

# **The Clementine Gospel Tradition**

By Dennis Barton

2017 Edition

*In memory of Dennis Barton (dec. Friday March 24, 2017)*

## Introduction

For 2000 years, Christians have accepted that the four Gospels provide reliable historical facts about the life of Jesus. They have also accepted that the ancient historians provided reliable accounts regarding the origins of the Gospels. Borrowing had obviously taken place between the authors of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But who had borrowed from whom was of little academic interest until 1764.

It was then that Henry Owen, an Anglican Vicar, proposed that Mark wrote after Luke. Owen's idea was ignored in Britain and, although discussed in Germany, conservative scholars rejected the idea. Their main reason was because it contradicted Jerome's sequence of Matthew-Mark-Luke-John.

Yet Owen had arrived at his theory by critically examining the wording used by the authors, and this prompted others to use the same technique. In 1838, Christian Weisse claimed that as Mark's Gospel was in poor grammatical Greek, compared to the other two, he must have written prior to them. His reason was that a 'borrower' would not deliberately turn good quality Greek into poor quality. His idea that Mark wrote first became known as: The Markan Priority Theory.

Non-believers in the German universities, supported by the government, championed this theory because all the ancient historians had said that Matthew wrote first. The acceptance of Markan Priority would mean all the early Christian historians were seriously wrong and thus unreliable in all they reported.

They could also argue that as most scholars dated Mark as writing around 64 AD, Matthew and Luke must have been written much later. Therefore, both Gospels would have been authored by anonymous individuals who had never met Christ or anyone who had. Their portrayal of the life of Christ and of Christianity would not have been based on historical facts, but on their personal faith. As such, the Gospels told us of a Christ of faith and not the Jesus of history.

The acceptance of such a view of Scripture could devastate Evangelical Christianity. And also undermine the Catholic Church's claim to having been historically founded by Jesus.

Christians answered those promoting Markan Priority by basing their stance on the reliability of Jerome having listed the Gospels as Matthew- Mark- Luke- John. But although they firmly challenged the reliability of the Markan Priority theory, they failed to explain the 'poor' Greek of Mark.

On the other side, Markans found it necessary to rely on an alleged historical document they called Q – although there was not the slightest historical evidence that it ever existed. The two sides fought each other to a stand-still.

*Dei Verbum* of the Second Vatican Council maintained that eyewitness Apostles and their associates had authored the four Gospels. The Council also allowed freer research which led to a third theory emerging (or rather, Owen's theory re-emerging in a modern form). This aimed to reconcile modern methods of critical analysis with the historical evidence.

Harold Riley, an Anglican priest, had become convinced of the correctness of Henry Owen's original sequence of Matthew-Luke-Mark. About the same time, Bernard Orchard OSB, a Catholic priest, pointed out that many early writers hadn't used Jerome's sequence.

In 1987, they co-authored *The Order of the Synoptics*. Riley showed how Mark always goes forward when quoting alternatively from Matthew and Luke. For Riley, the way doublets were formed showed conclusively that Luke had written before Mark. Two years later, he refuted criticism of his analysis.

In the same book, Orchard listed the authors prior to Jerome who had used the Matthew-Luke-Mark order. He also quoted the words of Clement of Alexandria, "According to the very earliest priests...the first written of the Gospels were those having the genealogies."

The co-authored book was 'a work in progress'. There was still need for further research. But studies in archaeology and linguistics came to the aid of the authors. Archaeologists established that the common speech used at the time of the Apostles was Koine Greek, not classical Greek. Mark had not been writing in 'poor' classical Greek but in Koine (common) Greek. In 1991, E. R. Roberts, a Baptist, also showed that Greek shorthand was widely used at the time.

Orchard was now in a stronger position to propose his ground-breaking theory. Luke, who had composed his Gospel for the Gentiles, had not known Jesus. So, he needed an eyewitness Apostle to endorse his manuscript as being a true Gospel. To give his endorsement, Peter gave a talk in which he merged together the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. He spoke in Koine Greek and his words were recorded in shorthand by his secretary Mark.

The errors and 'poor' quality of Mark's Gospel were not suddenly discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bishop Papias, who lived when some of those present at the talk would still have been alive, reported that John the Apostle had defended the quality of Mark's Gospel. Papias wrote, "Mark didn't err at all when he wrote certain things just as he (Peter) had recalled them. For he had but one intention, not to leave out anything he had heard, nor falsify anything in them."

If Mark's document had been edited it would have ceased to be a true report of Peter's talk. This explains why scriptural errors in Mark's Gospel (1:2 and 2:26), as well as poor grammar, were not corrected.

Some years later, Clement of Alexandria was lay head teacher of the diocesan school of Alexandria. This diocese had been established by Mark and had a good library. He reported that a large audience had begged Mark to quickly provide them with copies of Peter's talk, which he did.

Mark's Gospel was shorter than Luke's and, as Peter's secretary Mark would have had an established team of copyists. So, Peter's talk (i.e. Mark's Gospel) would have been published before Luke's Gospel. Today it would be known as a first edition. Clement then reports that when Peter learned of the good it was doing, he approved a second edition for the churches.

Therefore, although the Gospels were **composed** in the Matthew-Luke-Mark-John order, they were **published** in the Matthew-Mark-Luke-Mark- John order. This is the reason why all the

historians agreed that Matthew wrote first and John last, but the sequence of listing the other two varied.

When Jerome sent his Latin translation to Pope Damasus I, he explained that he had adopted the Matthew-Mark-Luke-John order. This indicates it was not the only one in use at the time. For example, Origen's used a different sequence to that of Clement, who had been his teacher.

Irenaeus and Tertullian used the Matthew-Luke-Mark order, as did Jerome in his book *Illustrious Men*. Jerome also wrote in it, "Mark is he whose Gospel consists of Peter's narration and Mark's writing."

Augustine, in his first book, mentioned Jerome's order as being in use. But, when he discussed the Gospels in his fourth book, he wrote that Mark had drawn on ideas provided by Matthew and Luke. Today, many Eastern Church liturgies still use the sequence Matthew-Luke-Mark-John.

If we accept that the order of **composition** was Matthew-Luke-Mark, while Jerome utilized the order of **publication** for his Vulgate, there is no problem.

Once Orchard's thesis is accepted, answers to other questions suggest themselves. For example, why are the last 12 verses of Mark disjointed from the main text? In 1987, Orchard speculated that these verses may have been notes for a further talk. But he later became interested in the suggestion that they were replies to questions provoked by the new information contained in Luke's Gospel. When examined as such, they do make sense.

The use of 'he' in Mark 16:9 is inexplicable unless we accept that the word "Jesus" was contained in a question. Matthew mentioned Mary Magdalene, and Luke mentions that a Mary of Magdalene had been possessed by devils. When someone asked if she was the same person, Peter confirms that she was. In the ensuing verses, we see Peter confirming details when he was a witness of an incident but otherwise quoting others.

Archaeologists have found two editions of Mark's Gospel, one including and one without these verses. This supports Clements claim that a second edition was created after Peter's approval.

Orchard died before he was able to set out his findings in full. As an admirer, I collected much of his work so as to preserve it and make it better known. This is contained in the following chapters, together with the addition of supporting evidence and comments added by myself. I hope you will have an interesting read.

# Contents

## [Introduction](#)

## [Contents](#)

### Part 1 - Basic Evidence for the Clementine Tradition

[Chapter 1](#)      Rediscovery of The Clementine Gospel Tradition

[Chapter 2](#)      The Synoptic Zig- Zag and Doublets

[Chapter 3](#)      The Origin of Mark's Gospel

[Chapter 4](#)      Mark's Gospel and Luke-Acts

[Chapter 5](#)      Anti-Judaism in Matthew

[Chapter 6](#)      Early Historical Evidence

[Chapter 7](#)      Liturgies of the Eastern Churches

[Chapter 8](#)      The mythical 'Q' , The Jerusalem Prophecies,

[Chapter 9](#)      Understanding 'According to...'

[Chapter 10](#)     The Roman World

[Chapter 11](#)     The Jewish World and Shorthand

[Chapter 12](#)     2000 Year Timeline

### Part 2 - More Evidence Compatible with the Clementine Tradition

[Chapter 13](#)     Dating Matthew

[Chapter 14](#)     Hebrew Matthew

[Chapter 15](#)     Luke and Acts

[Chapter 16](#)     Luke's Infancy narrative

<a href="#"><u>Chapter 17</u></a>	Luke's Style
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 18</u></a>	The Epistles & Pseudonymity
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 19</u></a>	The Epistle to the Hebrews
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 20</u></a>	John's Gospel: Gnosticism and Supplementation
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 21</u></a>	The Impact of Markan Priority on Teaching Christianity
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 22</u></a>	References

## Chapter 1

### Rediscovery of The Clementine Gospel Tradition

It is generally agreed that borrowing took place between the authors of Matthew, Luke and Mark. It is also agreed that Mark's gospel has poor grammar compared to the other two. Advocates of the Markan Priority theory claim that it would be inconceivable for Mark to have changed the well-constructed Greek into poor Greek. He must have written prior to the others. Sounds logical but it contradicts all the ancient historians who record that Matthew wrote first.

Opponents of Markan Priority have taken their stand on the evidence of the historians. But have, until recently, failed to provide a reason for the poor Greek of Mark. They have also tried to uphold the sequence of writing as: Matthew-Mark-Luke, used by Jerome.

Yet, B. H. Streeter, the main promoter during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in England of Markan priority, came close to partly solving the problem. He wrote, regarding the difference between the style of Mark and the other two:

It is the difference which always exists between the spoken and the written language. Mark reads like a shorthand account of a story by an impromptu speaker – with all the repetitions, redundancies, and digressions, which are characteristic of living speech. And it seems to me most probable that his Gospel, like Paul's Epistles, was taken down from rapid dictation by word of mouth (BHSG 163).

Streeter was presuming Mark had taken down the words in private, while acting as a personal secretary. So Streeter was not deflected from advocating Markan priority. But it was in the 1980s that Bernard Orchard saw Streeter's observation as significant. Orchard became particularly interested in the verses of Mark where scripture is misquoted, yet not corrected.

Orchard speculated that as Luke had not been an eyewitness to Christ's life, Paul asked Peter to endorse Luke's account. He further speculated that Peter had responded to Paul's request by giving public talks, quoting from Matthew and Luke while adding comments of his own. Orchard suggested that Mark's Gospel was an exact transcript of these talks in common Koine (common) Greek, not classical Greek. This would make the sequence of writing: Matthew-Luke-Mark.

In 1991 E. R. Richards established, on the basis of new data, that Greek shorthand was in use before 52 BC. He explained, "...it had long been the custom for public men to have their speeches recorded by competent shorthand writers" (BOO 13).

This changed Orchard's speculation into an hypothesis. This he published in 1993 as *The Fourfold Gospel Hypothesis* (BOF 1). As Mark took down the public talks verbatim in shorthand, they contained blemishes one finds in unedited common speech. Orchard explained:



Our thesis, that Peter was going to restrict his testimony to what he could vouch for by his own personal memories of the Ministry, is supported by his omission of Luke's birth narratives, his Central Section, his Resurrection stories, and his omission of all that Luke himself has left out of the six composite Matthean Discourses.

He [Peter] reinstates Luke's Great Omission (Mt 14:22-16:12), and furthermore reintroduces a few Matthean stories omitted by Luke, such as the pericope about divorce (Mt 19: 3-9), and adds a few stories of his own. This leads us to formulate the following hypothesis regarding Peter's handling of Luke as follows:

Peter's principal aim was to authenticate the text of Luke; and he decided to use the occasion to add individual comments of his own, prompted by his own personal memories, and his intimate knowledge of the Gospel of Matthew which had been circulating in the Church for at least twenty years as a handbook. He therefore concentrates on following Luke in order, pericope by pericope, as closely as his own personal memories will permit. He holds open the scroll of Luke, but the scroll of Matthew is also within reach, though he can quote word for word by heart whenever he wants to.

And so whilst steadily following the order of Luke he feels entirely free either to vary the wording of Luke in favor of Matthew's text, or to introduce his own variant of Matthew, in virtue of his being the eyewitness of the events he is describing. At the same time he has no problem in agreeing to follow Luke's alternative arrangement of the stories in Mt 3:1 – 13:58, nor does he need as a general rule to refer to the scroll of Matthew while he follows Luke freely and even conflates it with Matthew. (BOA 388-389).

Harold Riley, the close associate of Orchard, stressed the ongoing nature of this conflation. Mark's gospel keeps going forward when borrowing from the other two. He never retraces his steps by rolling the scrolls backwards. So stories of the centurion's servant and the messengers of the Baptist are omitted. To find them, Peter would have had to wind back the scroll (RO 11).

In only one place is there a change in order, and it is significant that this is Luke 6:12-19. Here the lines of Matthew and Luke are so close together Peter could see them at the same time. Rolling back was not required.

Markans argue that if Mark wrote after Matthew and Luke he would not have left out the infancy narratives, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes and the Resurrection. They argue that it would be more likely that Mark wrote first and that Matthew and Luke added them.

Now this would be logical if they were all writing unknown to one another and in private, but we have no evidence to presume this. The omission of the items does not cause a problem when we accept that Mark was recording Peter's voice conflating the other two. He conflated only what was parallel and convenient.

To quote Orchard again:

From the start the speaker determined to confine himself to the pericopes where Matthew and Luke have for the most part common material and are generally in parallel, that is, between 3:1 (=Luke 3:1) and Matthew 28:10 (=Luke 24:12). Thus Mark omitted the birth and resurrection narratives, the whole of Luke's central section, and both great sermons...But he did adopt Luke's summary version of Matthew's discourses on mission, community, parables and eschatology (RO 268).

The Our Father and the Beatitudes were included in the two great sermons or in Luke's Central Section, so were not in the segments conflated. The examination of the Gospels in the light of the above produces interesting insights, for which we have room for only a few examples.

Note how often 'And' is used to link sentences and clauses. This is a telltale sign of an untutored impromptu speaker of Greek. We have all heard speakers, especially if they are working from notes in front of them, repeatedly using 'and' or 'then' or even 'erh'. In a private composition, Peter and Mark would have adopted a more polished format.

The words in Chapter 1 verses 2 and 3 lack a main verb, so do not form complete sentences. While Mark omits important aspects of the life of Christ that were reported by Matthew and Luke, he adds trivial details. These are a puzzle for Markans. If we accept the Clementine tradition as developed by Orchard, the puzzle is solved. Peter was omitting sections of the other Gospels where it was difficult to conflate while adding short personal memories. These additions would be very human for a speaker.

Peter would have been very familiar with Matthew's Gospel, but Luke's would have brought back half-forgotten memories. As Peter read Luke 8:22-56 he recalled the scene and spontaneously mentioned the position of the cushion (Mark 4:38). Matthew in 14:19 tells of the multitudes sitting down on the grass, and Luke in 9:14 of them doing so in companies. Mark in 6:39 conflates the two accounts by speaking of both the grass and the companies. But this must have brought the scene to mind and he remembers something, which at the time had caught his attention – the grass was green in that arid area.

The cautionary aside, "with persecutions" (Mark 10:30), is thrown out as an afterthought during an impassioned delivery. In Mark 12:41-44 the speaker realizes his audience has not understood what he meant by "two tines", so he explains that they are the equivalent of the smallest Roman coin. In Mark 3:30, he feels bound to restate the reason for the condemnation in the previous verse 29. In Mark 7:20, when Peter is teaching about a Jewish eating taboo, he interrupts his flow with an explanation for the non-Jews present.

The insertion of "the father of Alexander and Rufus" (Mark 15:21) at such a sorrowful moment indicates the remark had some personal relevance to Peter's audience. It calls to mind that a Rufus was present in Rome (Rom. 16:13). In Mark 16:4, Peter interjects the exuberant comment "for it was mighty big". This is known to grammarians as an 'intensifier' used to create a sense of wonder. A trained writer of Greek would not have used it while he sat at his desk. It is such interjections that give this gospel its fresh and vivid style.

Redundant clauses (doublets) are often found in transcripts when a speaker has been guided by two similar documents. These are a problem for Markans, yet may be expected from a fisherman, quoting from two documents, while speaking in a foreign language.

As Orchard wrote:

...the Gospel of Mark is in no way the smooth product of a skilled author sitting at a desk, but has all the vividness, the inconsistencies, and the peculiar turns of speech, that one finds in actual transcripts of live speeches, for example, sudden breaks, asides, anacolutha [incoherence within a sentence] and so forth (RO 273).

Two scriptural allusions in Mark are significant. The first is in chapter 1. Peter opens his talk with a title. He says he is going to quote from Isaiah, but quotes Malachi 3:1. As the words leave his lips he realizes his error so runs on with Isaiah. It passes in a moment but the shorthand secretary has recorded the slip of the tongue for posterity.

The second error is in chapter 2:26, where Abiathar is referred to as the high priest who gave David and his companions the Bread of the Presence to eat (1 Samuel 21:1-6). Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar, was the high priest at that time. Again, the shorthand recorder has caught the slip. A writer in the quiet of his room or taking private dictation would have made corrections, but if viewed as an unedited verbatim record of a talk, problems do not arise.

The Gospel of Matthew has 18,293 words and that of Luke 19,376, which are just the right lengths to fill a standard papyrus roll. Mark, with 11,025 words, leaves nearly half his roll unused. This is a pointer to Matthew and Luke carefully planning their compositions, while the publication of Mark had not been planned.

Exegetes have noted the way Mark ends so abruptly at 16:8 without reporting any resurrection appearances. Orchard suggests that the two existing accounts of Christ's resurrection appearances, like his infancy, were too dissimilar to be easily conflated (RO 271-2). Mark's Gospel narrative stops exactly at the point where Matthew and Luke are no longer able to be conflated (BOM 112). Also, Paul was able to provide his own witness of Christ coming to him (1 Cor. 15:18), so could endorse this part of Luke's Gospel himself.

When we compare Orchard's hypothesis with the early historical records, (see Chapter 9) we find complete agreement. It is instructive to read Papias where he defends Mark's unedited wording, Justin who mentions Peter's memoirs, Irenaeus's statement that Mark recorded Peter, Clement reporting the delivery of the talks and the requests of the audience, The Anti-Marcionite Prologue adding extra details, and Eusebius making a summary of the records.

The first chapter of many modern books often admit that Markan Priority is no more than a theory, but the author treats it as a fact in his remaining chapters. Following books by Chapman, Butler, Riley, Farmer, Orchard, Robinson, Peabody and others, many accept that the evidence for Markan priority has now ceased to be convincing. But inertia is now a major ally of the theory.

Dennis Nineham in the 1970s wrote that he held to Markan priority, “Not because there are any really good arguments for it, but because there do not seem to be any better arguments for any other position” (SNTW 362).

Orchard’s theory may be summarized as: Matthew wrote for the Palestinian Jews about 45 AD. Luke, using Matthew and his own researches, wrote for the Gentiles about 60 AD. Then, at the request of Paul, Peter gave five talks to show his approval of Luke’s gospel. John then clarified and supplemented the three gospels, so the four gospels present the one Gospel of Jesus Christ.

During its modern development, this approach has appeared under a variety of names: the hypothesis of Owen, the Griesbach theory, the two-gospel hypothesis, and the fourfold gospel hypothesis of Orchard. To avoid confusion, and in recognition that Clement of Alexandria was the first to write of the Matthew-Luke-Mark sequence, we are referring to this approach as: The Clementine Gospel Tradition.

## Chapter 2

### The Synoptic Zig-Zag and Doublets

The Clementine tradition, revived in 1764 by Henry Owen, holds that Mark's Gospel was formed by the conflation (two streams mixing to form one stream) of Matthew and Luke (HO). When placed side by side (a synoptic arrangement) we can see where borrowing has taken place.

A synoptic arrangement may vary slightly depending on how the gospel verses and pericopes are divided. (A pericope is a small section or sub-section of a verse). When illustrating this zig-zag effect below, the works of several authors were consulted including H. Riley (RO 4-18), Orchard (RO 263-272), and Meijboom (JJK 151-155).

Where Matthew and Luke are identical, we are not able to decide which gospel Mark/Peter was following at that moment, but a small variation can provide a clue. For example, at the Transfiguration, Mark follows Matthew's "six days" rather than Luke's "about eight days".

The chart illustrates the alternating borrowing of complete verses, but is not detailed enough to indicate the borrowing of individual words or phrases. For example, although Mark 6:7-16 as a whole is drawn from Luke, the words in 6:14 are from Matthew. Although Mark 8:27-10:40 is mainly taken from Matthew, the influence of Luke may be seen in 8:38 and 9:32-33. (JJK 153-5).

From the shaded areas we are able to see how Mark's Gospel borrowed alternatively from the existing two Gospels. OF indicates: 'The Our Father' and B: 'The Beatitudes'. Mark's own verses are indicated by { }. T is where Orchard suggests Peter started each talk.

