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a *Grace Notes* course

Foundations 200

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**Foundations 207**

New Testament Survey: Matthew to John

*Grace Notes*

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## Foundations 207

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## New Testament Survey

### Introduction

The New Testament is a record of historical events, the ‘good news’ events of the saving life of our Lord Jesus Christ—His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and the continuation of His work in the world—which is explained and applied by the apostles whom He chose and sent into the world. It is also the fulfillment of those events long anticipated by the Old Testament. Further, it is sacred history, which, unlike secular history, was written under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. This means it, like the Old Testament, is protected from human error and possesses divine authority for the church today and throughout human history until the Lord Himself returns.

### ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE TERM “NEW TESTAMENT”

Our Bible is divided into two sections we call the Old Testament and the New Testament, but exactly what does that mean? The Greek word for “testament,” means “will, testament, or covenant.” The Old Testament or Covenant is primarily a record of God’s dealings with the Israelites on the basis of the Mosaic Covenant given at Mount Sinai. On the other hand, the New Testament or Covenant (anticipated in Jeremiah 31:31 and instituted by the Lord Jesus, 1 Corinthians 11:25), describes the new arrangement of God with men from every tribe and language and people and nation who will accept salvation on the basis of faith in Christ.

The Old Covenant revealed the holiness of God in the righteous standard of the law and promised a coming Redeemer. The New Covenant shows the holiness of God in His righteous Son, the Redeemer who came to man. The New Testament, then, contains those writings that reveal the content of this New Covenant.

The message of the New Testament centers on (1) the Person who gave Himself for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28) and (2) the people (the

church) who have received His salvation. Thus the central theme of the New Testament is salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The names Old and New Covenants were thus applied first to the two relationships into which God entered with men, and then, to the books that contained the record of these two relationships. “The New Testament is the divine treaty by the terms of which God has received us into peace with himself.”<sup>2</sup>

### DIVINE PREPARATION FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the time of the New Testament, Rome was the dominant world power and ruled over most of the ancient world. Yet in a small town in Palestine, Bethlehem of Judea, was born the One who would change the world. Concerning this Person, the apostle Paul wrote, “*But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law*” (i.e., the Old Covenant). In several special and wonderful ways, God had prepared the world for the coming of the Messiah. Several factors contributed to this preparation.

### PREPARATION THROUGH THE JEWISH NATION

The preparation for the coming of Christ is the story of the Old Testament. The Jews were chosen of God from all the nations to be a treasured possession as a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exodus 1:5-6). In that regard, beginning with the promises which God gave to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12:1-3; Romans 9:4), they were to be the custodians of God’s Word (the Old Testament [Romans 3:2]), and contain the line of the Redeemer (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8; Romans 9:5). The Old Testament, therefore, was full of information about Christ and anticipated His coming as a suffering and glorified Savior.

<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody, p. 1498.

<sup>2</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *The New Testament, An Introduction to Its Literature and History*, edited by W. John Cook, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1976, p. 16.

Furthermore, not only were there many prophecies, but there were many precise details concerning the Messiah's lineage, place of birth, conditions around the time of His birth, life, death, and even His resurrection.

Although Israel was disobedient and taken into captivity as God's judgment on her hardness of heart, God nevertheless brought a remnant back to their homeland after seventy years, as He had promised in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Four hundred years had passed after the writing of the last Old Testament book. The religious climate was one of Pharisaic ritualism and hypocrisy, but there was a spirit of Messianic anticipation in the air and a remnant was looking for the Messiah.

### **PREPARATION THROUGH THE GREEK LANGUAGE**

It is highly significant that when Christ sent His disciples out to the ends of the earth to proclaim the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20), there was "a world speech." This was the result of the conquests and aspirations of Alexander the Great, the son of King Philip of Macedon, who more than 300 years before the birth of Christ, swept across the ancient world conquering one nation after another. Alexander's desire was one world and one language. In the aftermath of his victories, he established the Greek language as the common tongue, and the Greek culture as the pattern of thought and life. Alexander's empire was short lived, but the result of spreading the Greek language endured.

The point is that God was at work preparing the world with a common language that was the clearest and most precise language known to man. This language was used to proclaim the message of the Savior. As a result, the books of the New Testament were written in the common language of the day, Koine Greek. It was not written in Hebrew or Aramaic, even though all the writers of the New Testament were Jews except for Luke, a Gentile. Koine Greek had become the second language of nearly everyone in the known world of that time.

