and probably a centurion guard. During this time, he wrote his “Prison Epistles” [Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon] and sent them to their destinations by his associates.

Thus concludes the Chronological Analysis and Survey of Acts. For remarks on Paul’s release, return to missionary travel and his final imprisonment, see: “Paul: A Brief Chronology and Harmony” in this section.

Notes and Observations

1. (1:1–11) The two writings of Luke overlap: (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1:1–2) and (Lk. 24:44–53; Acts 1:3–11). Together these comprise almost one fourth of the New Testament as the two longest books. Each filled a scroll, which was traditionally twenty–two feet in length.

⁴⁴⁴ See the previous reference to James Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, the classic, very detailed work on this subject.

⁴⁴⁵ Sailing season on the Mediterranean, especially the Aegean, was after the Passover in the spring to Yom Kippur [“Fast,” Day of atonement] in the fall. Paul, a seasoned sailor, knew the dangers.

2. (1:6) The final question of the Disciples: an immediate restoration of the kingdom of Israel. They did not yet, in spite of our Lord's teaching and the Great Commission, comprehend the true spiritual nature of the kingdom, the gospel age and the inclusion of the Gentiles as the gospel would circumvent the globe. We are at times slow to grasp spiritual truth because of long-cherished beliefs and tradition. We may need to re-investigate our beliefs and re-evaluate our traditions.
3. (1:11) The Angelic declaration is that our Lord will literally and visibly return. This second coming is our "blessed hope" and will be glorious (Tit. 2:13).
4. (1:12–14) A ten-day prayer meeting. Pentecost would come to a unified and praying church which had a glorious promise for which to pray (2:1–4). The best prayers hang on Divine promises.
5. (1:15–26) The Jerusalem church held both a prayer meeting and business meeting and the Lord recognized and honored both—before Pentecost.
6. (2:4) The word "utterance" [ἀποφθέγγομαι] is very significant. It occurs only three times in the New Testament, all in Acts: 2:4, "utterance," 2:14 "said," 26:25, "speak forth." The term signifies an elevated philosophical or prophetic utterance, spoken with power and authority. It is the one term which best describes the phenomenon of preaching. Biblically, it implies a formal presentation, a spirit-empowered declaration of truth with a raised voice, characterized by intelligence and authority.
7. (2:16) Peter's subject or sermon title on this awesome, unique occasion was "This is That!" He takes an Old Testament prophecy and demonstrates its fulfillment on that occasion. This is the first occasion of Spirit-filled Apostolic preaching—and what a glorious ingathering of souls!

8. (2:36) Peter's sermon was scriptural and pointed. He ended with a mighty declaration of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is the Christ of the Bible—both Lord and Christ—and not the “Jesus” some would preach today.⁴⁴⁶
9. (2:37–38) These verses have been commented on previously. The command to “Repent” and “be baptized” are not equal in the Gk. The force is upon repentance [μετανοήσατε, aor. imp. 2 pers. pl.], not baptism, which is a much lesser note of permission [καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν, aor. imp. 3 pers. sing.].
10. (2:39) *Paedokephelerhanters* limit this verse to “you and your children,” and omit the final part, which embraces all of those called by God. Limiting this statement does not do justice to the promise.
11. (2:40) At times and when opportunity presents itself, one must enforce the preaching with great exhortation. Pentecost was such a time! “Save yourselves” is pass. in Gk., i.e., “Get Saved!” [Σώθητε].
12. (2:41–42) The genuineness of these converts: They were continuing obstinately [Ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες, imperf. with periphras. pres. ptc.] in the doctrinal teaching, fellowship, the ordinances and in the prayer meetings [ταῖς προσευχαῖς]. Oh, for such converts in these times!
13. (2:44–47) Some have posited that this is true communism. Such could only be true of regenerate people filled with the Spirit and unified in doctrine and bound by a godly love.
14. (3:1ff) The healing of the man born lame. Doubtless his legs were small, twisted and utterly deformed. But in an

⁴⁴⁶ Acts 2:36, Mark the emphasis: “...let all the house of Israel know assuredly that both Lord and Christ hath made God this same Jesus whom ye crucified!” [γινωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι καὶ κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε].

instant, he was walking and leaping and praising God—a true, converted “Pentecostal”! This would draw thousands and Peter would preach a great sermon and 5,000 men would be converted!