<b>SYNOPTIC ARRANGEMENT</b>		<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>
The Baptist and Jesus' Baptism	T1	<b>3:1-17</b>	1:1-11	3:1-22
Temptation		<b>4:1-11</b>	1:12-13	4:1-13
Into Galilee		<b>4:12-17</b>	1:14-15	4:1-13
Call of Four Disciples		<b>4:18-22</b>	1:16-20	
Events at Capernaum			1:21-38	<b>4:31-43</b>
A preaching tour		4:23	1:39	<b>4:44</b>
The Leper			1:40-45	<b>5:12-16</b>
Five Occasions of Controversy			2:1-3:6	<b>5:17-6:11</b>
Healing of Multitudes		<b>4:24-25</b>	3:7-12	(6:17-19)
Calling of the Twelve			3:13-19	<b>(6:12-16)</b>
<i>Sermon on the Mount</i> (Matthew) OF and B		5:1-7:27		
<i>Sermon on the Plain</i> (Luke) B				6:20-49
Matthew's narrative continued		7:28-8:34		
Luke's narrative continued				7:1-17
<i>The Apostolic Commission</i> (Matthew)		9:35-10:42		
Matthew's narrative continued		11:1-12:21		
Luke's narrative continued				7:18-8:3
"He is beside himself"			<b>{3:20-21}</b>	

On Collusion with Satan	T2	12:22-30	3:22-27	
Sin against the Holy Spirit		12:31-37	3:28-30	
Jesus' True Kindred		12:46-50	3:31-35	
<b>The Parable Collection</b>				
Parable of the Sower and comments		13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
Lamp under Bushel/Bed			4:21-25	8:16-18
Parable of Seed Growing Secretly			{4:26-29}	
Parable of Mustard Seed		13:31-32	4:30-32	
Use of parables		13:34-35	4:33-34	
<i>The Parable Collection continued</i> (Matthew)		13:36-52		
Across the Sea and back			4:35-5:43	8:22-56
Jesus Rejected at Nazareth		13:53-58	6:1-6a	
Commissioning the Twelve	T3		6:6b-13	9:1-6
Opinions concerning Jesus		14:1-2	6:14-16	9:7-9
Death of the Baptist		14:3-12	6:17-29	
Return of the Apostles			6:30-31	9:10a
The Five Thousand		14:13-21	6:32-44	9:10b-17
Walking on the Water, and Healings		14:22-36	6:45-56	
Defilement, Traditional and Real		15:1-20	7:1-23	
Syro-Phoenician (Canaanite) Woman		15:21-28	7:24-30	
The Deaf-Mute (Matthew, Healings)		(15:29-31)	7:31-37	
The Four Thousand		15:32-39	8:1-10	
Pharisees: Sign and Leaven		16:1-12	8:11-21	
The Blind Man			{8:22-26}	
The Confession of Peter		16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21
First Prediction of the Passion		16:21-23	8:31-33	9:22
"If any man will come after me"		16:24-28	8:34-9:1	9:23-27
The Transfiguration		17:1-9	9:2-10	9:28-36
The Coming of Elijah		17:10-13	9:11-13	
The Epileptic Boy		17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43a
Second Prediction of the Passion		17:22-23	9:30-32	9:43b-45
True Greatness		18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48
The Strange Exorcist			9:38-41	9:49-50
Warnings against Temptation		18:6-9	9:42-50	
<i>Discourse on True Greatness</i> (continued)		18:10-35		
Departure to Judea		19:1-2	10:1	9:51
<b>Luke's Central Section OF</b>				9:52-18:14

On Divorce and Adultery	T4	19:3-12	10:2-12	
Jesus blesses the Children		19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17
On Riches and Discipleship		19:16-29	10:17-31	18:18-30
Third Prediction of the Passion		20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34
The Sons of Zebedee		20:20-28	10:35-45	
The Blind Bartimaeus		20:29-30	10:46-52	18:35-43
The Triumphal Entry		21:1-9	11:1-10	19:28-40
Jesus in Jerusalem		21:10-11	11:11	
Cursing of the Fig Tree		21:18-19a	11:12-14	
Cleansing of the Temple			11:15-17	19:45-46
Conspiracy against Jesus			11:18-19	19:47-48
The Fig Tree Withered		21:19b-22	11:20-26	
The Question about Authority		21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8
Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen		21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19
Questions on Tribute and Resurrection		22:13-33	12:13-27	20:20-40
The Great Commandment		22:34-40	12:28-34	
Questions about David's Son		22:41-46	12:35-37a	20:41-44
Woes to Scribes and Pharisees		23:1-36	12:37b-40	20:45-47
The Widow's Mite			12:41-44	21:1-4
<b>The Eschatological Discourse</b>				
Prediction about the Temple etc.		24:1-22	13:1-20	21:5-24
False Christs and False Prophets		24:23-28	13:21-23	
The Coming of the Son of Man		24:29-36	13:24-32	21:25-33
Conclusion: "Take Heed, Watch"			{13:33-37}	
Discourse continued (Matthew)		24:37-25:46		21:34-36
Conclusion (Luke)				21:37-38



Jesus' Death Predicted	T5	26:1-5	14:1-2	<b>22:1-2</b>
Anointing at Bethany		<b>26:6-13</b>	14:3-9	
Betrayal by Judas		<b>26:14-16</b>	14:10-11	22:3-6
Preparation for the Passover		<b>26:17-20</b>	14:12-17	22:7-14
Jesus Foretells his Betrayal		<b>26:21-25</b>	14:18-21	
The Last Supper		<b>26:26-35</b>	14:22-31	22:15-34
Gethsemane		<b>26:36-56</b>	14:32-50	22:39-53
The Young Man who Fled			<b>14:51-52</b>	
Jesus before the Sanhedrin		<b>26:57-68</b>	14:53-65	22:54-55
Peter's Denials		<b>26:69-75</b>	14:66-72	22:56-62
Jesus Delivered to Pilate		<b>27:1-2</b>	15:1	23:1
Trial before Pilate		<b>27:11-14</b>	15:2-5	23:2-5
Jesus Condemned to Death		<b>27:15-26</b>	15:6-15	23:17-25

Jesus Mocked by Soldiers		<b>27:27-31a</b>	15:16-20a	
The Road to Golgotha		<b>27:31b-32</b>	15:20b-21	23:26-32
Crucifixion		<b>27:33-43</b>	15:22-32a	23:33-38
The Two Thieves		<b>27:44</b>	15:32b	23:39-43
Death of Jesus		<b>27:45-54</b>	15:33-39	23:44-48
Witnesses to the Crucifixion		<b>27:55-56</b>	15:40-41	23:49
Burial of Jesus		<b>27:57-61</b>	15:42-47	23:50-56
Women at the Tomb		<b>28:1-8</b>	16:1-8	24:1-9
The Last Twelve Verses			<b>{16:9-20}</b>	

The three gospels of Matthew, Luke and Mark are often referred to as the Synoptic Gospels. According to the Markan priority theory, when Matthew ceases to follow the order of Mark, Luke continues in it until Luke ceases when Matthew takes over. This continues throughout the Gospels. This could only have been accomplished if Matthew and Luke coordinated their work very closely. But, according to the Markan theory, these Gospels were created in separate communities that were out of touch with one another.

This is an insoluble difficulty for the Markans. This difficulty also applies to other phrases. Matthew and Luke use exactly the same five Greek words to form a phrase concerning Peter's denial. Mark uses three different words conveying the same meaning (Mark 14:72). If Markan priority is correct, Matthew and Luke chose the same phrase without having been in contact with each other (DBP 303).

## **DUPLICATIONS**

The duplications of Mark are a feature of his style. They are often referred to as his 'redundant clauses' or 'duality'. To take an example:

Matthew: "That evening they brought to him..." (Mt. 8:16-17).

Luke: "Now when the sun was setting, they...brought them to him" (Luke 4:40-41).

The Gospel of Mark conflates the material together as:

"That evening, at sundown they brought to him..." (Mark 1:32).

By using 'evening' and 'sundown', Mark is duplicating himself. For those who accept that Mark is conflating, there is no difficulty as it is just part of his style. But for Markans, duality is a serious problem. If there were only a few instances of duality, they could be ignored. It could be said that Matthew just happened to use half of the duality and Luke happened to use the other half. But there are many dualities and where both halves are of equal importance, the authors do not chose the same half.

Matthew and Luke would have had to divide up Mark's dualities between them in a consistent manner to avoid them using the same half. The only way this could have been achieved would be for their gospels to have been brought together in some way. Again, the advocates of Markan priority meet the problem that, according to them, Matthew and Luke did not know one another.

## **A CHALLENGE**

Realizing the strength of the Clementine case, Markans have attempted to answer this problem. In 1983, C. M. Tuckett claimed there were 213 dualities in Mark's gospel, so chance could explain the 17 cases where Matthew and Luke chose different halves (CMT 20-21). At first this appears a plausible argument, and many feel overawed by statistics. A few comments are therefore required.

Let us presume for the moment, that Markan Priority is correct. Of the 213 dualities, Matthew and Luke did not use either half in 157 of them. It is correct that 39 do not use the same half. But these instances are where dualities are vague or do not have 'equal value' (i.e. one word is more suitable than the other, so was highly likely to be chosen by both). The debate must be judged on the 17 cases where there is a clear duality of equal value and meaning (e.g. 'evening' and 'sunset'). Markans need to explain why, whenever there was such a choice, Matthew and Luke always chose differently.

An interesting observation may also be made regarding the 213 dualities examined by Tuckett. Matthew has one or both halves 152 times, of which 124 are when Matthew and Mark are in the same sequence. Luke has one or both 116 times, of which 114 are when one or both

are in the same sequence. This is further support for the view that Mark was conflating the other two.

As Riley has pointed out, the normally accepted number of dualisms as listed by Neiryneck, a Markan, is 217. Tuckett omits many of these while adding others of his own. So the statistical basis for his calculations is itself open to questioning (RO107-8).

A more detailed response to Tuckett was made in 1987 by Allan J. McNicol (AJMT).

## **HEALING AND COMMANDMENTS**

Of the ten healing stories in Mark, eight appear in Matthew and Luke. Both had chosen exactly the same eight (WRF 166-7).

Mark lists six Commandments (Mark 10:19). Matthew and Luke list five and chose exactly the same five (WRF 160).

If Peter was reading from Matthew and Luke, there is no problem in accepting that he repeated what was in front of him and added something of his own. On the other hand, if Matthew and Luke were using Mark, the pattern of choosing exactly the same items would be highly unlikely unless they consulted with one another. Markan Priority insists that they did not know one another.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Origin of Mark's Gospel

We should not expect to discover the exact motives and methods of those involved with the birth of *The Gospel According to Mark*, but it is not irrational to presume they would have acted as people would do in the same situation today.

Matthew had written for the Jews - to proclaim the fulfilment of the Hebrew prophecies. Luke's Gospel was for the Gentiles. Luke's arrival in Rome, with his gospel, must have electrified the Christians in Rome. Extra information in Luke's Gospel and any apparent contradictions or discrepancies with Matthew's account would have raised questions. Also, the question would have arisen as to the suitability of reading Luke's Gospel in the churches.

There was a need for Peter to comment on the two documents. Orchard has suggested that Paul would have especially wanted Luke's work to be accepted by Peter, so it could be used in his Gentile churches.

Another consideration could have been that when an evangelist entered a town, it was customary to first visit the synagogue. Using Matthew's Gospel, a nucleus of Jewish believers would be formed and then utilized to preach to the Gentiles. However, Paul was planning to go to Spain where few synagogues existed. An endorsement of Luke's Gospel would enable Paul to use it to open his preaching.

This situation would have led to the decision to hold a day-long conference where Peter could address the community. The task before Peter would not have been easy. The two documents would need to be closely examined, line by line, by Peter, Luke, Paul, Mark and probably others.

Orchard suggested that Peter's commentary consisted of five half-hour talks. If we accept this suggestion, we may presume there were 15 or 30 minute breaks between each talk. A longer break at midday would allow time for lunch, rest, prayer and informal discussion. Following the end of the fifth talk, a time would have been allowed for the audience to ask questions. Starting at say 10 am the conference would have concluded at about 6 pm.

Not only Peter, but the secretaries, would have needed to be well prepared. These secretaries, with the scrolls opened and marked at key places, would direct Peter's eyes to relevant passages with the aid of a yad (pointer) according to Hebrew custom.

As there were five talks, there are ten places where Peter starts to quote from Matthew or Luke. It would have been easy to open the scrolls at these locations and have them ready at the start of each talk. In a further eight places, where Peter would have needed to switch from one Gospel to the other, the words are close together and therefore the scrolls could remain open without need for any movement.

There are six places involving slightly longer jumps. This would not be difficult when previously planned and with secretaries to assist. There is a jump (the longest) of 31 verses which would have required the skilled help of a secretary. It is interesting that Peter interjects a line of his own at this point, perhaps to provide the secretary with more time to locate the place.

The whole day could have been as well-organized as when a speaker today co-operates with assistants working a slide projector. Mark would have sat nearby to write down Peter's talks in shorthand. Only a part of a scroll would be used, the recorded words would be in Peter's poor grammatical Greek (i.e. Koine) and his slips not edited.

Not planned to be a new Gospel, Peter would not consider his talks as of enduring interest. Peter would be indifferent to Mark making copies for those present on the day. Clement of Alexandria recorded this detail, "And when Peter got to know about it [Mark's Gospel] he exerted no pressure either to forbid it or promote it" [For longer extract see Chapter 9]. It was later that Peter's attitude changed and a second edition authorized.

This raises an interesting point. If Mark's Gospel had been the first Gospel to be written, and therefore the 'flagship' of the Christians, why was Peter so indifferent regarding its promotion? On the other hand, if we accept that two well-constructed Gospels already existed, and that Peter had merely preached a series of commentaries based on them, Peter's attitude is understandable.

## **WRITING & PUBLISHING**

It was Jerome who established the Gospels in the Matthew-Mark-Luke-John order, for Western Europe. Prior to his time, there had been other orders used in this region. Irenaeus, when debating, quotes from the Clementine sequence. Tertullian refers to 'Luke and Mark', Jerome places Luke before Mark in his history book, Ambrosiaster also uses the Matthew-Luke-Mark order.

St. Augustine of Hippo in his first book says the received order was Matthew-Mark-Luke-John. But in his fourth book, discussing theological development, places Luke between Matthew and Mark.

Clement of Alexandria's statement was the clearest: "the first written of the gospels were those having the genealogies [Matthew and Luke]" [For longer extract see Chapter 9].

Clement not only provides the most detailed description of the circumstances of the composition of Mark's Gospel, but also provides a strong clue which points to the likelihood that both orders are correct. This may sound surprising until we look at the clue.

We know from Clement that a large audience begged Mark to publish his notes of Peter's talks and that Mark met their requests. It was an urgently requested manuscript and much shorter than Luke's. As Mark would also have had an established team of copyists, it is highly probable that his publication would have appeared prior to that of Luke.

This would have led Mark's scroll being 'pigeon-holed' in Church libraries next to Matthew's and awaiting the arrival of that by Luke. In the words of St. Augustine, it would be 'the received order' of the churches. This suggests how the familiar sequence of Matthew-Mark-Luke emerged. When sermons were delivered, or treatise written, it would be natural for many, such as Origen, to utilize the order to be found in their libraries.

Some people would have had knowledge of the tradition regarding the sequence in which the gospels had been written. This would have led to debates and could explain why Clement intervened specifically to clarify the issue.

So if we accept that Luke **wrote** before Mark, but **published** after him, the problem of order is solved. Both orders, Matthew-Mark-Luke-John and Matthew-Luke-Mark-John, are correct.

### **ALL SCRIPTURE IS FREE FROM ERROR**

Christians agree the Gospels were inspired by the Holy Spirit, so they are free from error. But, as Mark's chapters 1 and 2 contain serious misquotations of information from the Old Testament, exegetes have been faced with a problem.

Scholars often envision Mark sitting at a desk in his room making use of documents and his memory. In this scenario, it is difficult to uphold the truth of his Gospel being inspired by the Holy Spirit. But when we accept the scenario, as proposed by Orchard, we are able to suggest a way to solve this problem.

It was not Mark who had the lapses of memory, but Peter. No one claims that Peter's talks were free of error. Mark accurately recorded what Peter had said in his talks. Mark did not make an error in doing this. Peter had made slips and Mark accurately recorded them.

It is interesting that Papias (the earliest Christian historian) wrote, "Mark did not err at all when he wrote certain things just as he [Peter] had recalled [them]. For he had but one intention, not to leave out anything he had heard, nor falsify anything in them."

Papias is obviously defending Mark's Gospel against criticisms that Mark had made errors. Papias is saying that Mark had but one intention, to accurately record Peter. It was not Mark's responsibility to change anything regarding Malachi, nor correct the word 'Abiathar'.

## CHAPTER 4

### Mark's Gospel and Luke-Acts

Mark's Gospel breaks off abruptly at 16:8. This break involves ending with an enclitic form of Greek grammar, an inappropriate ending for a paragraph never mind a book. The gospel then continues with twelve more verses. Orchard suggested that they might have been notes for a further talk which was not delivered.

But there is an alternative Orchard showed interest in. Orchard had pointed out that Peter stopped at the end of his personal eyewitness of the earthly life of Christ (RO 271-8). So Peter had not commented on all the new information provided by Luke. This gives rise to another possible answer. Luke's material would have provoked questions and these last verses could have been a record of Peter's answers to them. Here are a few observations:

1. As the 'he' of verse 9 does not refer to the young man in verse 5, one would have expected to read 'Jesus'. But if the name of the Lord had been contained in a question, the use of 'he' would be correct.

2. Matthew 28:1-10 says that Mary Magdalene was, with another woman, the first to see Jesus. Luke had mentioned a woman of a similar description, 'a Mary who is called Magdalene', who had been possessed by seven devils (Luke 8:2). We should not be surprised if someone, noting her history, asked if this was the same person. Peter replies that it was. He then confirms that Luke was also correct when he wrote that it was she who told the Apostles (Mark 16:9).

3. Matthew had not reported that Christ had appeared to two men walking, but Luke gives this incident much space (Luke 24:13-31). Should the audience accept this story as true? Peter, not being one of the two, was unable to confirm all the details given by Luke. He does confirm that Christ did appear to two disciples walking in the countryside (Mark 16:12).

4. Luke tells of Christ appearing to the eleven (24:33-36), yet Matthew had not mentioned this event. Was it true? Peter, being there, was able to confirm that it was (Mark 16:14).

5. Matthew says that followers of Christ were to teach and baptize (28:19), but Luke says they are to preach penance and forgiveness (Luke 24:47). Was there a discrepancy here? Peter explains how baptism follows on from successful preaching (Mark 16:15-16).

6. In his second volume, *Acts of the Apostles*, Luke reports that Paul was able to cast out devils (Acts 16:18 and 19:12). There was no mention of this power by Matthew. Was it true? Peter, not being present at the incidents, could not confirm them, but he gives them credibility by saying Christ had foretold that such happenings would occur (Mark 16:17).

7. In Acts 2:4, 10:46 and 19:6, Luke reports occasions when speaking in tongues had taken place. Matthew had not reported these events. Peter, having been present, is able to confirm them (Mark 16:17).

8. The audience had read in Acts 28:5-9, that Paul was impervious to the poison of a snake and could heal the sick. Matthew had not recorded these incidents. Could they be true? Not being present at them, all Peter can do is refer again to the promises of Christ (Mark 16:18).

9. Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9 describe how Christ ascended into heaven. Matthew had not described this. Peter, having been an eyewitness, was able to confirm and slightly embellish Luke's account (Mark 16:19).

These answers tell us something about the care taken in planning the day. The first question arose due to something Peter had said. It may have been a spontaneous question. However, the next four questions appear to have been pre-planned. They were provoked by items in Luke's Gospel and asked in the same sequence (i.e. 8:2, 24:13-31, 24:33-36, 24:47). The next two were in response to events reported in Acts. The last question returns to the original Gospel sequence (24:51).

This analysis suggests that some in the audience had studied Luke's two books prior to the talks and had prepared themselves with questions.

The difference in style of Mark's final verses, compared with the main text, has often been noted. However, A speaker's style, when giving a talk, is significantly different from when answering questions.

In addition to Mark, the audience is likely to have included Paul, his guard, Luke, Linus, Cletus, Clement of Rome, Alexander, Rufus, and Hermas.

## **PAUL'S PASTORAL EPISTLES**

In Paul's two letters to Timothy and one to Titus, he claims he is their author and the wording implies his having travelled to Asia and Crete. Yet Luke's second book, Acts, which includes a record of Paul's travels and preaching, does not mention such visits. Those wishing to undermine the historical reliability of Scripture use this apparent discrepancy to assert that Paul didn't write these three epistles. They say an anonymous person must have composed them at a much later date.

The traditional reply has been that Luke completed Acts before 60 AD. This is the reason these later travels do not appear in Acts.

If Peter answered a question based on verse 5 of the last chapter in Acts, (i.e. Acts 28:3-8), we have confirmation that Acts was completed prior to 60 AD.

## **MATTHEW OR PAUL FIRST?**

We sometimes hear the claim that Paul's letter to the Thessalonians was the first part of the New Testament to be written. Is there any evidence for this claim?



Some of Paul's letters such as Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and 1 Corinthians contain words and phrases to be found in Matthew's gospel. They are also used in the same sequence. See 1 Thessalonians 2:14-5:7 and Matthew 23:31-24:49 (RO 119).

The question arises, therefore, who borrowed from whom? The traditional view accepts what the epistle says and therefore holds that Matthew wrote first and Paul used excerpts from Matthew's Gospel. As Paul's letters to the Thessalonians were written no later than 52 AD, Matthew's Gospel must have been written prior to that of Mark.

To avoid this conclusion, Markans state that the author of Matthew's Gospel must have used Paul's epistles. They assert that Paul's Epistles were the first parts of the New Testament to be written. But there is no basis for this claim, merely an assertion based on the need to uphold the theory of Markan Priority.

## **THE TWO EDITIONS OF MARK'S GOSPEL**

Clement of Alexandria tells us that Peter was indifferent to copies of Mark's writing being made for the audience. But later, when he became aware of its favorable reception, he agreed to it being sent to the churches. This account points to two editions coming into circulation.

Archeological research confirms there were two editions. One included the last 12 verses and the other omitted them. Clement says Mark issued Peter's words while Peter was still alive and Irenaeus says Mark published after Peter's death. This is another pointer that two editions were published.