### **PREPARATION THROUGH THE ROMANS**

God was not finished preparing the world for the coming Savior of the world. When Christ was born in Palestine, Rome ruled the world. Palestine was under Roman rule. Above all else, Rome was noted for her insistence upon law and order. The longest, bloodiest civil war in Rome's history had finally ended with the reign of Augustus Caesar. As a result, over 100 years of civil war had been brought to rest and Rome had vastly extended her boundaries. The Romans had also built a system of roads, which, with the protection provided by her army that often patrolled the roads, contributed greatly to the measure of ease and safety by which travelers could make their way back and forth across the Roman empire. Augustus was the first Roman to wear the imperial purple and crown as the sole ruler of the empire. He was wise and considerate of his people, and he brought in a great time of peace and prosperity, making Rome a safe place to live and travel. This introduced a period called "Pax Romana," the peace of Rome (27 B.C.-A.D. 180). Now, because of all that Augustus accomplished, many said that when he was born, a god was born. It was into these conditions that One was born who truly was and is the source of personal peace and lasting world peace. It was not the temporary and false peace which men can give—no matter how wise or good or outstanding they may be. Also, Jesus was truly God, the God-Man, instead of a man called God. The presence of Roman rule and law helped to prepare the world for His life and ministry so the gospel could be preached.

### **THE RELIGIOUS WORLD AT THE TIME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Before surveying the New Testament, it will help to have a general idea of the religious world when the Savior came and later sent the church out into the world. As you read the following quote from Merrill C. Tenney, note the great similarity to our world today

The Christian church was born into a world filled with competing religions which may have differed widely among themselves but all of which possessed one common characteristic—the struggle to reach a god or gods who remained essentially inaccessible. Apart from Judaism, which taught that God had voluntarily disclosed Himself to the

patriarchs, to Moses, and to the prophets, there was no faith (religion) that could speak with certainty of divine revelation nor of any true concept of sin and salvation. The current ethical standards had neither the remedy for the one (sin) nor the dynamic to produce the other (salvation).

Even in Judaism revealed truth had been obscured either by traditions or by neglect. Paganism and all religions apart from knowledge and faith in God’s Word always produce a perversion of God’s original revelation to man. It retains 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 legend and by falsehood. The resultant confusion of beliefs and of values left men wandering in a maze of uncertainties. To some, expediency (doing what one desires) became the dominating philosophy of life; for if there can be no ultimate certainty, there can be no permanent principles by which to guide conduct; and if there are no permanent principles, one must live as well as he can by the advantage of the moment. Skepticism prevailed, for the old gods had lost their power and no new gods had appeared. Numerous novel cults invaded the empire from every quarter and became the fads of the dilettante rich or the refuge of the desperate poor. Men had largely lost the sense of joy and of destiny that made human life worthwhile.<sup>3</sup>

**COMPOSITION AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament is composed of twenty-seven books written by nine different authors. Based on their literary characteristics, they are often classified into three major groups

1. **Five Historical:** The Gospels and Acts.
2. **Twenty-one Epistles:** Romans through Jude.
3. **One Prophetical:** Revelation.

<sup>3</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1965, p. 107-108.

The following chart illustrates the division and focus of this threefold classification of the New Testament books.<sup>4</sup>

<b>An Overview of the Focus of the New Testament Books</b>		
<b>Historical Books</b>	<b>The Gospels</b> Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	<b>Manifestation</b> The arrival of the Savior and His person and work.
	<b>Acts</b> The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles	<b>Transmission</b> Proclaiming the message of the Savior who has come.
<b>Epistles</b>	<b>Epistles</b> Letters to churches and individuals. Romans through Jude	<b>Explanation</b> Developing the full significance of the person and work of Christ and how this should affect the walk of the Christian in the world.
<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Revelation</b> The apocalypse of the Lord Jesus Christ	<b>Completion</b> Anticipating the end time events and the return of the Lord, His end time reign, and the eternal state.

**THE ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The order of the New Testament books is logical rather than chronological. As Ryrie explains, First come the Gospels, which record the life of Christ; then Acts, which gives the history of the spread of

<sup>4</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, by, Moody, p. 1500.

Christianity; then the letters, which show the development of the doctrines of the church along with its problems; and finally the vision of the second coming of Christ in Revelation.<sup>5</sup>

### **THE COLLECTION OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Originally, the books of the New Testament were separately circulated and only gradually collected together to form what we now know as the New Testament part of the canon of Scripture. By preservation of God, our twenty-seven New Testament books were set apart from many other writings during the early church. They were preserved as a part of the New Testament canon because of their inspiration and apostolic authority. Ryrie has an excellent summary of this process

After they were written, the individual books were not immediately gathered together into the canon, or collection of twenty-seven that comprise the New Testament. Groups of books like Paul's letters and the Gospels were preserved at first by the churches or people to whom they were sent, and gradually all twenty-seven books were collected and formally acknowledged by the church as a whole.

This process took about 350 years. In the second century the circulation of books that promoted false doctrine emphasized the need for distinguishing valid Scripture from other Christian literature. Certain tests were developed to determine which books should be included.