15. (3:6) One of the Romish Popes is said to have commented, “We can no longer say, ‘Sliver and gold have I none,’ but neither can we say, ‘Rise, take up thy bed and walk!’” Religion devoid of the Holy Spirit is dead, regardless of the imposing power of its externals.
16. (3:11ff) Peter freely acknowledged his and John’s lack of power. This glorious power came from the ascended Christ whom these Jews had condemned and killed. Fearless preaching to an astounded multitude—a great occasion when their attention was riveted on the miracle.
17. (3:15) What an oxymoron! “They killed the Prince of Life!” What a powerful utterance from Peter on this occasion—and it struck home to their consciences.
18. (3:19) The latter part of this verse has been used for centuries to refer to the times of revival that God has been pleased to send from the skies. The sense is: “Repent...in order that the set and special times of revival shall come from the face [presence] of the Lord...” [μετανοή...ὄπως ἂν ἔλθωσιν καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου].
19. (3:22) A quotation from Deut. 18:15. The Muslims hold that this prophet and prophecy by Moses refers to Muhammad, not to our Lord Jesus Christ.
20. (4:12) A great gospel text which reveals the exclusive and universal claims of the gospel message (cf. Jn. 14:6). The gospel is fitted for sinners, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only savior for sinners.
21. (4:13–18) The Sanhedrin would have denied it if they could—such is the evil in traditional, external religion!
22. (4:24–31) A glorious prayer meeting and a renewal of the revival. These early Jewish Christians formed their prayer from the Scriptures and applied them to their immediate

circumstances—and they had power in prayer! Do we seek to form our prayers from Scripture? (Eph. 6:17). Note that the term “word of God” is clearly something uttered or spoken [ῥῆμα θεοῦ]. Quoting Scripture, forming our prayers from Scripture, is wielding the “sword of the Spirit”

23. (5:1–11) The sad and awful case of Ananias and Sapphira. Some have held them to be false converts; others, sinning Christians. Whatever the case, they had tempted the Holy Spirit to abandon his work in the revival. Satan was at work. We must remember that the work of God is much greater than we are, and that we are always expendable—and must never take any sin lightly. This was immediate and final discipline in the work of God.
24. (5:27–28) Do we take our own words seriously? At our Lord’s trial, they had openly declared, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!” (Matt. 27:22–26). What an awful oath! We must beware of words hastily uttered to our own judgment or shame!
25. (5:34–40a) The wise counsel of Gamaliel. A Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, yet he was wise and spoke wisely. May God give us wisdom if and when we might be called upon in a time of crisis and trial.
26. (6:1–7). The establishment of the office of deacon. The assembly acted corporately and chose seven men as deacons [διακόνος, servant, waiter]. It is noteworthy that these men all had Grecian names. They chose men who would be equitable and generous, and the Lord blessed the church and its ministry.
27. (6:8–14) The ministry of Stephen, the only non-Apostle who performed miracles in the Book of Acts. The Jews had to bring false charges to detain him. May no one bring anything legitimate against us!
28. (6:15–7:60) The longest sermon in Acts—and preached by a deacon! His words cut them deeply because they were

true. Their only reaction was irrational and filled with rage. This was a lynching and illegal. Religion has probably murdered and made martyrs of more Christians than all the wars of history—and all because of the truth!

29. (8:1–4) Little space is given to the persecution under Saul of Tarsus, the first organized, deadly persecution of Jewish Christians. Paul himself describes it (Acts 26:9–11). His conversion and subsequent life and ministry would be one of the greatest manifestations of saving grace in history!
30. (8:5ff) The great spiritual awakening in Samaria, the first great step in the fulfillment of Acts 1:8. This mighty moving of God was evidently still among Jewish Christians.
31. (8:9–13, 18–34) The profession of Simon Magus. False converts soon make themselves known according to their natural desires and appetites. The heart remained unchanged. Christianity has always had its false and temporary professors (Matt. 7:21–23; 13:5–6, 20–21; 2 Cor. 13:5).
32. (8:26–39) Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Through this Ethiopian, Jewish proselyte, the gospel entered Africa. Far from the crowds and controversy, the Spirit of God was strategically at work! We should never despise small meetings.
33. (9:1–16). The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus, later to be known as the Apostle Paul, the most zealous, greatly used Apostle and writer of the First Century—or, perhaps of any century! Paul’s conversion was the most significant event after Pentecost, and would shape world history through his Epistles and the travels of his missionary labors. Consider what the Lord may do in the conversion of only one person.
34. (10:1–48) The conversion of Cornelius and his gathering. This marks the first great step of the final words of our Lord, “...and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts

- 1:8). The Gospel for the very first time goes to the Gentiles—“The Gentile Pentecost.” The Jerusalem church would be divided over this transition and the inclusion of the Gentiles (Acts 11:1–18), and even later, the religious and cultural issues would continue (Acts 15:1–32; Gal. 2:7ff). The “Judaizers would follow Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles and seek to subvert it. Do our religious and cultural traditions hinder the truth of the gospel?”
35. (13:1–4) The Antioch church sends out the first missionaries to the Jews of the Diaspora and the Gentiles. The Jerusalem church was never the great missionary church it could have been because of religious, traditional and cultural prejudice. Such still exists in what we might term “regional sanctification” and various religious and social traditions and ecclesiastical associations. Legalism or antinomianism always exists to some degree among many of God’s people who are thus prone to judge others.
 36. (13:10) C. H. Spurgeon was asked by P. T. Barnum to come and preach in the circus tents of America, hoping to cash in with large gate receipts. Spurgeon answered in a very kind letter as to why he could not travel to America and accommodate Mr. Barnum, thanking him for his offer. He closed his short reply with these words: “You will find my answer in Acts 13:10.”
 37. (13:14ff) Paul developed his missionary method at this point: preach the gospel in the synagogue in a given locality, separate the converts and establish a church. Some would be Jewish; most would come from the ranks of the Gentile proselytes (Acts 13:42–49; 14:1, 21–23; 16:13f; 17:2–3, 10–12; 18:4–8; 19:8ff). At times, these early missionary evangelists would preach to society at large (14:8ff; 17:17–18, 22–34).
 38. (15:1–32) The “First Church Council”—a failure. Although it sought to deal with Jewish prejudice and the corruption of grace, it failed to stop it; it was too deeply ingrained, even among Jewish believers (Gal. 2:7ff). May the Lord