## Chapter 5

### Anti-Judaism in Matthew

Matthew's Gospel exhibits far more antagonism towards the Jewish leaders than Mark's. This has traditionally been explained due to Christianity being born and persecuted in the Jewish setting of the Holy Land. Matthew wrote soon after Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, so reflected this background. Mark wrote many years later in Rome where the population and civil authority was Gentile. In Rome, Jewish antagonism towards Christians was not so intense. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark echo these two periods.

But according to Markan history, Jews and Christians had good relations until 85 AD. In that year, Jewish leaders, at a council at Jamnia, wrote a prayer containing an anti-Christian curse. When it was introduced into services and Christians refused to say it, they were expelled from the synagogue. This anti-Christian act by the Jews was a major turning point and explains why the Gospel of Matthew has an anti-Judaic tone.

Which history is correct? These periods have been studied in detail by both Jews and Christians. Rabbi Phillip Segal, a Talmudist, and other Jewish scholars have pointed out that while Jamnia was a Jewish center of learning, there is no record of the council being held there. The hypothesis of such a council was first put forward in 1871 by Heinrich Graetz. He wrote the first history of Judaism and, although a praiseworthy pioneering work, it is not reliable. A curse against Christians was written at Jamnia by a small number of Jews, but it was not a big event, nor was it introduced into all synagogues.

Other Jewish research was published in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* by E. P. Sanders in 1981. William Horbury, the leading Christian authority on this subject, endorsed the findings in the book. The Anglican Archbishop, John Robinson, commented on it:

[The prayer] ... does not reflect a watershed in the history of the relationship between Jews and Christians in the first centuries of our era. Apparently there was never a single edict which caused the so-called irreparable separation between Judaism and Christianity. The separation was rather the result of a long process dependent upon local situations and ultimately upon the political power of the church.

Concerning a later period, he wrote:

...there is abundant evidence from patristic sources that Christians were frequenting the synagogues quite often. Indeed there is far-flung evidence that it was the church leadership that strove to keep Christians away from the synagogue and not the Jews who were excluding them. Such protest from the Church Fathers demonstrates the receptivity of the synagogues to Christians. This situation is highly unlikely if the synagogue liturgy contained a daily curse against Christians.

And again:

There is no evidence to show that people were excommunicated on the ground of harboring non-orthodox beliefs ... While to Christians heresy mainly implied doctrinal dissent, in Judaism doctrinal dissent did not make a Jew into a heretic. Deviationism was assessed on grounds of practice or discipline rather than doctrine (JATRP 75-77).

Christian history shows there were very strong reasons for Christians to be critical of the Judaic leadership from the earliest times of Christianity. While Christ was alive, his followers feared being expelled from the synagogues (John 12:42), and when hiding in the upper room after the crucifixion, they lived in fear (John 20:19). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, they emerged to proclaim the Resurrection, perform miracles, and attract converts.

The Sadducees and the High Priest brought Christians before the Sanhedrin, ordering them to be beaten and to cease preaching. Stephen, a very eloquent deacon, was tried by the Sanhedrin and stoned to death (Acts 7:59).

Later, the Roman governor visited Caesarea and left the High Priest to govern Jerusalem. The High Priest took this opportunity to launch a persecution of the Christians consisting of searches, arrests, imprisonments, and executions (Acts 8:1). Then, he sent Saul to Antioch and other towns to bring fleeing Christians back for trial and death (Acts 28:11). It was during a journey to Damascus that Saul was converted and took the name Paul (Acts 13:9). The Apostles had to hide until the return of the Roman governor.

When Claudius became emperor in AD 40, he appointed the Jewish Herod Agrippa as king of Palestine. Needing to consolidate his influence with the High Priest, Herod beheaded the Apostle James the Great and, "Seeing that it pleased the Jews", arrested Peter (Acts 12:1-11). When King Herod died, his son was too young to rule, so a Roman governor was appointed and under him the Church was left in peace.

In 58 AD, Paul decided to return to Jerusalem from Asia but, hearing that some Jews were plotting to kill him, he travelled by an indirect route (Acts 20:3). So as to uphold the traditions of his people, Paul visited the Temple for the purification ceremonies but, when recognized, was dragged from the Temple and an attempt made to kill him (Acts 21: 30-31).

Fortunately, Roman troops in a nearby fort intervened and, wishing to learn the reason for the disturbance, asked the Sanhedrin to hold a trial. The Pharisees were willing to acquit Paul, but the Romans had to intervene again to protect him from the Sadducees (Acts 23:10).

The following day, he was sent to Felix, the Roman governor of Judea now living in Caesarea. Hearing that forty Jews had taken an oath sanctioned by the High Priest to kill Paul, Felix provided a large escort of troops (Acts 23:21-25). Although rejecting the accusations of the Jewish leaders, Felix granted Paul a limited freedom only.

After two years, Festus replaced Felix. Wishing to gain popularity, the new governor was willing to grant the demand of the Jewish leaders for Paul to be tried by the Sanhedrin. Paul

avoided this by claiming his right as a Roman citizen to be tried in Rome. But before Paul could be sent to Rome, Festus died and Albinus was appointed to replace him.

A few weeks passed while Albinus prepared for his trip to Palestine to take up his post. In his absence, the High Priest and Sanhedrin were free of Roman control. The city would be crowded during Passover and the leading Jews feared the Christians would take the opportunity to preach more openly. At this time, a holy man was known to spend long periods of daily prayer in the Temple. So the authorities placed him on a wing of the building and told him to warn the crowds against Christian preaching.

They were not aware he was the Apostle James, now bishop of the city. As soon as he stood up on the wing he openly preached Christ. The priests and Pharisees realized their mistake so threw him down. After being stoned he was beaten to death with a club. Following this incident in 62 AD, other Christians were killed. (EH 2:23 and BC 118-121).

Albinus, who was still in Alexandria, sent an angry letter depriving Annas of the high priesthood. This brought the Sanhedrin under control and an end to the killings, but the Sadducees banned Christians from worshipping in the Temple (BC 121). Within four years, Palestine was ravaged by war so the Christians moved to the Gentile town of Pella, 130 kilometers (~81 miles) to the north.

These events clearly explain why Matthew viewed much of the Jewish leadership as enemies.

In 64 AD, Nero launched a persecution far worse than anything attempted by the Jews. If the author of the Gospel of Matthew wrote much later, why are the Romans reported so favorably? If a Council at Jamnia so outraged the Christians that they suddenly became anti-Judaic, why is there no hint of it, or the curse, in Christian and heretical literature?

## Chapter 6

### Early Historical Evidence

It would be very surprising if all the scrolls produced by the earliest Christian writers had survived intact for 2000 years. However, we do have long extracts from their works as reproduced by early reliable historians such as Eusebius and others.

Papias (c. 60-139) was the bishop of Hierapolis. Eusebius reports that Papias wrote five books and mentions his commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and John. Ancient Armenian literature records Papias writing commentaries on Luke and John (RO 171). Papias had carefully studied at least three of the Gospels. Hierapolis was close to the Christian centers at Colossae and Laodicea and about 150 kilometers (~93 miles) from Ephesus along a good surfaced road, so contact with John the Apostle would have been easy. No doubt, John took a great interest in Papias as he trained to be a bishop and afterwards gave him good advice. His lifespan overlapped that of John by 30-40 years and Papias speaks of 'The Presbyter', who traditionally has been identified as John the Apostle. An extract from the fourth book by Papias as preserved by Eusebius reads:

And this the Presbyter used to say: "Mark, being the recorder of Peter, wrote accurately but not in order whatever he [Peter] remembered of the things either said or done by the Lord; for he [Mark] had neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but later, as I said, Peter, who used to make teachings according to the cheias, [a special kind of anecdote] but not making as it were a systematic composition of the Lords sayings; so that Mark did not err at all when he wrote certain things just as he [Peter] had recalled [them]. For he had but one intention, not to leave out anything he had heard, nor to falsify anything in them". This is what was related by Papias about Mark. But about Matthew's this was said: 'For Matthew composed the logia [sayings] in Hebrew style; but each recorded them as he was able' (EH 3: 39, 8 and RO 166r).

Here we have Papias quoting John the Apostle's words in defense of the style of the Gospel of Mark. The 'poor Greek' of Mark was not first noticed in the 19th century but rather was already noted by the late 1<sup>st</sup> century. The extract 'the Presbyter used to say', being in the plural, shows that aspects of Mark's Gospel must have had to be repeatedly defended by John the Apostle against criticism.

Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) was born in Palestine and, following his study of philosophic systems, became a Christian about 130 AD. About eight years later, Justin moved to Rome and set up as a teacher of Christian philosophy. He became a public leader in defense of Christian beliefs against Paganism, the Jews, and the heretical teachings of Marcion. In his work, he had to be careful to use soundly based arguments. Amongst his writings, we possess twelve direct quotations from the Gospels. Justin then moved to Ephesus where he died. The elderly members of the Ephesus community would remember the Apostles who had lived in or visited the town.

In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, published between 161-165, Justin quotes from Matthew and Luke, referring to them as, "the teachers who have recorded all that concerns our Savior Jesus

Christ” (JMD). He writes of “the memoirs composed by the apostles which are called Gospels” (JMD). He also specifically attributes the Apocalypse (now called Revelation) to John the Apostle.

He knew the Septuagint well and used the same version as had been used by Matthew. Justin in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, frequently uses the phrase ‘the memoirs of his apostles [note: plural] and others who followed him’, as the source of his quotations (JMD ch. 98-107 and RO 122). Justin accepted that apostles had written at least two of the Gospels. Also, he refers to Mark 3:16-17 as being in Peter’s memoirs:

And when it is said that he [Jesus] changed the name of one of the apostles to Peter, and when it is written in his [Peter’s] memoirs that this happened, as well as that he surnamed two other brothers, who were sons of Zebedee, with the name of Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder, this was a signification of the fact that it was He [JHWH] by whom Jacob was called Israel... (JMD 106. 9-10 and RO 125).

Irenaeus was born about 120 AD near Smyrna. After travelling throughout the Roman world, gaining a wide knowledge of Christian life and history, he was made bishop of Lyons and martyred about 180 AD. As a young man he frequented the house of Bishop Polycarp in Smyrna. In a letter to Florinus, he wrote regarding his childhood:

...I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse - his going out, too, and his coming in - his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people, also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would call their words to remembrance. Whatsoever thing he had learned from them respecting the Lord, both with regard to His miracles and his teaching, Polycarp having thus received [information] from the eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, would recount them all in harmony with the Scriptures... (See newadvent.org web site: Fathers: Irenaeus: Fragments from lost writings of Irenaeus, item 2 and IJK 540).

In the first chapter of his third book in the series known as *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus records that the Apostles of Christ preached the Gospel verbally. He then continues:

So Matthew also brought out a written Gospel among the Jews in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome and founding the Church. But after their demise, Mark himself the disciple and recorder of Peter, has also handed on to us in writing what had been proclaimed by Peter. And Luke too, the follower of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel which was being preached by him. Later on too, John, the disciple of the Lord, who had even reclined on his bosom, he too brought out a Gospel while he was dwelling in Ephesus of Asia (RO128-9; IAH 3.1, 1; EH 5:8, 2).

This quotation is from the Latin translation of his work, but we also possess the same passage in the original Greek as quoted by Eusebius. This confirms the Latin translation is

accurate. The Latin version may imply that Irenaeus was thinking that Mark and Luke wrote after the death of Peter. However, the perfect tense used in the Greek version makes it clear, according to Orchard, that this is not so. Irenaeus was merely saying that the gospels of Mark and Luke have handed on the traditions taught by Peter and Paul when they were still alive (RO 163). 'Tongue' may also be rendered as 'language' or 'dialect'. The word for 'demise' was also used by the Greeks to denote 'departure'. The words: 'Matthew also' may also be rendered as: 'So Matthew'.

Irenaeus is saying that the Gospel of Matthew was composed by one of Christ's Apostles who had already proclaimed the gospel verbally. As Peter fled to Rome about 41 AD and Paul was martyred in 67 AD, Matthew would have written between these dates.

When, in his third and fourth books, Irenaeus builds his case against three heresies, he quotes the Gospels in the order of Matthew-Luke-Mark-John. In his third book, at 3:9, 1-3 he quotes mainly from Matthew. Then at 3:10, 1-4 from Luke. Next in 3:10, 5 from Mark, and in 3:11, 1-6 from John. In the second controversy, Irenaeus says the Ebionites only use Matthew, Marcion mutilates Luke, Docetists adapt Mark, and the Valentinus misuses John (3:11, 7). In the third instance, he quotes Scripture to show God was the father of Jesus, then writes, "...Matthew hath set down, and Luke also, and Mark..." (4: 6, 1). (IJK 220, 234, 320).

Therefore, the sequence most familiar to Irenaeus was that of Luke being prior to Mark. This was first pointed out in 1972 by Hans von Campenhausen (HVC 195, note 243).

The Muratorian Fragment, or Canon, was discovered in 1740. Its authorship is unknown but is thought to have been written by Hippolytus (MFGR). It is in barbarous Latin and not always correct. It mentions Pope Pius I who reigned from 141-158 AD and three heretics as contemporaries, so is normally dated around 150 (RO 138). The surviving extract of the opening indicates that Mark was present at a specific event.

...at which, nevertheless, he was present and thus related. In third place [we have] the book of the Gospel According to Luke. This Luke, a physician, after the Ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him, as one studious of Right, [to be his follower] at his own request [in his own name], wrote from report, since he himself notwithstanding had not seen the Lord in the flesh. Yet, as far as he could ascertain, so indeed he began to relate, beginning at the birth of John. The fourth of the Gospels is John's, one of the Disciples. At the insistence of his fellow disciples and bishops he said: Today and for three days fast with me and what shall be revealed to each of us, relate to one another. The same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that whatever should come to the minds of them all, John in his own name should write it all down...What therefore [is there] to wonder at if John so constantly utters statements indeed in his Epistles saying from his own experience: What I have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears and our hands have touched, these things we have written to you? For, thus he declares that he is not only an eyewitness and a hearer, but also the writer of all the wonders of the Lord in order. However, the Acts of the Apostles were written in one book. To the excellent Theophilus, Luke dedicates [the Acts], some of the events of which happened in his presence, just as he clearly declares, though with omission

of Peter's Passion and Paul's journey from Rome setting out for Spain (MFGR and RO 139-140).

Theophilus, the sixth bishop of Antioch writing about 179, named John as the divinely inspired author of a Gospel (CCHS 776b).

Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, in 189 defended the authenticity of the four Gospels by appealing to the authority of the Apostles Philip and John. He also called on the witness of seven kinsmen who had been bishops in Asia before himself that, "He who was reclining on the breast of our Lord wrote John's Gospel" (CCHS776b).

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) was a pupil of Pantoris, the first great Christian teacher at Alexandria in Egypt. Clement records that he himself had travelled widely, meeting and listening to 'truly notable men' from all over the Roman Empire (EH 5, 11). While Rome was the administrative heart of the Church, her intellectual center was at Alexandria. The town had long possessed a famous pagan university. The earlier presence of Philo had also made it the center of Jewish studies, and it was here the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament had been made.

In his *Adumbrationes in Epistolas Canonicas*, Clement commented on 1 Peter 5, 13. As Eusebius did not copy the full quotation, we are using here the Latin translation by Cassiodorus:

Mark, the follower of Peter, while Peter was publicly preaching the Gospel at Rome before some of Caesar's knights and producing many testimonies about Christ, being begged by them that they should be able to record what was said, wrote the Gospel which is called the Gospel of Mark, from the things said by Peter - just as Luke is recognized as the pen that wrote the Acts of the Apostles and as the translator of the Letter of Paul to the Hebrews (RDCA, RO 166r).

The words 'Caesar's knights' brings to mind one of Paul's letters, "... it has become known throughout the whole praetorium and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ'. And, 'All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household'" (Phil.1: 13 and 4:22).

We also possess very important quotations by Eusebius from Clement's book *The Outlines*:

To such [a degree] did the flame of true piety illuminate the minds of Peter's hearers that not being satisfied adequately with having just one hearing – [that is] not [satisfied] with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with every sort of entreaty they begged Mark – whose Gospel it is reputed to be, being the follower of Peter – to bequeath to them also in writing the record of the teaching handed to them by word [of mouth], Nor did they let up before convincing the man; and by this means they became the cause of the Gospel writing that is said to be 'according to Mark'.

'And they say that when the Apostle, learnt what had happened, through the revelation of the Spirit being pleased with the enthusiasm of the men, he authorized the writing for reading in the churches'.



Clement in the Sixth book of *The Outlines* relates the story and the bishop of Hierapolis, Papias by name, bears joint witness to this [him], for Peter mentions Mark in [his] first letter; which he also says was composed in Rome itself, and that he indicates this speaking figuratively of the city as Babylon by these words: ‘The Elect [Lady] in Babylon greets you, and my son Mark’. They also say that this Mark was the first to journey to Egypt to preach the Gospel which he himself had written down, and the first to set up churches in Alexandria itself (EH 2.15, 1-2, 16, 1 and RO 166r).

And again in the same books, Clement states a tradition of the earliest presbyters about the order of the gospels; and it has this form. He used to say that *the earlier-written of the gospels were those having the genealogies*. But that according to Mark has had this formation. *Peter having preach the Word publicly in Rome and proclaimed the Gospel by the Spirit, the many who had been present begged Mark*, as one who had followed him for a long time and recollected what had been said, *to record what he had spoken*’; and he did so, handing over the Gospel to those who had asked for it. And when Peter got to know about it, he exerted no pressure either to forbid it or to promote it (EH 6:14, 5-7 and RO 166r). [emphasis added]

Clement is clearly stating that Matthew and Luke wrote first. He was the only early historian to specify the sequence in which two of the Gospels were written. He said he was quoting the very earliest presbyters [note in the plural]. As a professional teacher, employed by the diocese founded by Mark, he had access to its records and traditions.

Tertullian (c. 155-220) lived mainly in Africa and was a contemporary of Clement of Alexandria. For a time, he practiced as an Advocate at Rome. Being a lawyer, he would have been very experienced when sifting evidence. Between 207 and 212, he wrote *Adversus Marcionem* [Treatise against Marcion]. Being one of disputation, it would have been compiled with great care to ensure it was not open to challenge.

...I lay it down to begin with that the documents of the gospels have the Apostles for their authors, and that this task of promulgating the gospel was imposed upon them by the Lord himself. If they have also for their authors apostolic men, yet these stand not alone but as companions of the apostles, because the preaching of disciples might be made suspect of the desire of vainglory, unless there stood by it the authority of their teachers, or rather the authority of Christ, which made the Apostles teachers. In short, from among the Apostles, John and Matthew implant in us the Faith, while from among apostolic men Luke and Mark reaffirm it... (TE Book 4:2, 1-2 and RO 133-4).

Tertullian placed the name of Luke before that of Mark. He later wrote:

That same authority of the apostolic churches will stand as a witness also for other gospels, which no less [than Luke’s] we possess by their agency and according to their text-I mean John’s and Matthew’s though that which Mark

produced is stated to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. Luke's narrative also they usually attribute to Paul (TE Book 4:5, 3 and RO 135).

Origen (c. 185-253) was the successor of Clement of Alexandria as the principal teacher in Alexandria. Eusebius quotes Origen as asserting that by tradition:

"The first written was that according to the one-time tax collector but later apostle of Jesus Christ, Matthew, who published it for the believers from Judaism, composed in Hebrew characters. And second, that according to Mark, composed as Peter guided...And third, that according to Luke, the gospel praised by Paul, composed for those from the Gentiles and finally, that according to John" (EH 6: 25, and RO 169).

At face value, this seems to support the Jerome tradition. It is very unlikely Origen intended to dispute the clear and specific statement made by his predecessor, Clement of Alexandria. Origen's words could possibly be explained by noting that he says he is quoting 'the tradition'. Origen says Matthew wrote first and in Hebrew characters. So, for Markans, Origen is a very unreliable source. Logically, they have no basis upon which to use his writings to support their theory.

The Anti-Marcionite Prologues are a collection of second, third, and fourth century Gospel introductions that come down to us in both Latin and Greek. Concerning Mark, we read:

...Mark who was also called Stubfinger, because he had shorter fingers with regard to the other dimensions of his body. He had been the disciple and recorder of Peter, whom he followed, just as he had heard him relating. Having been asked by the brethren in Rome he wrote this short Gospel in the regions of Italy; when Peter heard about it, he approved and authorized it to be read to the church with [his own] authority (AMM and RO 148).

Concerning John, we read:

John the Apostle, whom the Lord Jesus loved exceedingly, last of all wrote this Gospel at the request of the bishops of Asia against Cerinthus and other heretics and especially the teachings of the Ebionites then arising...But they also say that there was another reason for this Gospel being written, because after reading the volumes of Matthew, Mark and Luke on the gospel, he of course approved the text of their accounts and confirmed the truth of what they had said, but [perceived] that they had provided the account of one year only in which he suffered after the imprisonment of John. Omitting therefore the year whose happenings were recorded by the three, he related the events that had occurred at an earlier period before John was shut up in prison, as will be able to be clear to those who have carefully read the books of the four Gospels. The Gospel therefore written after the Apocalypse, was also given to the churches in Asia by John while still living in the flesh, as the bishop of Hierapolis, Papias by name, a dear disciple of John, has

related in his 'exoteric', that is, in [his] last, five books, who wrote out this Gospel, John dictating it to him (AMJ and RO 151).