1. Was the book written or approved by an apostle?
2. Were its contents of a spiritual nature?
3. Did it give evidence of being inspired by God?
4. Was it widely received by the churches?

Not all of the twenty-seven books that were eventually recognized as canonical were accepted by all the churches in the early centuries, but this does not mean that those that were not immediately or universally accepted were spurious (false). Letters addressed to individuals (Philemon, 2 and 3 John) would not have been circulated as

widely as those sent to churches. The books most disputed were James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Philemon, but ultimately these were included, and the canon was certified at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397.

Although no original copy of any of the writings that comprise the New Testament has survived, there exist more than 4,500 Greek manuscripts of all or part of the text, plus some 8,000 Latin manuscripts and at least 1,000 other versions into which the original books were translated. Careful study and comparison of these many copies has given us an accurate and trustworthy New Testament.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Historical Books**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As previously mentioned, the New Testament falls into three categories based on their literary makeup—the historical, the epistolary (letters), and the prophetic. The four Gospels make up about 46 percent of the New Testament. The book of Acts raises this total to 60 percent which means that 60 percent of the New Testament traces historical development of Christianity. Christianity is based on historical facts which is inherent in the very nature of the gospel. The gospel is the good news which has been derived from the witness of others. It is history, a testimony of historical facts.

While the four gospels speak of the history of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection, Acts provides the historical outline of the apostles' ministry in the life of the early church. Acts thus becomes crucial to our understanding of much of what we have in the epistles. These epistles were actual letters written to living people in known places. The New Testament, then, is a historical book of the Good News of the living God at work in human history, not just in the past, but in the present and future in light of the promises of God.

#### **THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

Before beginning a survey of each of the Gospels, let us examine the term, "Synoptic Gospels." Though each Gospel has its distinct emphasis and

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 1498.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 1499.

purpose, Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they “see together,” that is, they have the same point of view with regard to the life of Christ, agreeing in subject matter and order. Further, they also present the life of Christ in a way that complements the picture given in the Gospel of John. The following show a number of areas that are common to each of the first three Gospels

- Announcement of the Messiah by John the Baptist (Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3).
- Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3, Mark 1, and Luke 3).
- Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4).
- Teaching and miracles of Jesus (The major portion of each Gospel).
- Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9).
- Trial, death, and burial of Jesus (Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23).
- Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24).

### THE PURPOSE AND DISTINCTIVE FOCUS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

The purpose of the four gospels is to reveal the person of Jesus Christ. Matthew 16:13-16 says, “*When Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi, He asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They answered, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘And who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’*”

Matthew 16:14 gives the four viewpoints of a large number of people in Jesus’ day. Only a few at first recognized Jesus for who He really was, the Son of God. Thus, under the inspiration of the Spirit, the Gospel writers set about to reveal just who Jesus really was concerning His person and work. In a four-fold way, each with their own distinctive focus, but in accounts that are complementary, the four Gospels answer the questions posed by the Lord to the disciples. They

declare just exactly who Jesus is. They show Him to be the Messiah of Old Testament expectation, the Servant of the Lord, the Son of Man, the Son of God, and the One who is the Savior of the World. The Gospels give us God’s portrait of the person and work of Christ with four distinct pictures.

**Matthew** addresses his Gospel primarily to the Jews to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth is their Messiah, the King of the Jews. With the genealogy (earthly line) of Jesus, Matthew also uses ten fulfillment quotations by which he seeks to show that this Jesus, though rejected and crucified, is the long-awaited Messiah of the Old Testament (Matthew 1:23; 2:15; 2:18; 2:23; 4:15; 8:15; 12:18-21; 13:35; 21:5; 27:9-10). Although Jesus was rejected by the nation as a whole and crucified, the King left an empty tomb.

**Mark** seems to be addressed to the Romans, a people of action but of few words, and presents Jesus as the Servant of the Lord who came “*to give His life a ransom for many.*” In keeping with this, Mark, the shortest of the Gospels, is vivid, active or lively, and presents a very clear eyewitness account, especially of the last week of Jesus’ life on earth. Over one-third of this Gospel is devoted to the events of His last and most important week.”<sup>7</sup>

**Luke**, the doctor and historian, presents Jesus as the perfect Son of Man who came “*to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). Luke stresses the true humanity of Christ while also declaring His deity. Some believe that Luke particularly had the Greeks in mind because of their keen interest in human philosophy.

**John** focuses the reader on the deity of Christ by presenting Jesus as the eternal Son of God who gives eternal and abundant life to all who would receive Him by believing in Him (John 1:1-2,12; 3:16-18, 36; 10:10). Though written to all mankind, John’s Gospel is especially written to the church. Five chapters record the farewell messages of Jesus to His disciples to comfort them just a few

<sup>7</sup>Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru The Bible*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1983, p. 305.

hours before His death. In addition, seven miraculous signs of Jesus are set forth to demonstrate that Jesus is the Savior and to encourage people everywhere to believe in Him that they might have life (John 20:30-31).