deliver us from prejudice and self-righteousness, and help us keep the gospel pure!

39. (15:36–40) Paul and Barnabas separate and go their respective ways. Sad, but a separation based upon sound principles. John Mark would later prove himself. Family ties may restrict gospel work.
40. (16:31) After John 3:16, one of the most quoted verses in the New Testament—the gospel in simple terms—if word each is correctly explained!
41. (17:16–34) Paul at Athens—The Apostle at his best. His knowledge, oratorical abilities and genius were displayed as he presented the gospel in terms of a Christian Theistic world-and-Life View in language suited to his hearers. He put Jesus and the resurrection into their historical and redemptive context (cf. v. 18). See notes on “Paul: A Brief Chronology and Harmony.”
42. (18:1ff) Paul’s ministry at Corinth. A church established in the very worst of environments—a testimony to the power of the gospel!
43. (18:24–28). Apollos. He was not too great in his own eyes to be instructed by a godly couple. Preachers might take note! All too often preachers think themselves beyond being taught by so-called “laypeople.”
44. (19:2). “Did you receive the Holy Ghost when [not “since”] you believed?” [εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; aor. vb., aor. ptc.]. No second work of grace here.
45. (19:13–20) Ephesus was a center for witchcraft and demonic powers. Paul never associated himself with the powers of darkness (cf. 16:16–18), but this was beyond his control and providentially used to magnify the truth and grace of God. God may use seemingly unsuitable people, such as the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:3–42), and strange occasions, as here, to do a great work.
46. (20:13–14) Paul needed time to think, pray and meditate. Often it is prayer which is sacrificed, even in the work of

the Lord. Paul always sought to have the right priorities; so must we!

47. (20:22–27) Paul did not say that he was pure from the blood of all men because he had preached to all men, but because he had been faithful to preach the whole counsel of God. How do we value faithfulness to the truth?
48. (20:31) Where are the tears in the modern ministry? We must never be ashamed of genuine tears shed in the context of truth and faithfulness! Genuine, godly tears are never unmanly.
49. (20:35) A non–canonical saying of Jesus, not preserved in the gospel records, but uttered by him and evidently well–known to the early Christians.
50. (20:22–24; 21:4, 10–14) Was Paul unreasonable or did he go contrary to the will of God? This must be left in God’s hands. He was determined to go to Jerusalem and suffer or even die. Premonition, circumstances and the warnings of others may distract. We must ultimately leave all in God’s hands and be faithful in the work God has given us.
51. (21:17–26) As with the circumcision of Timothy, there was no contradiction. Paul was still a Jew and did what he could to end misunderstanding without compromising the gospel. We need to be as consistent as possible, neither to compromise nor become exclusive when the gospel is not threatened.
52. (22:1–21) Paul gave his personal testimony at critical junctures when he could speak freely and use his life as a testimony for the gospel (See 26:1–25).
53. (22:24–29) Paul revealed his Roman citizenship only when absolutely necessary, and at times kept it hidden until the moment was opportune (16:36–38).
54. (23:11; 25:9–12) Paul was given a Divine promise which sustained him for over two years in prison. It was a promise he acted upon both in faith and as his right.

55. (23:26–30) Claudius Lycius shaded the truth in his favor, but yet was an honorable man for an unregenerate person. He treated Paul with the utmost respect.
56. (27:20–32) Paul assumed the moral command of the ship. He told the centurion that they could not be saved if the sailors did not remain on board; the soldiers cut away the skiff. Paul’s knowledge, courage, encouragement and example enabled him to assume this moral command. Can we, do we, seek to assume moral command of a given situation?
57. (28:2–6) Paul and the viper. He was not a rabid environmentalist; he shook off the poisonous snake into the fire. We also see him gathering sticks and helping in a practical way. His Christianity was much more than merely theoretical! He was never too good or “Spiritual” to be of practical help—and he physically worked to support his associates (Acts 20:34).
58. (28:7–10) Paul’s healing ministry caused the natives to honor the entire company. Sometimes the pagans are more appreciative than professing Christians.
59. (28:16) Paul and the soldier. What this guard may and must have heard and witnessed! The times of fervent prayer and discussion, the dictating and writing of the Epistles! What a privilege in a most unlikely situation.

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