Eusebius of Pamphilius (c. 260-340) emerged as a great scholar of the Church as She was emerging into cultural and political freedom. As bishop of Caesaria, he had a library with 30,000 scrolls and codices (CTJ 74). This library included the most complete collection of Christian documents ever assembled.

He was the literary heir of Pamphilius, who had inherited the library of Origen, as well as the correspondence of Dionysius of Alexandria who had died in 264. As a theologian and biblical critic, he played a part in the Council of Nicea in 325. Between 303 and 325, he wrote his ten-volume history of the Church, which summed up the accumulated historical knowledge of the early Christian world. Eusebius possessed books and quoted from them which have since been lost.

Fortunately, he normally quoted exactly what earlier historians, such as Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the others had written, rather than make paraphrases.

Some modern authors assert that Eusebius copied from Clement, and Clement obtained all his information from Papias. They say that if Papias was in error, Clement and Eusebius would be also. But this is not correct. As mentioned previously, Eusebius knew Clement had 'travelled widely and listened to truly notable men [note plural] from all over the Roman Empire'. Eusebius saw Clement as a very reliable witness to the consensus view of the most educated Christian authorities.

He treats Papias as being a separate confirmatory source. For example, if we reread the words of Clement above, we see that Eusebius, when quoting information from Clement of Alexandria, regarded him as an independent source. Regarding Peter and Mark, Eusebius says Papias "*also* bears witness to it" (EH 2:15, 2, RO 166). [emphasis added]

Eusebius explained that at first the Apostles did not write of their experiences, but relied on the proofs of the Spirit. But Matthew and John eventually wrote 'perforce'. Matthew wrote because he was about to leave Palestine, so he left something to partially make up for his absence. Luke was faced with the circulation of unorthodox accounts (Luke 1:14). John wrote because the existing Gospels limited themselves to only one year of the preaching of Christ, so he added the events of the other years (EH 3:24, 1-15).

Jerome (c. 331-420) is the second most voluminous writer in Latin Christianity behind Augustine of Hippo. Many people presume the gospels, as printed in our bibles today, are in the order in which they were always listed, but this is not correct. At the end of the 4th century, Pope Damasus I became concerned that faulty translations and copying errors were creeping into the Latin texts widely use in Western Europe. He commissioned Jerome to prepare a fresh, accurate Latin translation from the original Greek. It was known as 'The Vulgate' and became standard use in the West.

In his letter *Epistula ad Damasum*, addressed to the Pope enclosing his final text, Jerome explained why he had adopted the Matthew-Mark-Luke-John order. This indicates that it was not at that time being widely used in the West (WRFN 27).

When Jerome wrote his *Prologus Quattuor Evangeliorum* [Prologue to the Four Gospels] he did not specify whether the order he had adopted was based on the order of their composition or their publication.

In his letter to Hebidiam, Jerome wrote: "...Peter also had Mark, who's Gospel was composed with Peter narrating and him writing."

During the same years, Jerome compiled *De Viris Illustribus* [On Illustrious Men]. He does so in the Clementine order of Matthew (chapter 3), Luke (7), Mark (8), and John (9). In his eighth chapter, he says that the Jewish philosopher, Philo, wrote that Mark was 'learned'. We may observe that a 'learned' man is unlikely to have written in 'poor Greek' and not to correct his errors. (WRFN 26 and DVI).

Ambrosiaster is the name given to an anonymous author of the late fourth century. A passage in his writings implies that his copy of the New Testament was arranged in the Matthew-Luke-Mark-John order. He wrote:

The gospel is arranged according to the order [of their contents] rather than in chronological order. Therefore, Matthew is put in the first place because he begins from the promise, that is, from Abraham to whom was made the promise of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Next comes Luke, because he relates how this incarnation took place. Third comes Mark, who witnesses that the gospel preached by Christ has been promised in the Law. Fourthly, John... (AS and RO 201-2).

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) is one of the most highly-read writers in all of Christianity. In Jerome's lifetime, Augustine wrote *De Consensu Evangelistarum*. In his first volume, he wrote that the received order was Matthew-Mark-Luke-John, but the order of dignity was Matthew-John-Mark-Luke (AH1 Book 1:1-3).

Because he mentioned Matthew-Mark-Luke, this is often referred to as 'The Augustinian Tradition'. But this is a misnomer because, in his fourth volume, Augustine holds that Mark developed his theological thoughts from both Matthew and Luke. Augustine wrote:

Mark...either appears rather as one who goes with Matthew because, together they with him, he relates a great number of things respecting the kingly figure...or, more probably, he goes in step with both. For although he agrees with Matthew in many things, yet in some things he agrees with Luke, so by this very fact he may be shown to share the symbolism of the Lion and the Bull (for Christ is a Man), which symbolism of Mark possesses as he shares both aspects (AH4 Book 4:10.11 and RO 211-214).

David Peabody has examined this quotation in detail (WRFN 37-64).

The Monarchian Prologue to Mark's Gospel was Probably written by Priscillian, who died in 386. He wrote that Mark had seen Luke's Gospel. His Prologue reads, "For setting out on the perfect work of the Gospel, and starting to preach God from the Lord's baptism, he did not bother with the nativity story which he had seen related in the former" (208-209 and WRFN 22 and 23).

Early Latin translations, from the Greek, continued to circulate after the publication of Jerome's Vulgate. Many copies, or partial copies, have survived. Most have the Gospels in the order of Matthew- John-Luke-Mark. (BMM and RO 126). It is likely this order was adopted so as to honor the two Apostles by placing them first. However, it is worth noticing that if John's name is returned to the end, we have the Clementine sequence.

Greek and Russian Orthodox Church liturgies have not changed as much as in the Latin West. Apart from a few feast days, Matthew is read every Sunday from Pentecost, Luke follows, and Mark begins during Lent. John is read following the Easter period. The Melkite Church, which traces herself back to Antioch, uses a similar order, as do the Byzantine Churches. This shows early liturgical familiarity with the use of Luke prior to Mark [For fuller details see Chapter 7].

In summary, the early historians are united in reporting that Matthew, one of the eye witnessing Apostles, wrote the first Gospel, and John, another Apostle, wrote the last Gospel. They agree that Luke and Mark wrote the other two. One clear tradition is that Luke wrote prior to Mark.

## Chapter 7

### The Liturgies (Typicon or Ustav) of the Eastern Churches

In a book by Adrian Fortisescue entitled *The Mass*, we read:

Originally it seems clear that the books were read in continuous order, as they still are (with considerable abbreviations) at Matins. So the Epistle and *Gospel of each Mass would continue where those of the last Mass ended*. The text of the Apostolic Constitutions (II, lvii, 5-7) implies this plain enough. Many series of homilies preached in East and West follow the lessons in regular order. The Diatessaron of Titian (2nd century) is generally supposed to have been chosen for the purpose of continuous reading in church. Cassian (in 435) says that in his time the monks read the New Testament straight through (258-9). [emphasis added]

In the Eastern Churches, this principle (with interruptions for feasts) still obtains. The Byzantine Church, for instance in her liturgical Gospels begins reading Matthew immediately after Pentecost, Luke follows from September, Mark begins before Lent, and John is read from Eastertide. The Syrians have the same arrangement, evidently Antiochian in its origin (AF 258 and cc 066:59a).

In the Roman rite, the practice of continuous reading has become so completely overlaid with feasts and seasons that there is nothing left of it (AF 259). However, these early liturgies indicate how strongly the Matthew-Luke-Mark-John tradition was established in the early churches.

To illustrate this pattern of Gospel reading, we have used the Byzantine Typicon for 2006. The following extract is taken from Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, Post-festive Day of the Exaltation of the Cross:

The continuous reading of the Gospel of the Holy Evangelist Luke begins on the Monday following the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The four Gospels are all read in their entirety in the Byzantine Church and the reading of each begins with a great Feast. The Gospel of St. John the Theologian begins with the feast of Feasts, the Pascha of our Lord [Easter] and is read until Pentecost. *The Gospel of St. Matthew begins with the Feast of Pentecost, ... and is read until the Feast of the Holy Cross. The Gospel of St. Luke, then, begins with the Feast of the Holy Cross and is read until the Great Fast.*

The first Sundays in the Matthew cycle and in the Lucan cycle are of the call of the apostles Peter and Andrew, James and John, indicating that these Gospels also call us to follow after Jesus our Lord. The Gospel of St. Mark is read during the Holy and Great Fast, but since the Divine Liturgy is celebrated only on Saturday and Sunday, the remaining sections are read in the last six weeks of the Matthean and Lucan cycles... [emphasis added]

This shows how Luke's Gospel follows that of Matthew and is prior to the reading of Mark's Gospel.

During the past 2000 years, some texts have been allocated to Feast Days and, in the chart below, are indicated by green shading. The remaining readings show the basic sequence of Matthew-Luke-Mark-John for the rest of the liturgical year.

The Gospel sequence is easiest to see when you commence looking at the liturgical year at Pentecost.

JUNE	11th.	All Saints		<b>MATTHEW</b>	10: 32-33
	18th	2nd After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	4: 18-23
	25th	3rd After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	6: 22-34
JULY	2nd.	4th After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	8: 5-13
	9th.	5th After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	8: 28- 9:1
	16th.	6th After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	9: 1-8
	23rd.	7th. After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	9: 27-33
	30th.	8th After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	14: 14-22
AUGUST	6th	The Transfiguration		<b>MATTHEW</b>	17: 1- 9
	13th.	10th. After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	17: 14-23
	20th.	11th. After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	18: 23-35
	27th.	12th. After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	19: 16-26
SEPTEMBER	3rd.	13th. After	Pentecost	<b>MATTHEW</b>	21: 33-42
	10th.	<b>Before Holy Cross</b>		<b>JOHN</b>	<b>3: 13-17</b>
	17th.	<b>After Holy Cross</b>		<b>MARK</b>	<b>8: 34b-38</b>
	24th.	16th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	5: 1 - 11
OCTOBER	1st.	17th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	6: 31-36
	8th.	18th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	7: 11-16
	15th.	19th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	8: 5 -15
	22nd.	20th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	16: 19-31
	29th.	21st. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	8: 26-39
NOVEMBER	5th.	22nd. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	8: 41-56
	12th.	23rd. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	10: 25-37
	19th.	24th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	12: 16-21
	26th.	25th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	13: 10-17
DECEMBER	3rd.	26th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	18: 18-27
	10th.	27th. After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	17: 12-19
	17th.	Before Christmas		<b>LUKE</b>	14: 16-24
	24th.	<b>Vigil of Christmas</b>		<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>1: 1-25</b>
	31st	<b>After Christmas</b>		<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>2: 13-23</b>

JANUARY	1st.	<b>Before Theophany</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>MARK</b>	<b>1: 1-8</b>
	8th.	<b>After Theophany</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>4: 12-17</b>
	15th.	35th After	Pentecost	<b>LUKE</b>	18: 18-27
	22nd.	36th After		<b>LUKE</b>	18: 35-43
	29th.	37th After		<b>LUKE</b>	24: 1-12
FEBRUARY	5th.	Publican & Pharises		<b>LUKE</b>	18: 10-12
	12th.	Prodigal Son		<b>LUKE</b>	15: 11-32
	19th.	<b>Meatfare Sunday</b>		<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>25: 31-46</b>
	26th.	<b>Cheesefare Sunday</b>		<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>8: 14-21</b>
MARCH	5th.	<b>Great Fast Sunday</b>		<b>JOHN</b>	<b>1: 43-51</b>
	12th.	2nd. After Great Fast		<b>MARK</b>	2: 1-12
	19th.	3rd. After Great Fast		<b>MARK</b>	8: 34- 9:1
	26th.	4th. After Great Fast		<b>MARK</b>	9: 17-31
APRIL	2nd.	5th. After Great Fast		<b>MARK</b>	10: 32-45
	9th.	Palm(Flowery) Sunday		<b>JOHN</b>	12: 1-18
	16th.	Pasha (Resurrection)	Easter	<b>JOHN</b>	1: 1-17
	23rd.	Thomas Sunday		<b>JOHN</b>	15:17 16:2
	30th.	<b>Ointment-Bearing Women</b>		<b>MARK</b>	<b>15:43 16:8</b>
MAY	7th	The Paralytic Man		<b>JOHN</b>	5: 1 - 15
	14th.	The Samaritan Woman		<b>JOHN</b>	4: 5 - 42
	21st.	The Man Born Blind		<b>JOHN</b>	9: 1 - 38
	28th.	The Fathers of Nicean		<b>JOHN</b>	17: 1 - 13
JUNE	4th	Pentecost		<b>JOHN</b>	7: 37- 52

The Liturgies of the Greek, Russian, Melkite (Antioch) and some of the Syrian Churches follow similar patterns.



## Chapter 8

### The 'Q' Source & Temple Prophecies

#### The 'Q' Source

There are identical verses in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Markans claim both authors copied from Mark's Gospel. They further assert that Matthew and Luke had no knowledge of each other. So where did they obtain their many identical verses that were not present in Mark's Gospel? Markans say they copied from a lost document, which they call 'Q' from the German word 'quelle' (source).

There is not the slightest historical evidence, or even a hint, that 'Q' or its author ever existed. If 'Q' had existed, it would have been the most treasured, copied, and precious scroll of Christianity during the first 50-70 years of the new religion. According to the Markans, we owe the preservation of 'The Our Father' and 'The Beatitudes' to 'Q'. Mark did not bother to record them. If 'Q' had been the key document containing the sayings of Christ, it would have been passed from hand to hand and read at services.

Markans want us to believe that the community that produced 'Q' made such few copies that none have been found or have been mentioned by historians. Yet the anonymous authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, unknown to each other, found two rare copies and made them the basis of their writings. Then the communities of both Matthew and Luke lost 'Q'. If 'Q' was so important, multiple copies would have been made for many communities. Markans have not explained how all copies of this key Christian document were lost. Also, how did all knowledge of 'Q' disappear without leaving even a vague reference or echo in any piece of Christian or heretical literature?

Those who hold the Markan theory demand the most stringent proof for the historicity of the Gospels, for which we have much historical evidence. Yet they accept conjectures and theories about 'Q' based on further conjectures and theories for which there is no evidence at all. In reality, 'Q' was created out of nothing by theologians in the 19th century to fill a hole in their theory of Markan Priority.

Markans describe the period between the time of Christ and the writing of the Gospels as 'a long dark tunnel'. They have spent years, at the expense of universities, looking for 'Q' and its author in darkness. But historians tell us the period was short. The 'long' is not a fact, but a further creation. They are working in a long dark tunnel because they refuse to turn on the lights provided by the ancient historians.

We have no wish to be facetious, but it is necessary to be blunt to bring home another important point. The use of familiar names to describe unknown alleged authors clouds a clear understanding of what Markans wish us to accept.

They call the anonymous authors, they have invented, by the names of actual people (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). This makes them sound familiar, real, and comforting. But, if

the Markans are correct, more appropriate names would be: Saints Tom, Dick, Harry and Janette, while not forgetting the venerable 'Q'.

Irenaeus, Eusebius, Tertullian and others had travelled throughout the Roman Empire, and were well educated. Why did they have no knowledge of the alleged anonymous authors or 'Q'? Why did the Jews, heretics, and pagans never mention them or it? Why were all the ancient historians and theologians completely ignorant of 'Q'? Or the name of the genius who had produced the key written account of the life and teaching of Christ? Also, why did all the historians of the period, alleged to have lived far apart, accept the gospels were written by four other men and agree on their names and backgrounds?

### **The Temple Prophecies**

In Matthew 24:15-16, Luke 21:20-24 and Mark 13:14, we read of Christ prophesying the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Apart from Christ's death and resurrection, the destruction in 70 AD was the most momentous religious event in Jewish-Christian history. Yet, there is not a word in the Gospels, Epistles, or Acts of it having occurred. Why would their respective authors omit such a momentous event? The conclusion must be that these books were written prior to the catastrophe taking place.

Markans claim prophecies were placed on the lips of Christ by anonymous authors after the destruction had occurred. The prophecies are said to be ex-eventu (i.e. after the event). This claim is made without any supporting evidence but is needed to uphold their theory. Let us look at their assertions:

1. They say that Mark 13:14 places the words from Daniel 9:27, "When you see the Abomination of Desolation in the Holy of Holies", on the lips of Christ. This has long been thought to be a reference to the Roman standard flown in the Temple after its destruction. If Mark were writing post-destruction, why would he place these words on Christ's lips when he would've know the Christians did not wait to see the Roman standard in the Temple? The Christians had fled to Pella several years previously. Jesus was obviously quoting words from the Hebrew Scriptures.

2. Is it likely that a Christian would compose an 'ex-eventu' parable (Luke 21:20-21) in which he symbolizes the actions of the all-loving God by the actions of the armies of Emperor Nero?

3. In Matthew 24:16, the words of Christ include 'fleeing to the mountains'. Why would these words have been invented ex-eventu when everyone knew the Christians had fled to Pella, situated on low lying ground by a river?

4. Words allegedly placed on the lips of Christ confuse the end of the Temple with the end of the world. If the authors wished to deceive their readers, they would have picked clearer words.

5. Some Markans now accept that Mark wrote prior to 70 AD. This would mean that the prophecy quoted by him was not ex-eventu. This should undermine their acceptance of the passages, in the other Gospels, as being ex-eventu.

6. Many Markans hold the opinion that it is not possible to prophesy, so the gospel authors were not telling the truth when they wrote that Christ had uttered words of correctly fulfilled prophesy. This is a philosophical opinion and not based on history or critical analysis.

7. Some Markans claim the theology found in Matthew and Luke is more developed than that in Mark. Yet this again is merely based on personal opinions of what they consider to be 'more developed'.

## Chapter 9

### Understanding ‘According to...’

We may wish that each Gospel author had opened and closed with his name and other biographical details. But would this be sufficient to silence the critics? There are 13 Epistles where Paul uses his name at the beginning or the end, or at both. Yet his authorship is still denied.

There was one message of Good News, one Gospel – the Gospel of Christ. Justin Martyr used the word ‘Gospel’ in the singular, but used the plural when he says the memoirs of the Apostles are called Gospels. This dual meaning had evolved by his time, although signs of it may be seen earlier in Rom. 11:16, 16:25, Tim 2:8 and 2 Thess 2:14. Because four authors had given their separate accounts of the one Gospel, it is easy to understand how the expression, ‘According to...’, came to be used.

There is however a deeper way to look at this subject. The early Christians were soaked in the traditions of the Old Testament. According to Claude Tresmontant, when the Gospel of Matthew was translated from Hebrew into Greek, the same lexicon was used as that used for translating the Septuagint (CTH 17-23). Christian artists in the Roman catacombs depicted scenes where the Old and New Scriptures were compared. The five Christian foundation scrolls (the four Gospels and Acts) were set beside the five scrolls of the Torah.

The Jewish Palestinian Talmud of the 5<sup>th</sup> century confirms that the Christians, so as to underline that the Christian books were of equal quality to the Torah, wrote in the same format as the Jews (CTJ 76-77).

When we look at the Old Testament, we find that the authors of historical books do not give their names, while the authors of prophetic books do (GS 276). The Apocalypse (now called Revelation) is clearly framed on the model of the Old Testament. The transition from the third to the first person in the Apocalypse; ‘his servant John’ and ‘I John’ (1:1, 1:9, 21:2, 22:2) is parallel to the usage of Isaiah (1:1, 2:1, 6:1, etc.) and of Daniel (1:6, 7:1, 2, 15, etc.).

It was a matter of following Jewish tradition for the author of a prophetic book to give his name. We should not be surprised when the authors of the Gospels and Acts omit to give their names in historical books. John gave his name in his prophetic book, but not in his Gospel. Luke explains how he collected the historical material for his Gospel and produced the clearly historical *Acts of the Apostles*. Yet in both cases, he omits his name. It follows that the four authors considered their compositions to be mainly historical books.

Note: The books known as Joshua, Samuel and Ezra do not take the names of their authors but from their subject matter. There was a reason for the traditional rule to be broken in one case. Nehemiah (i.e. 2 Ezra) was a continuation of Ezra. The anonymous author had died, so Nehemiah gave his own name when explaining that he was continuing the account.

The early Church knew 'according to' meant 'written by'. Eusebius writes of the hearers of Peter beseeching Mark to leave them a written statement and "so became the Scripture called the Gospel According to Mark" (EH 2:15, 2).

## Chapter 10

### The Roman World

#### THE ROMAN WORLD

Most Markan literature seems to be written in an historical vacuum, so it is good to remind ourselves of the real world in which the early Christians lived. Classical scholars have shown that texts, such as that by Homer, could be disseminated very quickly (CTP 49). The noted classical scholar, W. Walker, has pointed out that Christians are fortunate when searching for their roots because a highly-developed civilization existed at the time of Christ. Walker has made an interesting observation:

So called 'Scientific' skepticism can easily be carried too far. Ancient traditions have sometimes been confirmed by archaeology; ancient writers sometimes meant what they said and occasionally even knew what they were talking about. Skepticism about skepticism is especially appropriate in the period from the first century BC to the second century of the Christian era, because this is the most learned, best informed, and most securely dateable period in history before modern times...The New Testament could not have been written at a time of greater literacy, education, or understanding (WW 126-7).

The English Scripture scholar C. H. Dodd wrote in 1972, "It is surely significant that when historians of the ancient world treat the Gospels, they are quite unaffected by the sophistication of 'Redaktionsgeschichte', and handle the documents as if they were what they profess to be" (JATR 360). F. D. Gregory noted that Markan authors "...have a hunger for uncertainty" (AD Nov. 1994, page 15).

The irony used by these authors is understandable. So often it is the exegetes and theologians with their 'creative theology', love of German theories, and philosophical rejection of the supernatural, not the historians, who question the historicity of the New Testament.