## Matthew

### (The King of the Jews)

#### AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Each of the Gospels receives its name from the human author who wrote it. Though this first Gospel, as with each of the Gospels, never names its author, the universal testimony of the early church is that the apostle Matthew wrote it, and our earliest textual witnesses attribute it to him by giving it the title, "According to Matthew". Matthew, who was one of the original disciples of Jesus, was a Jew writing to Jews about the One who was their Messiah. His original name was Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Matthew worked as a tax collector in Palestine for the Romans until he was called by the Lord to follow Him (Matthew 9:9, 10; Mark 2:14-15). His quick response may suggest his heart had already been stirred by the ministry of Jesus.

#### DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 50s or 60s

Suggestions for the dating of Matthew range from A.D. 40 to A.D. 140, but "the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is viewed as an event yet future (24:2) requires an earlier date. Some feel that this was the first of the Gospels to be written (about A.D. 50), while others think it was not the first and that it was written in the 60s."<sup>8</sup>

#### THEME AND PURPOSE

As evident in the questions Jesus asked His disciples in 16:13-15, Matthew wrote to Jews to answer their questions about Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus had plainly declared that He was their Messiah. Was He really the Old Testament Messiah predicted by the prophets? If so, why did the religious leaders fail to receive Him and why

didn't He establish the promised kingdom? Will it ever be established, and if so, when? Thus, Matthew is addressed primarily to a Jewish audience to show them that this Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah. This is seen in Jesus' genealogy (1:1-17); the visit of the Magi (2:1-12); His entry into Jerusalem (21:5); the judgment of the nations (25:31-46); the often mentioning of the "kingdom of heaven" that is common with the other Gospels, and in the Old Testament fulfillment of prophecy.

#### CHRIST AS SEEN IN MATTHEW

As previously emphasized, Matthew's goal is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah of Old Testament expectation. He is the son of Abraham and David. Thus, He is the King who comes offering the kingdom. The phrase "the king of heaven" occurs some thirty-two times in this Gospel. In order to show that this Jesus fulfills expectations of the Old Testament, ten times Matthew specifically emphasizes that what happened in the life of Jesus fulfills the Old Testament. Matthew also uses more Old Testament quotations and references than any other book of the New Testament, some 130 times.

#### OUTLINE

##### 1. The Person and Presentation of the King. (1:1-4:25)

- A. His Birth. (1:1-25)
- B. His Recognition. (2:1-12)
- C. His Flight. (3:13-23)
- D. His Forerunner. (3:1-17)
- E. His Temptations. (4:1-11)
- F. His First Disciples. (4:12-25)

##### 2. The Proclamation or Preaching of the King. (5:1-7:29)

- A. Concerning Personal Advance. (5:1-12)
- B. Concerning the Believers' Responsibility. (5:13-20)
- C. Concerning Relationships. (5:21-48)
- D. Concerning Giving, Prayer and Fasting. (6:1-18)
- E. Concerning True Treasure. (6:19-34)
- F. Concerning Fulfillment of the Law. (7:1-29)

<sup>8</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody, p. 1509.



**3. The Power of the King. (8:1-11:1)**

- A. Healing. (8:1-17)
- B. Calling Others. (8:18-22)
- C. Calming the Storm. (8:23-27)
- D. Casting Out Demons. (8:28-34)
- E. More Healing. (9:1-38)
- F. To Direct His Disciples. (10:1-11:1)

**4. The Program and Progressive Rejection of the King. (11:2-16:12)**

- A. Jesus' Praise for John. (11:2-19)
- B. The Call For Repentance. (11:20-30)
- C. The Pharisee's Attack. (12:1-50)
- D. Parables. (13:1-58)
- E. John Beheaded. (14:1-12)
- F. More Miracles. (14:13-36)
- G. Traditions and Hypocrisy. (15:1-20)
- H. More Healings. (15:21-39)
- I. More Attacks. (16:1-12)

**5. The Preparation of the King's Disciples. (16:13-20:28)**

- A. Peter's Confession. (16:13-28)
- B. The Transfiguration. (17:1-13)
- C. The Demoniac. (17:14-23)
- D. Faith and Taxes. (17:24-27)
- E. Faith and Love. (18:1-19:12)
- F. Faith and Children. (19:13-15)
- G. Faith and Discipleship. (19:16-30)
- H. Honoring Agreements. (20:1-16)
- I. Authority or Service? (20:17-28)

**6. The Presentation of the King. (20:29-23:39)**

- A. Healing the Blind. (20:29-34)
- B. Entering Jerusalem. (21:1-27)
- C. Teaching Parables. (21:28-22:14)
- D. Attacked Again. (22:15-46)
- E. Phariseism Exposed. (23:1-39)