The Roman Empire had a good system of roads free from marauders. Augustus (27-44 BC) had cleared pirates from the Mediterranean, so communications were reliable and fast (CTR 4). The shipwreck of Paul was quite the exception. Normally, it took ten days to sail from Rome to Palestine. Rome to Antioch and Alexandria was less. A voyage from Italy to Spain took 4-7 days (MP 226). In his book, *Geography*, Strabo (64 BC-19 AD) wrote that fish from the Sea of Galilee was prepared and salted in local factories to be exported to Rome (CTJ 171-2). Herod drank Italian wine in his palace at Masada. ((CTP 129)).

Letters were sent by post and valuable documents by hired messenger or trusted servants. The letter to the Colossians (4:16) illustrates how Christians used the communication system. A newly written Gospel could be copied and in the hands of Christian leaders throughout the Empire within weeks. The presumption that news and ideas took years to travel from one community to another has no basis in fact.

Yearly at Passover great numbers of Jews (probably 1-2 million), including those who had accepted Christ as the Messiah, travelled to Jerusalem. The city then became a center for the exchange of news, and a hive of gossip. The preaching of Jesus, his miracles, and the turbulence this caused amongst the Jews, together with steps taken to maintain the peace, would have been included in reports and sent by Pontius Pilate to the emperor in Rome. In 150 AD, Justin Martyr addressed *The Defense of Christianity* to Emperor Antonius Pius. He wrote:

Now there is a village in the land of the Jews, 35 stadia from Jerusalem, in which Jesus Christ was born, as you can ascertain also from the registers of the taxing made under Cyrenius, your first Procurator in Judaea (JMA Apologia 1:34).

He goes on to write of the life of Christ, his miracles, and details of the crucifixion such as the casting of lots for his vesture. He then adds, “And that he did these things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate” (JMA Apologia 1:35). Later, he lists the sort of miracles Christ performed. For confirmation, he again writes, “And that he did those things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate” (JMA Apologia 1:48).

If these reports of Cyrenius and Pilate had not been in the Roman archives, Justin would have been risking his life to suggest this action to the emperor. *The Acts of Pilate* have not survived down the centuries. A writing with the same title appeared in the fifth century but has been found to be spurious. The references by Justin Martyr to these official reports do not directly assist our dating of the Gospels, but they do provide further insight into the well-organized Roman world in which the New Testament books were composed.

Markans have no evidence that the authors of the Gospels and Acts lived out of touch with one another in isolated communities. There is no reason to think that the Christians did not live like others of their time.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

The theory of Markan Priority was slowly gaining support during the early 19th century, but, when Bismarck imposed it on the German universities, it became a threat to traditional belief. In 1893, Pope Leo XIII issued *Providentissimus Deus* to face “the difficulties and problems arising from the prejudice of a widely spreading rationalism” (DAS 6). He called for more research. By that time, there had been only one or two excavations in the Holy Land regarding the New Testament (DAS 16).

The Markan theory was born and incubated in the closed world of German academia as it existed over 150 years ago. Since then, there has been impressive progress in archaeological research and the understanding of ancient languages. This broad advance has transformed the scene. Two archaeological sites have particularly added to our knowledge.

Since 1902, a mound at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt has gradually been excavated. Finds show that a rough popular Greek (Koine) was widely used at the time of Christ. Scholars of the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> century, who expected all the New Testament to be in classical Greek, were therefore in serious error to treat Mark's Gospel as being in 'bad Greek' or 'degenerate Greek'. (SNTW 159).

The widely used non-literary Koine Greek, as used by the lower classes, provides the setting for the Greek of Mark when he was recording Peter's talks.

In 1946, a large collection of Gnostic texts was found at Nag Hammadi, also in Egypt. This collection has confirmed the reliability of information provided by Irenaeus (IDU opening page).

Archaeology is constantly clarifying and confirming early Christian writings. For example, it was not exactly clear what Papias was trying to say by the words, "Mark did not err at all when he wrote certain things just as he had recorded them...But Matthew composed the sayings in Hebrew style: but each recorded them as he was able" (). This makes sense now we know that Mark was able to use Greek short-hand, but such a tool was not yet available amongst the Hebrews. Papias was stressing Mark's absolute accuracy as compared with some reports of Matthew's oral preaching.

## **HISTORICAL NOVEL**

While an historical novel must not be treated as a history book, the success of such a novel depends on the author bringing historical events alive. To do so, it is important to keep the historical background acceptable to the intended readership. *The Acts of Peter* was published about 180 AD (AP). In this novel, we find a contest between Peter and Simon the Magician who is mentioned in Acts 8:9-24.

The novel also tells the story of Peter having to flee from Rome following a sermon on chastity and, when he meets Jesus, Peter is asked where he is going [Quo Vadis?]. Peter is ashamed and returns to Rome where he is crucified upside down. We know from other sources that this form of execution was in use at the time (CTJ 210). Thus, the author was keeping his novel close to credible historical facts.

In chapter twenty of the same novel, we read of Peter entering the house of Marcellus and finding a Gospel passage is being read [videt evangelium legi]. The passage was describing the Transfiguration. Peter takes the scroll from the reader, rolls it up, and proceeds to show how the 'Holy Scriptures of our Lord' should be preached [qualiter debeat Sancta Scriptura Domini nostri pronuntiari]. Saying 'What we have written in His grace', he then begins his own sermon on the Transfiguration from memory (CTP 170-172, AP 6:1).

This story comes from an historical novel, not a history book, but it is interesting that the author took it for granted that his readers would accept that at least one written Gospel was in wide circulation while Peter was alive. This dates at least one of the Gospels prior to Peter's martyrdom in 64 AD. The reading could have been from Matthew, Luke, or Mark. We may conjecture that the word 'we', put into Peter's mouth, indicates the author's understanding that Peter contributed the story of the Transfiguration to Matthew, who wrote first.



## Chapter 11

### The Jewish World and Shorthand

Although the Jews were a subject people in the Roman Empire, they had their civilization. They had their own form of shorthand, Simanimism. Although though not as advanced as Greek shorthand, it did exist.

The Presbyter, as reported by Papias, wrote, “Matthew composed the logia in Hebrew style, but each recorded them as he was able” (EH 39.16). The Presbyter could have been referring to recordings in shorthand.

Birger Gerhardsson in his book *Memory & Manuscript* writes, “We thus see that these Simanimisms are often a system of abbreviations which has with some justification been compared with shorthand” (195).

In *The Progressive Publication of Matthew* (2010), B. Ward Powers writes:

To have this evidence, about the apostle Matthew – his background training and employment. Also his response to the call to follow Jesus. That to believe he would not write down what Jesus was doing and teaching, requires a bigger leap of faith than believing that he did.... He had the means, the opportunity and the motivation. He would have made notes of what Jesus said. Logic demands and Papias confirms it [Much shortened and punctuation revised].

On pages 30-32, Powers mentions books by R. H. Gundry, W. Hendriksen, and D. Hill which accept that Aramaic Simanimism were available to Jewish students to record the words of their teachers. He also mentions as supportive E. J. Goodspeed, B.F.C. Atkinson, and A. T. Robetson. It is reasonable to accept that some, such as a custom official, would have continued to use shorthand in adult life.

It would be common knowledge in Palestine that Theophilus Ben Ananus served as high priest from 37-41 AD. He would have had a title of honor during this period. He stepped down in 41 AD. Luke used the title at the beginning of his Gospel. The omission of this title at the beginning of Acts indicates Luke’s second book was published in 41 AD or later.

Matthew mentions the town of Caesarea (16:13-20). Previous to 14 AD, this town had been called Panias in honor of the pagan god Pan. From 61, Herod Agrippa called it ‘Neronias’ in honor of the emperor Nero. These dates point to Matthew and Christ being there between 14-61 AD. (For more details: see this site B101 and B102).

## Chapter 12

### 2000 Year Timeline

Undisputed dates are in bold type. Christian events have been inserted, some tentatively, within this framework.

<b>Year AD</b>	<b>Event</b>
	The Resurrection. The leaders of the Jews persecute the first Christians. Saul/Paul is converted. Matthew composes his Hebrew gospel/liturgy in Palestine. Matthew's gospel issued in Greek. King Herod Agrippa executes the Apostle James the Great. Peter escapes and flees to Rome. The other apostles spread out from Palestine.
<b>37-41</b>	<b>Theophilus is high priest of the Jews</b>  Luke writes his gospel for the Gentiles
41	Luke writes his Acts
<b>44</b>	<b>King Herod Agrippa dies.</b>
<b>49</b>	<b>Jews and Christians expelled from Rome following riots.</b> First of Paul's epistles; some influenced by Matthew's gospel. Paul imprisoned by Romans. A copy of Matthew's Gospel taken to India.
<b>54</b>	<b>Nero becomes emperor</b> The Apostle James the Less, bishop of Jerusalem, killed by stoning. The Christians are expelled from the Temple. Paul asks Timothy to join him on a mission to Spain. Paul released from prison. Peter ordains Linus, Cletus and Clement as assistant bishops.
<b>61</b>	<b>Caesarea Philippi renamed Neronius</b> John writes twenty chapters of his Gospel
<b>64 July</b>	<b>Rome devastated by fire.</b>
64 Oct 13th	St. Peter's martyrdom (See this site: B 104).
<b>65 Spring</b>	<b>Nero enlarges his persecution of Christians.</b> Linus replaces Peter as bishop of Rome.
<b>66</b>	<b>Jewish rebellion in Palestine.</b>

- Paul goes to Spain.
- 68 early** **Jerusalem surrounded for first time by Romans.**
- 68 June** **Suicide of Emperor Nero followed by civil strife. This leads to the Roman troops, surrounding Jerusalem, being withdrawn.**
- Mark distributes larger second edition of Peter's talks.
- Paul returns from Spain and visits Asia and Crete.
- Paul writes an epistle to the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem.
- The Hebrew Christians flee from Jerusalem to Pella.
- Paul again imprisoned in Rome and then martyred.
- 69** **Galba dies trying to become emperor.**
- 69** **Vitellius dies trying to become emperor.**
- 69** **Otho dies trying to become emperor.**
- 69** **Vespasian becomes emperor**
- 69** **Vespasian renews war in Palestine**
- 69** **Romans surround Jerusalem for second time.**
- Clement of Rome replies to Corinthians on behalf of Linus.
- 70 Aug** **Jerusalem captured.**
- 70** **The Temple is destroyed**
- 81 About Linus dies.
- Cletus replaces him as bishop of Rome
- Hypothetical Council of Jamnia (about 85-100).
- 91** **Domitian starts persecution**
- 92 About Cletus dies
- Clement becomes bishop of Rome.
- Clement, exiled by Romans to the Crimea.
- 96 About John the Apostle adds final chapter to his Gospel.
- John the Apostle dies.
- 98** **Trajan becomes emperor.**
- Clement dies and Evaristus replaces him as bishop of Rome. (about 101).
- Papias (about 130) records that Mark wrote down Peter's words.
- Justin Martyr reports (161 – 165) that Apostles wrote Gospels.
- Prologues use Matthew-John-Luke-Mark sequence and report Peter's approval of Mark's Gospel.
- Ireneaus (about 180) familiar with the Matthew-Luke-Mark sequence.
- Clement of Alexandria states (about 200) that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were the first to be written.
- Tertullian (about 212) uses Luke prior to Mark three times.

- Origen (about 250) uses Matthew-Mark-Luke tradition.
- 312-323** **Eusebius writes his ‘Ecclesiastical History’.**  
 Augustine (about 380) says Matthew-Mark-Luke order is as ‘received’.  
 Jerome (about 383) chooses Matthew-Mark-Luke-John sequence for his Latin New Testament (The Vulgate).  
 Augustine (about 420) writes that Mark used Matthew and Luke.  
 Ambrosiaster (about 480) refers to Matthew-Luke-Mark-John sequence.
- 1546** **Council of Trent confirms which books are Sacred.**
- 18th C.** **The skill of literary analysis (internal evidence) develops.**
- 18th C.** **Henry Owen proposes Matthew-Luke-Mark sequence.**
- 19th C.** **Against Christian opposition, Bismarck enforces Markan Priority in German universities, so it triumphs in that country.**
- 1870** **First Vatican Council endorses decree of Council of Trent.**
- 1893** **Rome insists witness of historians, not on internal evidence.**
- 1902** **Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) established.**
- 1903** **Rome launches an anti-Modernist Crusade.**
- 1912** **PBC bans the teaching of Markan Priority in Catholic establishments.**
- 20<sup>th</sup> C.** **Markan Priority spreads in Protestant countries.**
- 1943** **Rome in ‘Divino Afflante Spiritu’ permits some use of internal evidence.**  
**2nd Vatican Council (Dei Verbum) maintains the historicity of the Gospels, bugospels, but allows greater freedom of research and opinion.**
- 1965**
- 1965-2011** **Markan Priority theory spreads quickly within the Catholic Community. Greatly influences Catechetical teachings.**
- 30 Sept.**
- 2010** **Apostolic Constitution, ‘Verbum Domini’, reads: “As Dei Verbum reminds us, Jesus Christ commanded the Apostles to preach the Gospel... This was ... carried out by those Apostles and others associated with them who committed the message of salvation in writing”.**

## Chapter 13

### Dating Matthew

For nearly 2000 years, it has been held that Matthew wrote his gospel in Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the city in 70 AD. The reason modern books have transferred its composition to a later period is so as to conform to the Markan theory. When dating is examined on its own, without this supposition, the witness of the ancient historians is clearly correct. This chapter will highlight some of the concerns featured in this gospel that indicate its background was Palestine and Jerusalem as it existed prior to 70 AD.

The new Christian community was formulating its position with regard to the Hebrew Scriptures, The Law, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Temple sacrifices, purification rites, the Sabbath, admission to the community, internal discipline, fasts, prayers, marriage, divorce and celibacy, as well its attitude to the Samaritans and Gentiles. As we read through the chapters and verses of Matthew, we see this taking place. This is what gives this Gospel such a Jewish flavor and points to it being written at that time and place. There are many examples which indicate its Palestinian background:

5:19	Fulfillment of the law
5:23-24	Bringing gifts to the altar
5:35	Swearing by Jerusalem
10:6 and 15:24	The lost sheep of the house of Israel
15:22	The Samaritan woman
24:21	The Sabbath
19:28	The twelve tribes
23:16-22	Swearing by the Temple and the altar
23:27	White-washed tombs

Luke and Peter/Mark, addressing mainly Gentile audiences, omit these subjects.

Matthew was very conscious of Jews living by 'The Law'. He used the words just, justice, lawlessness, worthy, and judgement fifty times. Luke uses them twenty-four times and Mark twice (NCCHS 710B). This is a sign of a moving away from the Palestinian environment.

Matthew assumes his readers are familiar with the views and customs of the Scribes, Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees. He never explains who they are, which would be expected if he had a mixed Gentile-Jewish audience towards the end of the first century (RO 233). He is busy solving the problems of Christian Jews, while ignoring those of the Gentiles who later poured into the Church. Major theological concepts in Matthew's Gospel presume an audience possessing a good understanding of the Old Testament. Matthew uses concepts foreign to Greek thought such as nuptial tent (9:14-15), bridegroom (17:10-13), and marriage feast (22:7).

The Greeks, thanks to Aristotle, had a word for ‘species’. The Hebrews didn’t. They used expressions such as ‘Son of Man’, ‘Son of Ox’, ‘Son of Crow’, etc. (CTH 30-45, 87, 131).

Matthew in 24:19-20 writes of the Sabbath, yet the corresponding passages in Luke 21:23 and Mark 13:17 omit it. Again, we see the Church drawing further away from her Jewish roots.

Matthew in 16:1-12 attacks the Pharisees and Sadducees four times in a long passage. In the related passage in Mark 8:11–27, we see the mention of the Pharisees reduced and there is no mention of the Sadducees. If Matthew had written second, why would he have doubled the references to the Pharisees and insert the phrase ‘and the Sadducees’ four times? Remember that after 70 AD, the Sadducees did not exist. If we assume the Markan dating of Matthew (80-85 AD), why would Matthew (17:24-7) be preoccupied with the half-shekel Temple tax? The Temple would have ceased to exist ten or fifteen years earlier.

Comparing the two stories in Matthew 15:1-2 and 15:21 with Mark 7:2-4 and 7:28, we see Mark finding it necessary to explain the act of ‘washing’ and the nationality of a Canaanite. Matthew, writing for Palestinians, had no need to do this. If Matthew was writing years after Mark for a mainly Gentile readership, and basing his Gospel on Mark’s Gospel, why did he leave out the helpful explanations provided by Mark?

Matthew’s Gospel is full of examples claiming Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Hebrews (e.g. 1:22, 2:15, 2:17, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 27:9). He reports the rending of the Temple veil (27:51), yet not the destruction of the Temple.

According to Matthew in 12:38-42, Christ said the story of Jonah would be a sign to a disbelieving Jewish generation. The point of the story (see Jonah chapters 1 and 2) is that the pagans would flock to be righteous while the chosen people would keep their hard hearts. The three-day whale incident is ancillary to the main story. If Matthew had written towards the end of the century, when the Gentiles were flooding into the Church, he would have been able to show the fulfilment of the prophecy (CTH 42). These are all signs of Matthew writing pre-70 AD.

The disciples knew Christ was aware of the future and asked questions, but Christ was aiming to make his Apostles single-minded and not waste time on idle curiosity (John 21:22). He gave them answers, but Christians have been puzzled ever since as to what applied to the immediate future and what to the end of the world. Whether this was deliberate on the part of Christ or whether the Apostles became confused, we do not know. We know that a major part of the prophecy, the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, had been fulfilled within forty years. If Matthew was writing after 70 AD, why did he fail to unscramble the words of Christ?

Orchard has pointed out that the letters of Paul to the Thessalonians, written in the 50s, show the influence of Matthew’s Gospel. Orchard comments, “We find the same teaching, the same metaphors and similes and the same key words, some exceedingly rare” Apart from two in 4:16, the words are used in the same order. The order is not so close in the second epistle, but even here the words all appear in chapter 24 and the beginning of chapter 25.

Other powerful supporting reminiscences of Matthew are to be found in Galatians 1:12, 16, and 1 Cor. 7:1ff and 9:14 (RO 119-120). For a fuller description of these relationships see 'Biblica 19 (1938): 19-42'. This is more evidence of Matthew writing before the 50s AD.

## Chapter 14

### A Hebrew Matthew

Every ancient historical source says the Apostle Matthew wrote the first Gospel, and most of them record that it was in Hebrew or at least in a Semitic language or style. Here we will look at the linguistic evidence for Matthew's Gospel being written first in Hebrew.

Doubt regarding the use of Hebrew rests on an assertion in 1555 by J. A. von Widmanstadt that Hebrew was a dead language at the time of Jesus (JC 83). Yet Luke, in Acts 21:40 and 22:2 reports Paul using it. Its use has since been confirmed by *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (JC 65).

Eusebius quoted Papias as stating that Mark was very accurate when recording the speech of Peter but, "Matthew collected/composed the oracles [logia or sayings] in the Hebrew language/style; but each recorded them as he was able" (EH 3:39.16 and RO 166r).

Modern research shows that at that time Greek shorthand was in use, but the Jews had to write fast, and use abbreviations, when recording Hebrew speech. The words of Papias imply that, when Matthew's Gospel was publicly read, listeners had difficulty making notes because it was in Hebrew.

Quoting Irenaeus, Eusebius wrote, "Now Matthew published among the Hebrews a written gospel also in their own tongue/ dialect" (EH 5:8, 2). Kirsopp Lake, in a footnote to his translation, explains that the word 'also' indicates that Matthew's Gospel had an earlier spoken form. The only reason Markans have for rejecting the evidence of Eusebius is because it challenges their theory. Without evidence, most Markans have asserted that it is not possible to back-translate Matthew's Greek Gospel into Hebrew. The Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1912 stated that this assertion did not undermine the words of Eusebius.

In recent years two Frenchmen have thrown more light on this question. Jean Carmignac, a specialist in Greek and Hebrew, spent eleven years from 1943 translating *The Book of Chronicles*. Then from 1954-63, he was engaged in translating *The Dead Sea Scrolls* from Qumran. Although his work was mainly concerned with the Old Testament, he noticed connections with the New Testament.

In 1963, he attempted to translate one of the Greek Gospels back into the form of Hebrew used at Qumran. Carmignac was 'absolutely dumbfounded' to find how easy it proved to be. Realizing his translation would be met with ferocious criticism, he searched in the old monastic libraries of Europe to see if the translation had been attempted previously. At the same time, he hoped to correct and improve his own work. Although lacking the time to make a thorough search, he soon found sixty translations of Gospels or portions of them. Some were by Rabbis who had become Christians and others by those wishing to dispute with Christians.

Carmignac was aging and had not published his scholarly findings, so his friends persuaded him to write a small book for the general public. This appeared in 1987. He not only asserted that Matthew's Gospel was the first to be written, but that it was in Hebrew.



According to him, the order of composition was a Hebrew Matthew followed by a Greek Luke, and then by a Greek Mark. In order to conform to Markan priority, he presumed there must have been an earlier Hebrew version of Mark, which Mark later translated. If we ignore this presumption, his work dovetails with the Clementine tradition of Matthew-Luke-Mark. He dated Greek Mark as before 70 AD, thus Matthew and Luke at an earlier date as well.

In 1953, Claude Tresmontant, a French Hebrew scholar, published a book dedicated to Hebrew thought. He then worked for years to produce a Hebrew-Greek dictionary. As he did this, he was overwhelmed by how easy it was to back-translate the Gospels into Hebrew.

In *Le Christ Hebreu*, he explained in detail the Hebrew basis of the Gospels. He formed the opinion that Matthew, in both Hebrew and Greek, could be dated as being written soon after the Resurrection, Luke between 40-60 AD, and Mark 50-60 AD (CTH 324). While not confirming the Clementine order, this pointed to its likely possibility.

Tresmontant detected a Hebrew substructure to Mark's Gospel. At first sight, this could conflict with the normally accepted view that Mark recorded Peter speaking in Greek. But, if over 90% of the talks by Peter consisted of quotes from Matthew and Luke, the Hebrew substructure of these quotations would automatically show in Mark's Gospel. The additions made by Peter would also have a strong Semitic tone because Peter was a native Aramaic speaker.

J. Kurzinger has shown that the description given by Papias, of Matthew's Gospel, would be best rendered as 'style' (RO 128-9). This would be a fair description of a Greek document written with a Hebrew substructure. When discussing Semitisms in the Gospels, many could be explained as a Greek author borrowing familiar Hebrew words. It would have been easy for the translator to carry over some Hebrew words, but the Hebrew substructure pointed out by Carmagnac and Tresmontant is of a different kind.

Hebrew likes wordplay and takes great pleasure in using similar sounds to assist memorization. In Matthew 3:9 we read of 'stones' and 'children'. In Greek and English there is no linguistic connection to assist memorization, but in Hebrew it reads as 'abanim' and 'banim' (CTH 64). In Matthew 9:16, the tear (qera) becomes worse (ra). In Matthew 13:6, shemesh (sun) is linked phonetically to the word for root (shoresh). In Matthew 21:12, shulehanot (tables) is similar to shulehanim (changers) (JC 29). Hebrew Matthew in 26:38 probably used the words 'imdu' (stay) and 'immadi' (with me). The word 'immadi' was translated into Greek, and therefore into English versions. This is acceptable in English but superfluous in the Greek language (JC 30). Peter, reading a Greek copy of Matthew and speaking in Greek, omits it (Mark 14:34). We may ask Markans why Matthew, if writing in Greek at the end of the first century, adds a superfluous Greek word.

Translators and copyists are liable to make small errors. These errors show when we compare the Gospels. It is necessary to point out here that the use of small dots or dashes in Hebrew are not aids to pronunciation, as they are in some languages. In Hebrew, they signify completely different letters. Many apparent discrepancies between the Gospels may be explained if we accept that Matthew's Gospel was originally in Hebrew. In Matthew 22:19, we read 'show me a coin' while Mark 12:15 has 'bring me a denarius'. In Hebrew, a coin is HBW and a denarius is HRW.

In Hebrew, a small difference distinguishes B and R from one another, so could easily have been misread when being translated into Greek (JC 32). Matthew 13:17 has ‘the just’ or ‘righteous men’, but Luke 10:24 has ‘kings’. As ‘the just’ corresponds to WYSRYM and ‘kings’ to WSRYM, and as the symbols for W and Y are very close, we are able to see how easy it would have been to read W in place of WY. Misreading in Greek the word ‘king’ for ‘just’ would be unimaginable (JC 33).

Some Hebrew theological concepts present in Matthew’s Gospel would be alien to Greek thought. Here we may note some of the more common Hebrew words and expressions used by Matthew but not by Greeks: Beelzebub, Woe, Flesh and Blood, deliver into the hands, hardness of heart, to set one’s face. Why would a Greek use these if not translating from Hebrew? They are not used by Luke or Mark (CTH 67-71, 90-92 and 112).

Tresmontant pointed out that a Hebrew-Greek Lexicon had to be produced when the Old Testament was translated into Greek (the Septuagint). He held the opinion that the Christians used the same lexicon in New Testament times. On both occasions, the translators tended to transcribe word for word, even though this could produce a Greek which did not flow well.

The evidence produced by Carmagnac, Tresmontant, and over sixty Rabbis, is that Matthew’s Gospel was first written in Hebrew. The examples above are a few of those provided by the two French translators. This is in accord with the historical records of Papias and Irenaeus. They say a Hebrew version for the Jews of Palestine was composed first. A Greek version appeared when converts were made amongst those who spoke Greek only.

These Frenchmen agreed the Synoptic Gospels were written pre-70 AD, but do not take a stand on the sequence in which they were composed. However, it is interesting that Tresmontant refers to them in the order of Matthew-Luke-Mark four times on one page of his writings (CTG 14). As they showed that Papias and Irenaeus were correct to report that Matthew’s Gospel was first written in Hebrew, confidence in the other information these historians provide is greatly increased.

In 47 AD, Western sailors learned how to utilize the monsoons to sail from Egypt to southern India in less than 100 days. Indian records show that Thomas the Apostle landed at Malankara, Kerala in 52 AD (SGP 5). After establishing seven churches, he moved to Coramandel on the east coast where he was martyred in 68 AD. Irenaeus records that Pantaenus, director of the Alexandrian School of Sacred Learning from 180-192, paid a visit to India in 190 and was shown a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew characters. Pantaenus reported that it was the Apostle Bartholomew who had taken it to India (EH 5: 10). Thomas was called ‘Mar Toma’ [Lord or Bishop Thomas] so Pantaenus, who knew Hebrew but not the Indian languages, may have misheard this as ‘Bar Tolmai’, the Hebrew name for Bartholomew (SGP 19). Whether or not this copy of the Matthew’s Gospel had belonged to Thomas or Bartholomew, Pantaenus had seen it in Hebrew. Yet, Markans say it was written for a Greek community a hundred or more years after Thomas and Bartholomew were both dead.

In his *De Viris Illustribus*, Jerome states that Matthew wrote in Hebrew letters and words for the sake of the Jews and then translated into Greek. He writes, “the Hebrew itself is preserved even now in the library at Caesarea...” Jerome also says he “was given the opportunity of

transcribing this volume by the Nazarenes who use it in Beroea, a city of Syria.” He adds that Matthew, when quoting from the Old Testament, had used the Hebrew Scriptures not the Greek Septuagint (RO 203 & DVI, ch 3&7).

## Chapter 15

### Luke and Acts

The traditional belief is that the Gospel of Luke was composed by the companion of Paul in Greek no later than 65 AD. It was based on his personal research and extracts borrowed from the Gospel of Matthew. Those claiming this Gospel was written anonymously about 85 AD, or in the second century, deny the author was a companion of Paul. Let us look at the evidence.

The author declares his aim is to set out an orderly account of the events in the life of Christ and His followers. He does so in the form of a letter to Theophilus. In a second volume, *Acts of the Apostles*, the author continues the story from where he left it at the end of his Gospel. If it can be shown that Acts was composed prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, it follows that Luke's Gospel was also composed prior to 70 AD.

The author of Acts records the conversion of Paul in his ninth chapter and then spends eighteen chapters detailing his travels with Paul. This includes Paul's arrest, voyaging, shipwreck, arrival in Italy, and two years awaiting trial. But when we would expect details of Paul's trial, sentence, or release, there is an abrupt silence. The absence of this information is a clear indication that Luke completed Acts before 64 AD.

Acts ends at a time of peace for the church in Rome. Yet secular historians tell us there was a great persecution of Christians after 64 AD. As this does not appear in Acts, we have an indication that Acts was sent to Theophilus before this event.

This dating is confirmed by the way Jerusalem and its Temple are treated. Luke-Acts constitutes one third of the New Testament, yet contains two thirds of the references to Jerusalem. In the Gospel and Acts, the city is mentioned 31 times. We can see that the Temple and Jerusalem are very prominent in the thinking of the author. Yet he ignores their destruction, the civil and religious symbolism of such destruction, and the impact on the life of the Church and her missionary preaching. Again, the obvious conclusion is that Jerusalem and the Temple were still standing at the time he wrote.

The letters sent by Paul to various destinations became well known and copied for reading in other churches. Luke, as the companion of Paul, would not have foreseen their future importance, so did not mention them. But a writer of a generation or more later, giving an account of the life of Paul, would certainly have alluded to at least one as an example of Paul's writing ability and his thought. Yet nothing is said.

Critics work hard to find alleged discrepancies in the New Testament, but it is prudent to check their assertions. Some claim that Luke's Gospel tells us that Christ ascended to heaven soon after His Resurrection (Luke 24:50), while Acts (also composed by Luke) speak of a forty-day delay (Acts 1:3). The Gospel does not say how long it was between Christ speaking to the Apostles in the Upper Room and leading them out to Bethany. As we know from other parts of the Scriptures, 'then' does not mean 'immediately'.

In four places in Acts (16:10-17, 20:5-15, 21:1-18, 27:1-28), the author uses the pronoun 'we' when recording the journeys of Paul. The obvious meaning is that the author was with Paul in the 60s. Those arguing against this meaning claim 'we' could have been a stylistic device or that the author was copying from an old manuscript without adjusting the wording. These claims are pure speculation to avoid acceptance of the clear meaning. Acts contains a whole range of pronouns such as: I, me, he, us and they. Together with 'we' they all fit naturally into the manuscript. Paul, when acting alone, is referred to as 'he'. When Paul is separated from the author but with others, 'they' is used. When Paul is with the author 'we' or 'us' is used.

Paul's companions are referred to as 'they' until Paul arrives for the first time in Troas (Acts 16:8) when 'we' and 'us' is used till Paul leaves Philippi with Silas (Acts 16: 40). 'They' is used again until 'they' return to Troas (Acts 20:5). Then, for the remainder of the travels of Paul, the word 'we' is used.

It is common for a writer to give greater detail to events in which he has been involved compared with those he has learned of second hand. It is noticeable that the author deals at great length with the 'we' events at Philippi, yet provides a short summary of the 'they' passages (Acts 16:4-8, 18:18-23).

For the remaining time, the author is in such close touch with Paul that events are often recorded on a day-to-day basis. The suggestion that Luke was using the royal 'we', when meaning 'I', is contrary to the narrative. When he refers to himself in Acts 1:1, he uses 'I'.

Luke devotes one and a half chapters to Stephen (Acts 6:8-8:1). He could only have obtained this information first-hand from Saul/Paul. He had been closely involved in the trial of Stephen and in his execution (Acts 7:58). Christians would not have been close enough to those events to hear the conversation in such detail.

An early Greek prologue says that Luke was an unmarried physician, a Syrian by birth who died aged 84 at Thebes in Boeotia (RO 144). Irenaeus in his *Against Heretics* took it for granted that Luke was the author of one of the four Gospels. The heretics with whom he was disputing must have accepted this as true, otherwise the arguments being used by Irenaeus would have been useless.

There is nothing in the many early writings or in more recent discoveries that remotely hints that the author was not the companion of Paul. The only reason it is alleged to have been someone else, is because the acceptance of Luke's position destroys the theory of Markan Priority.

Luke says Christ came to preach (4:18) and that he did preach (20:1). Yet, according to Markan priorists, Luke not only failed to report this preaching but substituted the views of a later unnamed creative theologian.

Christ said to his Apostles, "You shall be my witnesses" (Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8). The Gospel writers call themselves 'witnesses' (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32 etc.). So, the Apostles had a deep commitment to witnessing to the historical events of the life and teaching of Christ and his followers. The only way to reject this view is to assert that the books of the New Testament are a

massive confidence trick of falsehoods invented by theologians to fool their readers and later generations.

It has been claimed that as the author of the Gospel and Acts did not give his name, these writings are anonymous. But no one writing to a named person, such as Theophilus, would write: “it seemed good to me ...to write”, without letting the recipient know who was writing to him. If the correspondent had a reason to omit his name from the scroll, he would write his name and address on the wrapping or in a covering note. The most likely reason Luke omitted his name in the text was explained in our chapter 9.

The first twelve chapters of Acts concern the early church in Jerusalem with Peter as the key figure. In the twelfth chapter, we read of Peter escaping from prison, hiding in the home of John Mark, and leaving for ‘another place’ (Acts 12:17). This would have occurred in 41 or 42 AD (CTJ 44). In the first chapter of his Gospel, Luke stresses that he has made careful researches and throughout his writings we find he is very precise when giving place names. Why was he vague here?

Theophilus would know of Ezekiel 12:1-13 where it was written, “Therefore...prepare for yourself an exile’s baggage...in the dark...and go into exile...to another place.” In 12:13, ‘the other place’ is identified as Babylon. At this time, Rome was coming to be known as a second Babylon. Peter himself refers to it by this name in chapter 5 of his first Epistle. The Apocalypse (Chapters 14, 17, and 18) also refers to Rome in this way. It can then be assumed the author was writing in code to Theophilus and informing him that Peter had gone to Rome. The early historians report Peter preaching in Rome; none reported that he visited Babylon of the Chaldeans (BC 44).

Following his escape from prison, Peter was a fugitive. Herod had executed two guards because of the escape. Here we have Luke, who aimed to be factual in his accounts, using code regarding the whereabouts of Peter. If Acts had been written after the death of Peter in 64 AD, the author would have been free to say Peter had fled to Rome.

All these observations point to Acts, and therefore also Luke’s Gospel, as being written some time before this date. Jerome stated that *Acts* was completed in the fourth year of Nero which would be in 64 AD (DVI chapter 7).

## Chapter 16

### Luke's Infancy Narrative

In a 1977 book, R. E. Brown, a leading Catholic Markan priority scholar, denied the historicity of the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. Edith Black has shown that the exegetical principles used by Brown, according to which he denies this historicity are in sharp conflict with the norms laid down by the Catholic Church (EB).

Fr. Brown attracted a large following, but he had not examined the narratives with an open mind. He was committed to the theory of Markan Priority with its acceptance of late composition by anonymous non-Apostolic authors, personally out of touch with each other, writing creative theological treatises rather than history.

From this presupposition and thus narrow perspective, Brown presumed that the only way the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke could possibly be historical was if their authors had both copied an earlier tradition.

Since the infancy narratives did not repeat the same stories, he concluded that such an earlier document could not have existed. Therefore, the first chapters of these Gospels were not historical (RBM 34-36). From this understanding, he found many alleged problems. Some of his 'problems' have gained wide circulation. Yet when Markan Priority is rejected, the 'problems' disappear.

For example, he said that secular historians did not corroborate the massacre and census stories. But is there a need for corroboration? It is unscientific prejudice to accept the evidence of all sorts of ancient historians provided they were not Christian. Unbiased modern historians accept the accounts of ancient historians as being correct unless there is strong contrary evidence. In this case, contrary evidence does not exist. At the opening of his Gospel, Luke claimed to be giving an account of historical events, so he had to be very careful. He knew many anti-Christians would try to find errors in his writing.

Bethlehem was a small community, with the number of males under two years not more than twenty (RL 372). According to Josephus, the main Jewish historian of the period, Herod carried out large massacres of his own family, his officers, and the general population. They were on such a scale that a non-Christian historian would have passed over the killing of twenty children without comment (RL 372).

When discussing scholars, who claimed to be demythologizing the New Testament, an editor asked an interesting question:

“Do these scholars ever stop to weigh up the psychological state of mind they imply in the evangelists of the New Testament? Herod may have been a depraved beast, but it would be a monstrous crime to frame even Herod with a murderous outrage he did not commit. Do ‘scholars’ like these know anything about the love of God as an experience?” (FM March 1991, page 6).

Quirinius (Cyrinius) did not become governor of Syria until 10 AD so, at first sight, there appears to be a genuine problem here. It is true that other historians do not report the taking of a census at the time of Christ's birth. But this does not prove that it did not occur.

Our knowledge of the administrative background of the period is very fragmentary. A Roman census did not take place at the same time in all parts of the empire and could be carried out spread over many years. As Luke mentions 'the first enrollment', he was presuming Theophilus knew of at least one later one. If Luke was so ignorant of the history of the period, would he have left himself open to criticism by attempting such precision?

We lack details of the early career of Quirinius. Some modern historians think he was given charge of some affairs in the Middle East before being promoted to the position of governor of Syria in 10 AD (RL 328). So, he could have been overseeing a census of the small town of Bethlehem at an earlier date.

A census was usually held to have a basis for taxation. It was very important for those owning land to inform their children, who would inherit. The census would have been a subject of general knowledge and discussion for many years amongst villagers. Many of Luke's contemporaries would have been aware of the census through such family histories.

Luke was writing at a time when records of the census would still have been available in both Jerusalem and Rome. Yet there is no sign of the Roman, Pagan, Jewish, and heretical enemies of Christianity challenging the statement of Luke.

Justin Martyr addressed a letter to Emperor Antoninus Pius who reigned from 138–161. After telling of the registration of the Holy Family in the census, he adds that details can be found in the official Roman archives (JMA 1:34). About 200 AD Tertullian, in his *Adversum Marcionem*, writes, "There is historical proof that at this very time a census had been taken in Judaea by Sentius Saturninus, which might have satisfied their enquiry respecting the family and descent of Christ" (TE Book 4:19,10). So, at this time, there was historic proof of the census available. Sentius Saturninus was the pagan priest appointed by Augustus to head the planning of the worldwide census.

Some critics claim that Mary would not have travelled to Bethlehem, as it was a duty for the head of the household alone. But if the names of Mary and Jesus were not included in the census, Tertullian's appeal that his enemies look in the records would have been pointless.

Other critics have asserted that the Romans did not require a return to one's hometown to be registered. But we read in the K. C. Hanson collection of Ancient Documents:

Gaius Vibius Maximus, the Prefect of Egypt, declares: "The census by household having begun, it is essential that all those who are away from their homes be summoned to return to their own hearths so that they may perform the customary business of registration..." (KCH). [nomes = an Egyptian administrative district]

This was in 104 AD and only 250 kilometers (~155 miles) from Palestine.



It is true that Matthew writes of wise men visiting Jesus at a house at Bethlehem, while Luke reports that the shepherds found Jesus in a manger. But this is not a problem. Once the crowds had gone home after the census, Bethlehem would not have been so crowded. The family could easily have moved into a house during the two years prior to the arrival of the wise men. [A manger is part of a stable].

Let us look at the wider aspects of these narratives. The first two chapters of Matthew and Luke provide essentially the same information: Mary and Joseph are legally engaged; Joseph is Davidic in descent; Mary conceives by the Holy Spirit while remaining a virgin; an angel says the child is to be named 'Jesus', meaning 'Savior'.

Matthew then provides some less-essential details. It was Joseph who was told of the child's name, the place of birth was Bethlehem, the family had then fled to Egypt, Herod had carried out a massacre, and Jesus had grown up in Nazareth. Matthew was writing primarily for Jews in Palestine and we can see him contrasting the violent rejection of the Messiah by a Jewish king with the wise Gentiles seeking the Will of God.

Luke repeats the same essential information, which could be said to be 'doctrinal', but not the less-essential details already made known by Matthew. Matthew had stated that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but had grown up in Nazareth. A vague intimation of the date of the birth of Jesus was conveyed by the mention of Herod in the Magi story, but he had reigned for many years.

A precise date would not have been required by Matthew's audience in Jerusalem just after the Resurrection. Everyone would have possessed a general knowledge of the period. But Luke, writing twenty or so years later in Asia, would feel it necessary to be more precise and explain how Jesus, a Nazarene, came to be born in Bethlehem. His account provided this information and added the less important information that he was lying in a manger because the inn was crowded. He also reports the visit of the shepherds. These details do not conflict with those provided by Matthew.

According to tradition, Mary, following the death of Jesus, lived at Ephesus in Asia. We know that Luke spent much of his time in the same area. Even if Mary lived elsewhere, Luke would have been permitted to visit her. Considering the detailed and intimate nature of the nativity story, it is not difficult to theorize Luke obtained his information from Mary, especially as he mentions her memory twice (Luke 2:19 and 2:51).

The call of John the Baptist for repentance persisted for a generation or so after his murder. Many of his followers came to accept Jesus, but others claimed John was equal to or even greater than Jesus. In telling of the visit of Gabriel to Zechariah and Elizabeth, and the birth of John the Baptist, Luke was providing powerful facts to support the Christian argument that John was doing no more than preparing the way for Jesus.

Markans sometimes claim these narratives are composed in the midrash form of Hebrew popular legend based on reused Scriptures. Yet there is no trace of midrash in the early life of the church. What some claim is midrash would often be better described as typology.

## Chapter 17

### Luke's Style

Let us look at the writing style of Luke. There is a Greek word used thirty-two times in chapters 3-53 of Luke's Gospel and twelve times in Acts. This word has been rendered into English as 'It came to pass' or 'And it came to pass that'. It is a distinctive mark of Luke's style.

It is rare in Matthew and John and it appears twice only in Mark where he is borrowing from Luke. This 'fingerprint' of Luke appears eight times in the infancy narrative of Luke (1:8, 23, 41, 59, 2:1, 6, 15, 46). It is a clear indication that the author of the Gospel and Acts also wrote the 'infancy narratives'.

The RSV translation of the New Testament replaces the traditional phrase 'It came to pass' or 'And it came to pass that', with, 'while', 'now while', 'and while', 'and when', or it is omitted. In this way, the fingerprint of Luke's style is lost to view. The more literal translations are to be found in the King James and Douay versions.

When Luke introduces a new person or place, he explains something about them.

1: 5	Herod, king of Judea	1:5	a priest named Zechariah
4: 31	Capernaum, a city in Galilee	7:11	a town called Na'in
19:2	Zacchaeus; he was a tax collector	19:29	place called the Mount of Olives

Yet in verses 3:1 and 4:14-16, we find John, Jesus, Galilee, Nazareth mentioned without any explanation of who or what they are. The reason is that they have already been introduced previously in the infancy narratives (HR 73-74). This is further evidence of Luke's infancy narrative being an integral part of his Gospel.

### MATTHEW & LUKE

The Clementine tradition holds that Luke borrowed from Matthew, so let us see whether there are signs of this borrowing.