**7. The Predictions or Prophecies of the King. (24:1-25:46)**

- A. Prepare For His Return. (24:1-51)

- B. Parables of Preparation. (25:1-30)

- C. Judgment. (25:31-46)

**8. The Passion or Rejection of the King. (26:1-27:66)**

- A. Betrayal and Arrest. (26:1-56)
- B. Trials and Denials. (26:57-75)
- C. Remorse. (27:1-10)
- D. Crucifixion. (27:11-56)
- E. Burial. (27:57-66)

**9. The Proof of the King. (28:1-20)**

- A. He Is Risen. (28:1-10)
- B. Cover Up. (28:11-15)
- C. The Great Commission. (28:16-20)

**Mark****(The Servant of the Lord)****AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK**

Mark's Gospel is actually anonymous since it does not name its author. The title, "According to Mark" was added later by a scribe sometime before A.D. 125, but there is strong and clear evidence (external and internal) that Mark was its author. "The unanimous testimony of the early church fathers is that Mark, an associate of the apostle Peter, was the author."<sup>9</sup> In A.D. 112, Papias cited Mark as "the interpreter of Peter." Walter M. Dunnnett points out, "A comparison of Peter's sermon in Acts 10:36-43 with Mark's Gospel shows the former to be an outline of the life of Jesus which Mark has given in much greater detail."<sup>10</sup>

Though Mark was not one of the original disciples of Christ, he was the son of a woman named Mary, a person of wealth and position in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), a companion of Peter (1 Peter 5:13), and the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). These

<sup>9</sup> John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983,1985, electronic media.

<sup>10</sup> Walter M. Dunnnett, *New Testament Survey*, Evangelical Teacher Training Association, Wheaton, 1967, p. 17.

associations, especially his association with Peter who was evidently Mark's source of information, gave apostolic authority to Mark's Gospel. Since Peter spoke of him as "Mark, my son," (1 Peter 5:13), Peter may have been the one who led Mark to Christ.

In addition, Mark was also a close associate of Paul. Charles Ryrie writes

He had the rare privilege of accompanying Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey but failed to stay with them through the entire trip. Because of this, Paul refused to take him on the second journey, so he went with Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts 15:38-40). About a dozen years later he was again with Paul (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24), and just before Paul's execution he was sent for by the apostle (2 Timothy 4:11). His biography proves that one failure in life does not mean the end of usefulness.<sup>11</sup>

#### DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 50s or 60s

The dating of Mark is somewhat difficult, though many scholars believe this was the first of the four Gospels, since virtually all of the verses found in Mark are quoted in the other three. Mark was written before A.D. 70 and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (13:2).

#### THEME AND PURPOSE

The theme of Mark is "Christ the Servant." The emphasis on service and sacrifice is clearly taught in 10:45, "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many.*" A careful reading of Mark shows how the two themes of this verse, service and sacrifice, are unfolded by Mark.

Mark is addressed primarily to the Roman or Gentile reader. As a result, the genealogy of Jesus is omitted along with the Sermon on the Mount. The condemnations by the religious leaders also receive less attention, since they would have been more culturally relevant to a Jewish audience. Since Mark presents Jesus as the Worker, the Servant of the Lord, the book focuses on the

activity of Christ as a faithful Servant effectively going about His work.

#### CHRIST AS SEEN IN MARK

Of course, Mark's contribution especially centers on presenting the Savior as the Sacrificing Servant who gives His life obediently for the ransom of many. The focus is clearly on His ministry to the physical and spiritual needs of others always putting them before His own needs. This emphasis on the Savior's servant activity is seen in the following

Only eighteen out of Christ's seventy parables are found in Mark-some of these are only one sentence in length-but he lists over half of Christ's thirty-five miracles, the highest proportion in the Gospels.<sup>12</sup>

#### OUTLINE

##### 1. The Preparation of the Servant for Service. (1:1-13)

- A. His Forerunner. (1:1-8)
- B. His Baptism. (1:9-11)
- C. His Temptations. (1:12-13)

##### 2. The Preaching of the Servant in Galilee. (1:14-9:50)

- A. His Mission. (1:14-2:12)
- B. Initial Opposition. (2:13-3:35)
- C. Parables. (4:1-34)
- D. Miracles. (4:35-5:43)
- E. Growing Opposition. (6:1-8:26)
- F. Peter's Confession of Christ. (8:27-33)
- G. Cost of Discipleship. (8:34-9:1)
- H. The Transfiguration. (9:2-13)
- I. Demon-possessed Son is Delivered. (9:14-29)
- J. Jesus Foretells His Death. (9:30-32)

##### 3. The Preaching of the Servant in Perea. (9:33-10:52)

- A. Jesus Teaches to Prepare the Disciples. (9:33-10:45)
- B. Blind Bartimaeus Is Healed. (10:46-52)

<sup>11</sup> Ryrie, p. 1574.