When the Apostle Matthew recounted historical events, he did not place the events in chronological order. In recent years, Luiz Ruscillo has analyzed Matthew's Gospel (FM January 2002). A similar analysis was set out in the 1953 edition of *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (CCHS 678). Here we will give a brief outline based on these two analyses.

### The Structure of Matthew's Gospel (A Lectionary)

Matthew's Gospel consists of narrative followed by a discourse/sermon on the narrative.

1-4 Narrative: How the birth of Jesus fulfilled prophecies regarding his infancy.

5-7 Sermon: Blessings and Entering the Kingdom

8-9 Narrative: Start of Our Lord's ministry, miracles.

10 Sermon: Instructions for Apostles' ministry.

11-12 Narrative: Opposition to '*The Kingdom*' by this generation.

13 Sermon: The Kingdom's mysterious nature is reason for opposition. Parables explaining: '*The Kingdom*'.

14-17 Narrative: Formation of the Disciples and of Peter.

18 Sermon: Duties of the disciples.

19-22 Narrative: Mounting opposition of Judaism.

23-25 Sermon: Messianic Judgement on Judaism.

26-28 Narrative: The death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Until Markan Priority came to be tolerated within Catholic circles, the above was how most Catholics understood the structure of Matthew's Gospel.

Analyzing the relationship between Luke's and Matthew's Gospels will assist us in determining their order of composition. Here we will show how Luke was influenced by Matthew. This is based on the detailed study of Luke's Gospel made by Harold Riley (HR 11-145).

In his opening words, Luke says many 'had taken in hand' to produce an account 'in order'. He then says he is going to write an account 'in order'. So Luke's Gospel is going to aim at chronological accuracy. Luke, in the opening words of Acts, explains how he used this order in his Gospel. He explains that his Gospel told of all that Jesus began to do and to teach.

We note how he gathered the teaching material into a central section (Luke 9:52-18:14) and in so doing changed the order of Matthew's passages. This could have caused confusion amongst his readers regarding chronology, so he acted to avoid this. When changing the order of a passage from Matthew, which contained a note of place and time, he omits this note and uses the phrase 'And it came to pass...'

To give a few examples: Christ finishes his sermon, descends the mountain and cures a leper (Mt 7: 28-8: 2). Luke, moving this incident to a different location (Luke 5:12-14), suppresses both time and place (HR72). The story of plucking corn is 'at that time' (Mt 12:1) but Luke makes it non-specific (Luke 6:1). In Mt 12:9, we read 'He went down from there', but Luke changes it to the vague 'on another Sabbath' (Luke 6:6).

In 13:1, Matthew says, 'That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea', but Luke avoids the chronology (Luke 8:4). Luke's policy is highlighted by when there would be no confusion in preserving Matthew's chronology Mt 16:13-17//Luke 19:18-45 (HR 73). We should add that the expression 'eight days' designated a week.

This presents a question for Markan priorists, who assert that Matthew and Luke borrowed these incidents from 'Q' or Mark. Why would Matthew give precise times and places while Luke, who has promised in his first chapter to be accurate, omits them? And why does Luke include them only when he has not altered the timing?

Julius Africanus, also known as Sixtus or Sixtus Julius, was in the army in 195. He later lived in Emmaus and Alexandria and was involved in rebuilding Nicopolis. Still alive in 240, he was one of the most learned writers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. He wrote a treatise of five volumes on chronology from creation to 221 AD. In it, he explained that the genealogies of Christ that had been provided by Matthew and Luke were not at variance with one another (EH I: 7). Why would he have bothered if they were the late symbolic inventions of unknown writers, and not viewed in his time, by Christians and non-Christians, as reliable factual history?

Some Markans argue that Matthew's Gospel does not have an eyewitness quality like that according to John. But Matthew does not need to claim to be an eyewitness of events, nor explain his personal relationship with Jesus. His readers would already have been very much aware of this. His Gospel reads like a Lectionary to be read at weekly meetings. If it was intended to be a Lectionary, it would have been out of place for him to break into the pattern of worship, prayer, and learning with matters of a personal nature.

## **MATTHEW & ACTS**

Orchard pointed out that if we accept Matthew's Gospel as being composed about 44 AD, we see that it slots in very well with the situation depicted in Acts 1-12. Matthew is responding to the problems to be found there.

To avoid recognizing this, the Markans are forced to say that Acts 1-12 does not give a true picture of the Church at that time, or they create an anachronistic Christian-Jewish community near Damascus about 75-90 AD, or that Matthew was written in reaction to the obscure workings of the hypothetical Jewish curse of Jamnia. There is little evidence to support any of these proposals. They are attempts to defend the Markan theory (RO 241). That Markans propose many such mutually exclusive theories is itself a sign of the weakness of their position.

## **ORAL REPORTS WITH EXPLANATIONS**

In the Gospels written by Matthew, Luke, and Mark, there are many places where a report of an event is followed by an explanation of its context. Many see this as a sign of an author passing on information from an oral source, before adding an explanatory note of the context. So let us consider whether this may add to our understanding of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels.

Matthew was an eyewitness of much of Christ's public life, but not all—for example the infancy years of Jesus. Also, not being one of the first Apostles, he needed witnesses to tell him of events concerning John the Baptist. So, Matthew would have interviewed witnesses.

When preaching, the Apostles would have found that quoting the words of a witness without providing the context could cause puzzlement amongst their hearers. The preachers learned the need to add the context when giving a quotation from an eyewitness. So, when Matthew wrote his Gospel, he did the same.

Luke was not an Apostle and relied on witnesses for information. So, like Matthew, he added explanations after recording the oral words of his interviewees. When Luke copied parts of Matthew's Gospel, he included Matthew's context notes.

Peter's talk was mainly based on quotations from Matthew and Luke. So their words of explanation would have been incorporated into Peter's delivery. Where Luke had copied Matthew and then Peter had used the same phrase from Luke, it would cause the quotation to appear in the three Gospels. Peter had no need to add an explanation of his own until he responded to a question at the end of his talk (Mark 16:14).

## Chapter 18

### The Epistles & Pseudonymity

Critics are keen to say that most of the Epistles were not written by those who claim to be their authors but by anonymous men. They allege they are pseudonymous (anonymous and false, but written by Christians who believed that ‘gaining converts justified telling lies’).

Of the 21 Epistles, 7 are generally accepted and the Epistle to the Hebrews will be discussed in Chapter 19. We lack room to examine all the remaining 13 but will look at the five most rejected by the critics. These are the three Pastorals by Paul, the second epistle of Peter, and the one by Jude.

#### THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

These are 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus. They provide their recipients with advice for managing their flocks, so are called ‘Pastorals’. We will give the arguments put forward by critics and a reply.

1. Acts provides an account of the travels by Paul but do not include a visit by him to Greece and Crete. The Pastoral Epistles (PEs) imply such visits, and thereby create an ‘insurmountable difficulty’ for the traditional belief that Paul wrote them.

Reply: This is an example of how ‘a difficulty’, concerning the reliability of the New Testament, is not caused by historical or literary evidence, but by the Markan Priority theory itself. Because Markans claim Luke wrote his Gospel about 85, they must date his Acts as later still. History places Acts in the 60s (CCHS 815a). And the historical evidence tells us that Paul was released from prison and continued his missionary journeys. Let us look at the evidence:

Clement of Rome writes in his Epistle to the Corinthians that Paul ‘was a herald both in the East and in the West’, and that he reached ‘the limits of the west’ and was then rearrested and executed (COR chapter 5:6-7). Whether you hold that Clement wrote prior to the destruction of Jerusalem or in 96 AD, many of his readers would have been aware of what had occurred. So he is unlikely to have invented the journey.

Although The Acts of Peter was not inspired by the Holy Spirit, it was written in 180-190. It states that when Paul was released from prison he was granted permission to go where he wished. He chose to visit Spain, returning after Peter’s death. He was then arrested again and executed (AP 1-3; 4.2, 6; 40).

The Muratorian Fragment of the same period states clearly that Paul went from ‘the city’ [Rome] to Spain (MFGR lines 38f). Eusebius records that Paul, after spending two years preaching in Rome (Acts 28: 30) and ‘after being brought to trial’, set out on a ministry of preaching (EH 2: 22).

We may note that the alleged offence of Paul was minor, Agrippa had not found him guilty (Acts 26:31-32) and Festus would have included this favorable opinion in his report. Also, the Apostle himself expected to be released so he could see his friends. (Phil.1:25-26; 2:24). Paul had previously voiced his ambition to preach in Spain (Rom. 15:24-28).

In Acts itself, Luke makes no mention of Paul's trial, judgement, or his martyrdom. Yet up to this point Luke has detailed the witness and suffering of Paul in great detail. The obvious conclusion is that Acts does not cover the latter part of Paul's life. So Paul could have written the Pastoral Epistles in his later years.

Once we accept that Luke concluded Acts prior to Paul being released from prison, the 'insurmountable difficulty', created by Markan priority, disappears.

Michael Prior held that the second letter of Paul to Timothy may be seen as a request for assistance in the proposed Spanish mission. In the past, the whole letter has been interpreted to accord with the translation of one word in chapter 4:6. But as this Greek word, which has may be translated as 'departure', was rarely used. Its precise meaning in this context is unsure. Prior believes this word should be seen in the context of the whole letter. A man on the point of execution is unlikely to make a request for books, parchments, and a cloak before winter. However, a man about to make a missionary journey would find them very useful. He suggests the translation should read: 'For my part I am already spent and the time for my release is at hand' (MP 89-90 and SB Jan 2001, 19).

1. The style is not the same as that seen in the recognized Pauline Epistles.

Reply: The 'recognized Pauline epistles' were co-authored, as may be seen from their opening and closing words. They were also addressed to the leaders of churches for public reading. On the other hand, the Pastoral Epistles were private letters to friends. It is a fallacy to think we can learn of the personal and private style of Paul from official co-authored letters addressed to communities.

Dr. Johnson, when visiting Scotland, described the isles in letters sent home and later in a book. Macaulay, the English historian, said it was 'hard to credit the letters and the book had been written by the same man' (PT 17:152). Prior examined the styles of Paul in detail and pointed out the fallacies of pseudonymity (MP and SB Jan 2000, 2-19).

1. 175 of the 848 words used in the Pastoral Epistles do not occur in the New Testament, but 93 of these 175 do occur in the Fathers and Apologists. This shows the vocabulary of the PEs belongs to the second century.

Reply: Some years ago, these statistics were used to convince people. But it has since been shown, with less publicity, that 95 of the 175 occur in the writings of Philo who died 20 years before Paul. Also, 153 of these 175 words occur in writings from before 50 AD (SB Jan 2001, 6). Almost the same proportion of unusual words are to be found in 1 Corinthians, accepted by nearly all as first century, as occur in the much later Apostolic Fathers (JNDK 24). So the vocabulary of the Pastoral Epistles was in use during New Testament times.

4. The heresies implied in the Pastoral Epistles did not develop till the second century.

Reply: By the second century, Christian heretical sects, incorporating Gnostic and cultic ideas, were well organized. But there is no evidence that earlier and incipient forms were absent from apostolic times (CCHS 656h).

5. The Pastoral Epistles fit the structured church government developing in the second century rather than that of the Charismatic earlier forms.

Reply: It does take time for structures to develop, but they need to exist before they can develop. In the first years, there were Charismatic and structural aspects to the church, as there are today. Both were developing as they met new needs. Between the Resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit, Church leaders were exercising a self-confident authority with a primitive but effective structure for decision making (Acts 1:25-26).

6. The Pastoral Epistles are like many other epistles, pseudonymous.

Reply: In many epistles, including the Pastoral Epistles the names of the person or persons sending the letter are given in the opening words, or at the end, or in both. So there should be no problem. Both history and the internal evidence are against the critics. But they have developed this idea of wide-spread pseudonymous (false documents written with good motives—the end justifying the need).

Christians are not likely to easily accept that the early Christian leaders produced forged documents so as to fool congregations, gain converts, and win arguments. Some claim the congregations were not fooled but did not object.

Those who make these claims come from a world where Christian pseudonymity is considered to have been common in the first century. But there is no evidence that the Church produced or spread such false writings.

Later, in the mid-second century, there were some books ascribed to long dead apostles, but Tertullian tells us that an author who was orthodox in his teaching, full of love for Paul and acting with the noblest of intentions, was deposed from the presbyterate for the sole reason that he practiced pseudonymity. Sometime later, Eusebius quotes Bishop Serapion of Antioch as rejecting writings falsely bearing the names of the Apostles (JATR 187-8).

When a pseudonymous letter is sent to the Thessalonians, it is condemned as a forgery, not a harmless Christian convention (2 Thess. 2:2). Robinson has written

There is an appetite for pseudonymity that grows by what it feeds on. If you believe it is everywhere, you cease to have to argue for it anywhere. If we ask what is the evidence for orthodox epistles being composed in the name of apostles within a generation or two of their lifetime, and for this being an acceptable literary convention within the church, the answer is nil (JATR 186-7).



7. Many of the epistles could not have been early because there had not been sufficient time for ‘theological development’.

Reply: This argument is often claimed to be ‘conclusive’. Yet the time it took for such developments is purely speculative. The Apostles lived in daily contact with Christ for three years. Three had experienced the Transfiguration. In history, many individuals have been known to develop deep spiritual insights within a few years.

Christianity is a revealed religion, so Christ imparted its basic teachings and structures to the Apostles. Although these were developed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Markans do not know what was known or not known in the first years. Those claiming to make these judgements are living two thousand years after the events, in a completely different environment and with their own ideological agendas and personal presuppositions. Their conjectures are as reliable as measuring a fast-growing plant with an elastic measuring tape.

8. We are told that Paul would have been too humble to have written 2 Tim. 4:7-8.

Reply: He was expressing his honest feelings in a private letter to a personal friend. This criticism is based on a false understanding of humility.

These replies show there is no need to accept Markan assertions regarding the PEs.

Regarding the alleged errors in the PEs, similar ‘errors’ are to be found in the Epistle to the Corinthians (Cor. 2: 4-26), which are accepted by nearly all to be Paul’s (CCHS 918g).

## **PETER AND JUDE**

9. Markans claim 2 Peter was written in the second century because it quotes from Jude written late in the first century. Also that 2 Peter 3:16 mentions a collection of Paul’s letters which would not have existed till the end of the first century.

Reply: These assertions are not based on history but on the Markan Priority theory. Recent research indicates that Jude wrote about 62 AD and depended on 2 Peter (CTP 245). This would place the composition of 2 Peter sometime in the 50s AD. These are not fully proven, but show an increasing number of exegetes are researching, unrestricted by Markan dogma.

The Markan argument about a collection of Paul’s letters is based on their own false picture of Roman life. Life in the Roman Empire was reviewed in our Chapter 12. The library at Rome would probably have been one of the largest in Christian hands.

When Paul wrote a letter to a church, it is most likely copies would be passed to other churches. In Colossians 4:16, a specific instruction is given to do this. It is difficult to imagine that none of these copies arrived at the Church’s headquarters in Rome. Markans have no evidence that it took fifty years for a library to be formed at Rome containing Paul’s letters. Also, Peter’s second epistle does not say all of Paul’s letters were in the collection

It would be difficult to run an organization and convert an empire, if two thirds of important and treasured letters passing between branches and its headquarters were forgeries.

## Chapter 19

### The Epistle to the Hebrews

Tradition tells us that Paul sent this epistle before 70 AD to the Christian-Jews of Jerusalem known as Hebrews. This tradition was repeated in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* of 1953, but ignored sixteen years later. The revised edition adopted the Markan theory that it was written about 80-90 AD, by an anonymous person from an unknown place, to a mainly Gentile community probably in Rome (NCCHS 929a, b and 932b).

The Council of Trent in 1546 issued a decree placing the Epistle in the list of the 14 by Paul. But, although Trent favored Paul's authorship, it did not directly define it (CCHS 928a).

In the early Church, some had doubted Paul's authorship and these doubts were revived by the Markans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But in June 1914, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) stated that. "No such force is to be attributed to those early doubts" (CCHS 928a).

Trent defined the Epistle as sacred, canonical, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, but Paul's authorship is not so clear as the authorship of the Gospels of Matthew and John. So according to the PBC, a scholar is at liberty to doubt Paul's authorship if he should decide.

As critics have failed to find a valid reason to deny the historical evidence for Paul's authorship, there is no reason why it should not be taught in schools. Reasons for rejecting the critics of the traditional opinion are as follows:

They claim the Epistle is not written in Paul's normal style. But we do not know how to recognize the normal style of Paul when he wrote in Hebrew.

Critics point out that after Origen had studied the authorship, he remarked 'only God knows'. (It is worth noting how critics who deny the reliability of the early historians, quote them when thought to be useful in undermining Christianity) These critics are creating a false impression. Origen stated that everyone agreed that the quality of Greek was better than that in the Epistles known to be by Paul. But everyone also agreed that the quality of thought was as found in Paul's writings.

Origen concluded that Paul composed the Epistle but another wrote it down. He praised those churches that accepted it as being by Paul, and went on to write, "But who wrote the epistle, in truth God knows...some saying that Clement [a bishop at Rome] ...wrote the epistle, others that it was Luke, he who had written the Gospel and the Acts..." (EH 6:25). Origen's only real doubt was regarding which secretary was working with Paul at the time.

Today, some say it has an Alexandrian flavor. They suggest the secretary for the original was Apollos, who came from Alexandria. Luke did praise Apollos for his writing ability (Acts 18: 24-28).

Clement of Alexandria had earlier recorded that the Epistle to the Hebrews was by Paul and had first been written for the Hebrews in the Hebrew tongue. He also said that Luke had carefully translated it for the Greeks, hence the style is the same as his Gospel and Acts. Clement goes on to explain that the words ‘Paul the Apostle’ were not prefixed because the Hebrews were prejudiced against him and he wisely did not repel them at the beginning by putting his name (EH 6:14, 2-3). So, Clement of Alexandria and Origen both believed Paul had composed the Epistle, but were not sure who had held the pen. It is worth noting that no one suggested it was the creation of a theologian of an ‘unknown community’.

The discovery of James the Apostle preaching in the Temple was a great shock to the Jewish authorities. In response Christians were barred from the Temple. For years, the Christians had been insisting on their loyalty to the laws and rituals of Judaism, so it was a painful psychological blow to be excluded from the sacred place. Their spiritual life and mental framework were bound up with the national form of worship. The Eucharist was held in simple rooms without the grandeur, formality, and history associated with the Temple.

They had now to choose between worshipping exclusively outside the familiar cultural setting or to deny Christ. At this critical moment, Symeon, successor of James as bishop of Jerusalem, would not have possessed the same personal authority as James had done. With the other Apostles having left the Holy Land, the Christians would have felt themselves leaderless.

News of the crisis would have soon reached the whole Christian world and, if we accept the letter to the Hebrews as a response to this crisis, much falls into place. A careful reading shows it was addressed to a community soaked in knowledge of Jewish history with multiple references to Moses, Melchizedek, the Psalms, and the ritual of the Temple. It is addressed to a community as if it was completely Jewish, with no mention of Gentiles or their needs. As far as we know, only in Jerusalem did such a community exist.

Critics claim that Rome also had a large Jewish population. This is true, but it is significant that the Jewish Christians addressed in the Epistle were under a great temptation to deny Christ, yet Gentile Christians were not, apparently, faced with the same temptation. The arguments employed in the fifth chapter of Hebrews would have had no meaning for former pagans. It is also worth remembering that Paul, having been educated in the Temple, was aptly suited to compose this letter.

The opening words of the letter are ‘In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets...’ There is no evidence the early Christians believed God had spoken through prophets to the Gentiles, so the epistle must have been addressed to a community of Jews. By writing ‘our fathers’ the author was claiming to be of the same race as the Jews he was addressing.

There are many passages which indicate it was written while the Temple was still standing. Examples are listed below with verbs in the present tense underlined.

7:5 “And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people ...”

8:4-5 "...there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve as copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary."

8:13 "And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."

9:6-7 "...go continually...performing...goes, and he but once a year...he offers..."

9:13 "...sanctifies..."

9:25 "...as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly..."

10:1 "...sacrifices which are continually offered year after year..."

10:3 "...there is a reminder of sin year after year."

10:11 "And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away our sins"

13:10 "We have an altar from which those who serve the tent [the sanctuary] have no right to eat." [Is this an allusion to the Eucharist eaten from the Christian table?]

13:11 "...blood is brought into the sanctuary...are burned."

Note how 13:10 is of particular interest regarding the period.

Critics have argued that Clement of Rome, when describing Temple ritual, had used the present tense, although he was writing in 96 AD. The answer to this argument is discussed in *Dating Clement of Rome's letter to the Corinthians*, which is included in our list of suggested further reading.

Much of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is devoted to showing the superiority of the Christian priesthood compared to the Levitical priesthood. This is achieved by returning to the Jewish history of sacrifice and then leading up to the statement that it "is becoming obsolete and growing old" (Heb. 8:13). If this had been written after 70 AD, why did the author not use the crowning proof of his thesis? By then the Temple, the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices, were not merely 'becoming obsolete and growing old', but had gone forever.

In order to explain this use of the present tense, Markans claim the author was describing the ritual originally used in the desert not that used in the Herodian temple. So let us look a little closer. In chapter 7:1-4, Paul recounts the institution as given in Exodus 25-26, so uses the past tense. But when in verse 5 he is describing the current practice he changes to the present tense. In verse 6 he explains the reason for the present practice.

Markan literature implies the author was ignorant of how Temple ritual had changed from that of the original Tabernacle in the desert. But the ritual acts to which he was alluding in the present tense were still taking place. The document's tone is that needing to face a very severe

challenge, yet not one threatening death (Heb. 12:3-4). This was the situation for the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem prior to their flight to Pella.