<sup>12</sup> Wilkinson/Boa, p. 321.

#### 4. The Passion of the Servant in Jerusalem. (11:1-15:47)

- A. His Formal Presentation. (11:1-19)
- B. His Instruction on Prayer. (11:20-26)
- C. His Opposition by the Leaders. (11:27-12:44)
- D. His Instruction on the Future. (13:1-37)
- E. His Passion. (14:1-15:47)

#### 5. The Prosperity of the Servant in Resurrection. (16:1-20)

- A. His Resurrection. (16:1-8)
- B. His Appearances. (16:9-18)
- C. His Ascension. (16:19-20)

### Luke

#### (The Son of Man)

#### AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Both Luke and Acts, which are addressed to Theophilus as a two-volume work, are attributed to Luke, and while Luke is nowhere named as the author of either, a great deal of evidence points to Luke, “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14) as the author of both books.

Significantly, these two books make up over one-fourth of the Greek New Testament. The only places where we find his name in the New Testament are Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. It is also believed that Luke referred to himself in the “we” sections of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16). These “we” sections of Acts show that the author was a close associate and traveling companion of Paul. Since all but two of Paul’s associates are named in the third person, the list can be narrowed to Titus and Luke. By process of elimination, Paul’s “dear friend Luke, the doctor” (Colossians 4:14), and “fellow worker” (Philemon 24) becomes the most likely candidate.

It seems evident from Colossians 4:10-14 that Luke was a Gentile because Paul makes a distinction between him and the Jews. Here the apostle states that, of his fellow-workers, Aristarchus, Mark, and John were the only ones who were Jews. This suggests that Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, also mentioned in these verses,

were Gentiles, not Jews. “Luke’s obvious skill with the Greek language and his phrase ‘their own language’ in Acts 1:19 also imply that he was not Jewish.”<sup>13</sup>

We know nothing about his early life or conversion except that he was not an eyewitness of the life of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:2). Though a physician by profession, he was primarily an evangelist, writing this gospel and the book of Acts and accompanying Paul in missionary work. Luke was with Paul at the time of the apostle’s martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:11), but of his later life we have no certain facts.<sup>14</sup>

#### DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 60

Two commonly suggested periods for dating the Gospel of Luke are: (1) A.D. 59-63, and (2) the 70s or the 80s, but the conclusion of Acts shows us that Paul was in Rome, and since Luke is the former work, written before Acts (Acts 1:1), the Gospel of Luke must have been written in the earlier period, around A.D. 60.

#### THEME AND PURPOSE

The purpose of Luke is clearly stated in the first four verses of his Gospel.

*“Now many have undertaken to compile an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, like the accounts passed on to us by those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word from the beginning. So it seemed good to me as well, because I have followed all things carefully from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may have certainty regarding the things you were taught.” (Luke 1:1-4)*

Several things need to be noticed regarding his approach to presenting the gospel

Luke states that his own work was stimulated by the work of others (1:1), that he consulted eyewitnesses (1:2), and that he sifted (examined)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 327.

<sup>14</sup> Ryrie, p. 1614.

and arranged the information (1:3) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to instruct Theophilus in the historical reliability of the faith (1:4). This is a carefully researched and documented writing.<sup>15</sup>

As a Gentile, Luke must have felt responsible to write his two-volume account of the life of Christ so it would be available to Gentile readers. This seems evident from the fact that Luke “translates Aramaic terms with Greek words and explains Jewish customs and geography to make his Gospel more intelligible to his original Greek readership.”<sup>16</sup>

Luke, written by the “the beloved physician,” is the most comprehensive and longest of the Gospels. It presents the Savior as the Son of Man, the Perfect Man who came to seek and save the lost (19:10). In Matthew we see Jesus as Son of David, Israel’s King; in Mark we see Him as the Lord’s Servant, serving others; in Luke we see Him as the Son of Man, meeting man’s needs, a perfect man among men, chosen from men, tested among men, and supremely qualified to be the Savior and High Priest. In Matthew we see groupings of significant events, in Mark we see the shortened versions of significant events, but in Luke we see more details of these events by the physician/historian.

His perfect human nature as the Son of Man, yet also Son of God, is brought out by the fact that His physical birth with his genealogy is traced all the way back to Adam (3:38; note that Matthew goes back only to Abraham). His mental development is recorded in 2:40-52 and His moral and spiritual perfection is also evidenced at His baptism by the voice of the Father from heaven and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit (3:21-22). So in Jesus we have One who is perfect physical, mental, and spiritual manhood.

### **CHRIST AS SEEN IN LUKE**

The humanity and compassion of Jesus are repeatedly emphasized in Luke’s Gospel. Luke gives the most complete account of Christ’s ancestry, birth, and development. He is the ideal

Son of Man who identified with the sorrow of sinful man in order to carry our sorrows and offer us the priceless gift of salvation. Jesus alone fulfills the Greek ideal of human perfection.<sup>17</sup>

### **OUTLINE**

#### **1. The Introduction: The Method and Purpose of Writing. (1:1-4)**

#### **2. The Identification of the Son of Man with Men. (1:5-4:13)**

A. The Events Preceding Christ’s Birth. (1:5-56)

B. The Events Accompanying Christ’s Birth. (1:57-2:38)

C. The Events During Christ’s Childhood. (2:39-52)

D. The Events Preceding Christ’s Presentation. (3:1-4:13)

#### **3. The Ministry of the Son of Man to Men. (4:14-9:50)**

A. The Presentation of Christ. (4:14-30)

B. The Demonstration of Christ’s Powers. (4:31-5:28)

C. The Explanation of Christ’s Program. (5:29-6:49)

D. The Expansion of Christ’s Program. (7:1-9:50)

#### **4. The Rejection of the Son of Man by Men. (9:51-19:27)**

A. The Increasing Opposition to Christ. (9:51-11:54)

B. The Instruction in View of Christ’s Rejection. (12:1-19:27)

#### **5. The Suffering of the Son of Man for Men. (19:28-23:56)**

#### **6. The Authentication of the Son of Man before Men. (24:1-53)**

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 1614.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkinson/Boa, p. 328.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 328.

## John

(Eternal Son of God)

### AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

From early in the second century, church tradition has attributed the fourth Gospel to John the apostle, son of Zebedee and brother of James. Jesus named John and James, “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). Salome, his mother, served Jesus in Galilee and was present at His crucifixion (Mark 15:40-41). He was not only close to Jesus as one of the Twelve, but he is usually identified as “the beloved disciple” (13:23; 18:15, 16; 19:26-27). John was one of the inner circle of disciples and one of three Christ took with Him to the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1). He was also closely associated with Peter. After the ascension of Christ, John became one whom Paul identified as the “pillars” of the church (Galatians 2:9).

Strictly speaking, the fourth Gospel is anonymous. No name of its author is given in the text. This is not surprising because a gospel differs in literary form from an epistle (letter). The letters of Paul each begin with his name, which was the normal custom of letter writers in the ancient world. None of the human authors of the four Gospels identified himself by name, but the authors indirectly revealed themselves within the writing, and were well known by tradition.

### DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 85-90

This Gospel has been known in the church as the “Fourth” one, and the early church believed that it was written when John was an old man. Therefore a date between 85 and 95 is probable. John 21:18, 23 require the passing of some time, with Peter becoming old and John outliving him.<sup>18</sup>

### THEME AND PURPOSE

Probably more than any other book of the Bible, John clearly states the theme and purpose of his Gospel. Significantly, this statement of purpose follows Thomas’ encounter with the resurrected Savior. Thomas had doubted the reality of the resurrection (John 20:24-25) and immediately

after this profession of doubt the Lord appeared to the disciples and addressed Thomas with these words, *“Put your finger here, and examine my hands. Extend your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe. Thomas then declared, ‘My Lord and my God!’ The Lord then said to Thomas, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed’”* (20:26-29). It is following this exchange and the focus on the need of believing in Jesus that John states the theme and purpose of his book, *“Now Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples that are not recorded in this book. But these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”* (20:30-31)

In keeping with this statement of purpose, John selected seven sign-miracles to reveal the person and mission of Christ that it might bring people to believe in Jesus as Savior. These signs revealed Jesus’ glory (John 1:14; Isaiah 35:1-2; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13). The seven signs consisted of the following:

1. Turning water into wine. (2:1-11)
2. Healing the nobleman’s son. (4:46-54)
3. Healing the crippled person. (5:1-18)
4. Feeding the multitude. (6:6-13)
5. Walking the water. (6:16-21)
6. Giving sight to the blind. (9:1-7)
7. Raising Lazarus. (11:1-45).

John’s special theme and purpose is also easily discerned by the distinctive nature of his Gospel when compared to Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

When one compares the Gospel of John with the other three Gospels, he is struck by the distinctiveness of John’s presentation. John does not include Jesus’ genealogy, birth, baptism, temptation, casting out of demons, parables, transfiguration, instituting of the Lord’s Supper, His agony in Gethsemane, or His Ascension. John’s presentation of Jesus emphasizes His ministry in Jerusalem, the feasts of the Jewish nation, Jesus’ contacts with individuals in private conversations (3:1-4:38; 18:28-19:16), and His

<sup>18</sup> Walvoord/Zuck, electronic media.

ministry to His disciples (13:1-17:26). The major body of the Gospel is contained in a “Book of Signs” (2:1-12:50) which embraces seven miracles or “signs” which proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. This “Book of Signs” also contains great discourses of Jesus which explain and proclaim the significance of the signs. For example, following the feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15), Jesus revealed Himself as the Bread of Life which the heavenly Father gives for the life of the world (6:25-35). Another notable and exclusive feature of the Fourth Gospel is the series of “I AM” statements that were made by Jesus (6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5).

The distinctiveness of this Gospel must be kept in perspective. The Gospels were not intended as biographies. Each Gospel writer selected from a much larger pool of information the material which would serve his purpose. It has been estimated that if all the words from the lips of Jesus cited in Matthew, Mark, and Luke were read aloud, the amount of time taken would be only about three hours.<sup>19</sup>

### CHRIST AS SEEN IN JOHN

While the deity of Christ is a prominent theme in the Bible in many places, there is no other book that presents a more powerful case for the deity of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God. The fact is that one who is identified as “The man called Jesus” (9:11) is also called “God, the One and Only” (1:18), “Christ, the Son of the Living God” (6:69) or “the Holy One of God” (6:69).

This declaration of the deity of Jesus Christ is further developed by seven “I AM” statements made by Jesus and recorded in John’s Gospel. These seven statements are

1. I am the “Bread of Life.” (6:35)
2. I am the “Light of the World.” (8:12)
3. I am the “Gate.” (10:7, 9)
4. I am the “Good Shepherd.” (10:11, 14)
5. I am the “Resurrection and the Life.” (11:25)
6. I am the “Way, the Truth, and the Life.” (14:6)
7. I am the “True Vine.” (15:1, 5).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Another distinctive feature of John’s Gospel, again focusing on the person of Christ, are the five witnesses that testify to Jesus as the Son of God. In John 5:31-47, Jesus responds to the arguments of His opponents. They had charged that His claims lacked sufficient witnesses to confirm His testimony so Jesus shows them that their charges are not true by presenting other witnesses to the validity of His claims. Other witnesses include His Father (5:32, 37), John the Baptist (5:33), His miracles (5:36), the Scriptures (5:39), and Moses (5:46). Later, in 8:14 He declares that His witness is indeed true. On certain occasions, Jesus equates Himself with the Old Testament “I AM,” or Yahweh (4:25-26; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5-6, 8). Some of the most crucial affirmations of His deity are found in 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28.<sup>20</sup>

### OUTLINE

#### 1. The Introduction: The Incarnation of the Son of God. (1:1-18)

- A. The Deity of Christ. (1:1-2)
- B. The Preincarnate Work of Christ. (1:3-5)
- C. The Forerunner of Christ. (1:6-8)
- D. The Rejection of Christ. (1:9-11)
- E. The Acceptance of Christ. (1:12-13)
- F. The Incarnation of Christ. (1:14-18)

#### 2. The Presentation of the Son of God. (1:19-4:54)

- A. By John the Baptist. (1:19-34)
- B. To John’s Disciples. (1:35-51)
- C. At the Wedding in Cana. (2:1-11)
- D. At the Temple in Jerusalem. (2:12-35)
- E. To Nicodemus. (3:1-21)
- F. By John the Baptist. (3:22-36)
- G. To the Samaritan Woman. (4:1-42)
- H. To an Official of Capernaum. (4:43-54)

#### 3. The Opposition to the Son of God. (5:1-12:50)

- A. At the Feast in Jerusalem. (5:1-47)

<sup>20</sup> Wilkinson/Boa, p. 338.

B. During the Time of the Passover in Galilee. (6:1-71)

C. At the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. (7:1-10:21)

D. At the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem. (10:22-42)

E. At Bethany. (11:1-12:11)

F. At Jerusalem. (12:12-50)

**4. The Instruction by the Son of God. (13:1-16:33)**

A. Concerning Forgiveness. (13:1-20)

B. Concerning His Betrayal. (13:21-30)

C. Concerning His Departure. (13:31-38)

D. Concerning Heaven. (14:1-14)

E. Concerning the Holy Spirit. (14:15-26)

F. Concerning Peace. (14:27-31)

G. Concerning Fruitfulness. (15:1-17)

H. Concerning the World. (15:18-16:6)

I. Concerning the Holy Spirit. (16:7-15)

J. Concerning His Return. (16:16-33)

**5. The Intercession of the Son of God. (17:1-26)**

**6. The Crucifixion of the Son of God. (18:1-19:42)**

**7. The Resurrection of the Son of God. (20:1-31)**

A. The Empty Tomb. (20:1-9)

B. The Appearances of the Risen Lord. (20:10-31)

**8. The Conclusion: The Appearance by the Lake. (21:1-25)**

A. The Appearance to the Seven Disciples. (21:1-14)

B. The Words to Peter. (21:15-23)

C. The Conclusion of the Gospel. (21:24-25)

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