The recipients were reminded of the earlier abuse and torment of their community (Heb. 10:32-34, 13:3) and urged not to stay away from the assemblies (Heb. 10:24). As the Sanhedrin had prohibited Jewish Christians from entering the Temple (BC 121), to be seen attending a Christian assembly would have provided evidence for exclusion.

The recipients were also reminded how Moses rejected the things of this world and how Christ was executed outside Jerusalem (Heb. 13:12). His followers must be willing to accept the same ignominy as those with leprosy of being driven to live apart (Lev. 13:46) outside the camp [nation] of Israel (Heb. 13:12-14).

Their correct cause of action would be a stigma (Heb. 11:26). Many of those in Jerusalem would have personally heard Christ himself (Heb. 2:3). The example of the faith of Abraham is given (Heb. 11:8-10). He went out not knowing whither he went. In 11:27, we are reminded that by faith Moses left Egypt. And in 13:7 and 17, readers are urged to listen to their leaders.

One Markan argument, for this Epistle not having been addressed to Jerusalem, is that it was a rich community (Heb. 6:10), whereas Acts 11:29 and 24:17 say the Christian community in Jerusalem was poor. But this is not a valid argument. Hebrews 6:10 does not say the community was financially rich. There are many Christian communities in the world today working hard to spread the word of God, while struggling to feed their own members. Yet they provide a loving reception to a visiting missionary. The relief sent on one of these occasions was because of a specific worldwide famine (Acts 11:28) that reached its peak in 48 AD. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem may have been refusing relief to Christians. Most communities have poor members who need alms, especially in times of discrimination.

As James was killed in 62 and the Christians fled from Jerusalem in 68, the date of the Epistle would be between these dates. Before the arrival of Markan priority, a date of 62-64 was considered the most likely (CCHS 929b).

It is not surprising that copies have been found in Italy but not near Palestine. After arriving at Pella there would have been little or no incentive for the refugees to make copies. However, as the destruction of the Temple would have traumatized every Jew in the Empire, the Greek speaking Christian-Jews living in Italy and Asia would have been very interested. So, the Greek translation would most likely have appeared soon after 70 AD. Modern literary analysis shows its style to be closer to that of Luke than to any other New Testament writing (PCB 880c). This confirms the words of Clement of Alexandria.

In the last chapter of Hebrews, we read, "The brethren from Italy send their greetings." Some claim this shows the Epistle was addressed to Rome, others that it was sent from Rome. Both views are nothing more than speculation. The words indicate that some Italians living near Paul were concerned about the difficulties of those to whom he was writing. Thousands of Italian Christians had been expelled from Rome in 49 and had settled in Asia. It is likely to have been some of these who sent their greetings.

## Chapter 20

### John's Gospel: Gnosticism and Supplementation

#### The History and the Dating of John's Gospel

The records of the historians are consistent with one another. According to the Old Latin Prologue to John, Bishop Papias of Hierapolis (60-138) related that he had written the Gospel as John had dictated it to him (RO 150). This claim may have been concerning the last chapter only. Papias said John had composed it at the request of the bishops of Asia against Cerinthus and other heretics, especially the Ebionites. Papias added that John knew the other three gospels and had written to supplement them (RO 151).

Irenaeus (120-180) wrote, "Later on too, John, the disciple of the Lord, who had even reclined on his bosom, he too brought out a Gospel while he was dwelling in Ephesus of Asia" (RO 129). [Present day Turkey]

A long fragment of the Muratorian Canon was discovered in 1740 by Cardinal Muratori in the Ambrosian library at Milan. Internal evidence shows it was composed between 141- 155 AD. Some attribute its authorship to Hippolytus. The Latin text, confirmed by other finds, appears to have been translated from the Greek (RO 138-139)

It explains that John wrote at the insistence of his fellow-disciples and bishops. John agreed and asked them "to fast with him for three days, and what shall have been revealed to each let us, relate to one another." That same night it was revealed to the Andrew, one of the Apostles, that whatever came to the minds of them all, John, in his own name, should write it all down (EH 6:14, 5-7 and RO 139).

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) mentioned that John wrote the forth Gospel after being urged by his friends (EH 6:14 and CCHS 777a).

The Anti-Marcionite Prologue of John says the bishops of Asia [present day Turkey] asked the Apostle John to answer Cerinthus and other heretics, and this was the reason why John wrote his gospel (AMJ and RO 151-2).

At one time, it was accepted that John wrote his gospel about 96 AD (CCHS 781j). But recently, Tresmontant (CTH 324), Thied (CTR xii), Orchard (BOO 18), and Robinson (JATR 311) separately concluded that the first twenty chapters were written prior to 70 AD with chapter 21 added about 95 AD.

#### The Gnostic Challenge

In the first 18 verses, John gave a theological answer to the Gnostic challenge and then turned to comment on specific subjects.

The Gnostic belief, that men were good immortal spirits imprisoned in evil bodies, was widespread in various forms throughout the Greek-speaking world. This imprisonment led to a battle between light and dark, spirit and flesh. While its influence may be seen in much of pagan and non-canonical early Christian literature, we do not possess coherent statements of the beliefs of its various sects.

The word ‘Gnostic’ meant ‘knowledge’, but heretics used it to mean ‘secret knowledge’. In his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul writes, “See that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceits...according to the elemental spirits of the universe” (Col. 2:8). It is widely accepted that this letter was sent while Paul was in prison earlier than 70 AD.

In 1 Timothy 6:20, we read, “Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge...” Pope John Paul II considered Paul was here referring to Gnostic teachings (JPFR 4:37). In the Apocalypse (2:6 and 15), we read a warning regarding the Nicolaites, a Gnostic sect.

In the second century, the Gnostics became more organized, but their ideas were causing problems for Christians much earlier. Irenaeus described the beliefs of Cerinthus before he described those of the Ebionites. He accused the Ebionites of ‘worshipping Jerusalem’. This indicates the Ebionites, and therefore the Cerinthians, were active prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Irenaeus records that John had in mind “the errors sown by Cerinthus and earlier still by those called Nicolaites” (IAH 3: 11, 1 and CCHS 778h). The Gnostics claimed to be ‘the knowing men of light and knowledge’.

Irenaeus and others made many references to the Gnostics, and Henry Owen in 1764 used this information to construct an outline of their teachings. The following is based on the work of Owen, but it needs to be remembered that the Nicolaites, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and many more sects, varied from one another in their precise beliefs.

According to Gnostic belief, the unknown most high God lived in heaven with the chief spirits or Aeons. He generated an only-begotten son, called *Monogenes*, who begat the inferior *Logos* [Greek for word]. There were two high Aeons called *Life* and *Light*. From these Aeons proceeded inferior orders of spirits including *Christ* and *Demiurgus*. It was *Demiurgus* who created this visible world out of eternal matter. This *Demiurgus* was ignorant of the supreme God and much lower than the invisible Aeons. He was protector of the Israelites and sent Moses to them with laws of perpetual obligation. [Many of the heretical sects observed Jewish traditional laws]

Jesus was a mere man, the real son of Joseph and Mary. But *Christ* descended on him in the form of a dove when he was baptized. *Christ* revealed to him the unknown Father and empowered him to work miracles. Similarly, the Aeon, *Light*, entered John the Baptist. As *Light* was superior to *Christ*, John the Baptist was in some respects to be preferred to Jesus.

After Jesus had propagated the knowledge of God, he came to suffer. So *Christ* left him and fled to the uppermost heaven. It was Jesus only who suffered. *Christ* would return to reign for



a thousand years, with humanity the slave of lust and pleasure (EH 3:28). Some groups denied that Christ had risen and there would be a resurrection of the dead (HO 92).

Knowing this background, we can understand the early words of John's gospel.

John says that *Christ* is the *Logos* [*The Word*] of God (John 1:1). The *Word* and *Monogenes* [the only begotten son of God] are one and the same person (1:14). *Christ*, or *The Word*, is not an inferior Aeon, but God (1:1). *Christ* was not ignorant of God but knew him always and perfectly in heaven (1:18). Christ is not to be distinguished from the *Demiurgus* for he is the creator of the whole world (1:10). LIFE and LIGHT are not particular and separate spirits, but the same as the LOGOS and CHRIST (John 1:4, 7-9).

Thus, John is saying that *Christ*, the *Logos*, *Life*, *Light*, and *Monogenes* (the only-begotten) are not distinct Aeons but one and the same Divine person. John says that an Aeon, *Light*, did not enter John the Baptist and communicate to him supreme knowledge of the Divine Will. He was a mere man and, though inspired, much inferior to Jesus being only the forerunner of him (John 1:6, 8, 15).

John explains that the Supreme God was not entirely unknown before the time of Christ. Men were enlightened in their own consciences, but they did not want to know him (1:9-10). The Jews were not the particular people of an inferior god, *Demiurgus*, but of *Christ*, himself the only-begotten son of God (1:11). Eventually he became man (1:14) and fulfilled the Law of Moses, which was only a shadow of good things to come, and instituted its fullness. *Christ* came for all men not for the Jews only (1:12-13). Jesus was Son of the Father (1:14).

In his following verses and chapters, John selected incidents and miracles to support what he had affirmed. John refutes the idea that John the Baptist, by preaching the Law of Moses, was superior to *Christ* (John 1:15-34). John showed *Christ* was superior to John the Baptist.

The passages above show that Irenaeus was correct in the reason he gave why this Gospel was written. So, it is logical to assume him as being correct when naming John the Apostle as its author.

Some Markan priorists claim Cerinthus did not live until after John had died. But according to Eusebius, Cerinthus founded his religion 'at the time under discussion' (EH 3:28, 1). As he had just been writing about the Ebionites, this must have been very early.

We also have a graphic story recorded by Irenaeus,

“The apostle John once went into a bath-house to wash, but when he knew Cerinthus was within, leapt out of the place and fled from the door, for he did not endure to be even under the same roof with him, and enjoined on those who were with him to do the same, saying ‘Let us flee, lest this bath-house fall in, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.’”

Irenaeus added that he had obtained this story from Bishop Polycarp, who had known John personally (EH 3: 28, 6).

We also read, “At his time, too, there existed for a short time the heresy of the Nicolaitans of which the Apocalypse of John [Apoc. 2:6 and 15] also makes mention” (EH 3:29, 1). So we see again that Irenaeus was writing about a very early period.

### **John Supplementing and Clarifying the Synoptic Gospels**

In his gospel, John does not repeat details already to be found in the three existing gospels. If he had written without knowledge of the existing gospels, it would be incredible that he could so successfully have avoided repeating so much contained in them, such as the Transfiguration and Christ’s confession of divinity before Caiaphas (CCHS 778h).

Eusebius reports that the three existing gospels were distributed to all and John testified to their truth. [John endorsed all three]. John then supplemented them (EH 3:24, 7 and 11) and, by correcting any false impressions they may have given, closed openings for heretical attacks.

By looking at various passages, we are able to see how he accomplished this. We may note how John presumes many of his readers had a vivid knowledge of the environment of Christ’s preaching, which was radically changed in 70 AD.

1. It would have been strange for the Messiah not to have preached in Judea and Jerusalem or attend the great feasts. Yet the Synoptics mention Galilee only. John provides the additional information (John 6:1, 5:1, 3:22, 4:54). He ignores the Galilean ministry, except for one incident, where there is a specific reason to mention it.

2. This specific reason concerned the Eucharist. The Synoptics had given accounts of its institution, (Mt 26:26-27; Luke 22:19-20 and Mark 14:22-24), but not the earlier promise of Christ to do so. In chapter six, John provides an elaborate Eucharistic discourse, including Christ’s promise (John 6:54-58), and a long account of the last supper. He does not repeat the institution of the Eucharist itself.

3. The Synoptics report the great enthusiasm of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but not what had caused it. John explains that Christ had just raised Lazarus to life (John 11:17).

4. Matthew recounts how Christ called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be his disciples (Mt. 4:18-22), and Luke provides a similar but shorter account (Luke 5:10-11). Critics could say that the manner of this call provided neither sufficient time for serious intelligent consideration, nor the opportunity to provide for dependents.

Mark had indicated that the father of James and John would not be left without assistance (Mk 1:20). But it is John, who was there, who provides a fuller explanation. He reports that two of the disciples of the Baptist had talked for a long time in private with Christ (John 1:35-51). What was said during that day and night we do not know, but we may presume they were told clearly what was required of them. Following this, Christ spoke to the others he intended to call.

Matthew and Luke tell us that Christ then went into the desert for over a month, and followed this with a period of preaching (Mt 4:1-2, Luke 4:1-2, and Mk 1:12-13). There was no need for John to repeat this information. By the time Christ finally calls His disciples (Mt 4:18-22), each had had time to consider seriously his call and provide for his dependents.

5. Matthew reports the intention of Christ to appoint Peter as leader of His church (Mt 16:18), but not how Peter got this name. So John supplies this information (John 1:42). The change of name was important because in Aramaic 'Kepha' was the word for both 'Peter' and 'Rock'. But John does not repeat the account of the formal promise of the appointment because Matthew had already done so.

6. Matthew tells us that Christ was born in Bethlehem, and mentions the prophecy that Christ would come from there (Mt 2:1-6), but not of Bethlehem being the town of David. John adds this important detail (John 7:42).

7. Matthew's Gospel reads as if Simon carried the cross for Christ (Mt 27:32). The words of Luke (23:26) and Mark (15:21) convey the same information. But John makes it clear that Christ was "bearing his own cross" (John 19:17) and does not mention the assistance of Simon. Note how by introducing the word 'own', John emphasizes the meaning of his sentence. We know that heretics were claiming that Christ had not suffered because he had left the body of Jesus before the crucifixion. They were probably quoting Matthew's account, so as to 'prove' it was Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross because Jesus, now a mere man, had been too weak.

8. Matthew reports in 27:35 that the soldiers divided the garments of Jesus by lots. This was similar to the prophecy in Psalm 22 (23) but Matthew did not mention what had happened to the tunic of Christ. Critics could say that the reports in the Synoptics did not fulfill the prophecy exactly. Matthew had fled the scene so was reporting second hand. Luke (23:34) and Mark (15:24) merely provide abridged versions, so did not clarify the question. It was John, having been present, who was able to provide a detailed account of the discussion between the soldiers and the reason they treated the tunic of Jesus differently. It is the account in John 19:23-24 which shows the events fit the prophecy exactly.

9. At the time of Christ, there were two high priests. Matthew tells us that when Christ was arrested, he was taken to Caiaphas the high priest, the scribes, and the elders. They sent him to Pilate because they wanted him to be executed (Mt 26:57). Luke and Mark add little to Matthew's account. Although according to Jewish law the position of high priest was held for life, Annas had been deposed by the Romans and replaced by Caiaphas.

So a critic could argue that the true high priest had not been guilty. John answers this by stating; "First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the high priest for that year" (John 18:13).

John then reports the trial before Annas (John 18:19-24) which took place prior to Annas sending Christ to Caiaphas. John is showing how both high priests were involved and therefore responsible for the death of Christ. It also appears that the arresting party consisted of men

employed by Annas. Note how John introduces the word 'First' (Verse 13), which emphasizes the meaning of the sentence.

10. Groups of pious Jews were following the tradition of repentance as preached by John the Baptist. They did not accept the superiority of Jesus and his greater claims and could argue that Jesus had submitted to John for baptism. Also, the Baptist's words could have been referring to someone yet to come.

Matthew had not been an eyewitness, so his account (Mt 3:11-15) was second-hand. John, having been a close disciple of the Baptist and present at the baptism of Jesus, was able to give personal testimony that Jesus was 'The mighty one' (John 1:26-42).

11. The words 'For John [the Baptist] was not yet cast into prison' (John 3:24) are interesting because they presume readers knew of the imprisonment of John, as reported by the Synoptic gospels.

12. Because Matthew constructed his Gospel in a liturgical non-chronological form, it conveys the impression that the public ministry of Christ lasted for only one year. John corrects this by making it clear that it took place through three Paschs (CCHS 779c).

13. Matthew, in constructing his liturgy, passes quickly from the supper at Bethany to the crucifixion (Mt 26:2 and 6). This could give the impression that both occurred within twenty-four hours. Our modern liturgy, by celebrating the supper on Maundy Thursday, continues this model. But the activity between the two events would have required a longer period. John explains that the supper at Bethany took place some days earlier (John 12:1).

There are other apparent inconsistencies of time concerning this week, but archaeology shows that the Essenes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees each had their own calendars for the festivals (CTH 292 and CTJ 118), so this could have caused confusion. Also, just as Matthew had condensed three years into one to suit his lectionary, he would have felt free to condense the events of Holy Week.

14. Some have raised an alleged problem of dating the census of Quirinius. But if Luke had made a serious error, this would have been challenged at the time. Yet John does not take the opportunity to clarify or amend the date. The census dating of Luke was apparently not a problem for those living in the first century.

15. Our Lord had promised the spiritual supremacy to Peter (Mt 16:19). John in his final chapter reports when Christ fulfilled that promise by charging Peter with looking after all his sheep. (John 21:15-17).

We are able to make observations regarding the above.

a). While the Gospel of John contains many theological insights, it also aims to provide accurate historical data concerning the same period as covered by the other Gospels. He speaks of

the same Apostles and holy women, and mentions Caiaphas, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, and many incidents from the lives of John the Baptist and Christ.

b). Today we often hear the Gospel of John called ‘a spiritual Gospel’. This is true, but the word ‘spiritual’ should not be allowed to exclude its historical aspect. John repeatedly claimed to be a reliable eyewitness of events in the life of Christ (John 19:35; 20:30-31; 21:24). Just as in the opening words of his first Epistle.

c). The action of John in supplementing the Synoptics with such precise and small historical details and explanations should be pondered. It shows he was treating them as historical documents, not ‘creative theology’. It also indicates that John was very much alive to the real needs of the churches.

d). Matthew reports that the unnamed disciple mentioned by John (John 1:35), who had been with John the Baptist, was also named John (Mt 4:21). This explains how the author of the fourth Gospel was able to write with authority regarding the detailed narrative concerning the mission of John the Baptist. It showed how he knew the conversation just prior to the meeting with Christ (John 1:6, 15-37) and also of the ministry of Christ.

e). In John 5:2, we see John referring to Jerusalem in the present tense. Critics may try to explain this away, but they have no evidence that the verse should not be understood as it is written. This indicates that the first part of John’s Gospel was written prior to 70 AD.

f). Matthew recounts how an unnamed person cuts off an ear of the High Priest’s servant (Mt 26: 51-52). Luke 22:50 and Mark 14:47 also report this, but all are careful not to disclose the name of the person using the sword. This would have laid him open to prosecution. But John in 18:10 says it was Peter, and the victim was Malchus. We have a sign here that the Synoptics were written during Peter’s lifetime, when the Apostles had to protect him. But John, writing after Peter’s execution in 65 AD, was free of this constraint.

It is interesting that Matthew, an eyewitness, does not specify which ear was cut off. Peter, reading from this section of Matthew’s Gospel, and so reported by Mark, does not add anything. But Luke specifies that it was the right ear. As Luke was not present at the incident, this must have been secondhand information and therefore may have been seen as unreliable. But now John, who had been present at the incident, confirms Luke’s information.

g). From our findings, especially e) and f), we are able to date the writing of the main section (i.e. without the final chapter) of the Gospel According to John as between 65-70 AD.

h). If we accept that most of the Gospel of John was written pre-70 AD, and that it clarified the Synoptic Gospels, then these gospels must also have been in circulation before 70 AD.

i). Markan priorists claim that Matthew and Luke reported the destruction of Jerusalem by means of non-historical parables. It is interesting to consider the reaction of John. He was clarifying the gospels of Matthew and Luke. So if the Markans are correct and John was writing

after 70 AD, why did he fail to clarify the meaning of the Synoptic parables? References to the destruction of Jerusalem are intermingled with those concerning the end of the world.

j). Palestine at the time of Christ was a peculiar and very complicated society. The Romans shared administration with the council of Jewish judges, known as the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was often in conflict with the civil officials, taxes were paid in Greek money, Roman money was used in commerce, and Temple dues paid in Jewish money. Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin were spoken. Public and private life was affected in many subtle ways by this diversity of language, culture, and division of authority.

Yet, in the gospels, we find countless references to geographical features and transient social and religious conditions. This society was completely swept away in 70 AD followed by changes in population and government. How could a writer portray the life of this society, so accurately and minutely, living a secluded life far from Palestine fifty or more years later?

k). A person who lives on one side of a river, such as the Thames in London, will often refer to the other side as ‘over the water’. The author of this gospel uses this expression when referring to the Jordan (1:28). This implies he was a native of Palestine or had at least lived there for a long period. It also indicates that he was aware of another Bethany. This is a small illustration of how the writer’s portrayal of Jerusalem’s society is so accurate.

l). The author uses the expression, ‘The disciple Jesus loved’, six times. These are at the Last Supper, at the foot of the Cross, being entrusted with Mary’s protection, outrunning Peter, being first to recognize the Lord, and when Christ says he will have a long life. In Chapter 21:24-25 he at last explains that, ‘the disciple Jesus loved’, was writing the gospel. Tradition has always seen the phrase as referring to the author who felt embarrassed by reporting himself in such a privileged position. Many of the instances were of a private or semi-private nature where only the one involved would have been able to provide a detailed record.

m). Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John ignore the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the persecution under Nero, and the martyrs at that time which included Peter and Paul. If they were writing after these events, why would they omit them?

## **SOLID EYEWITNESS EVIDENCE**

By accepting the Clementine Tradition, we see that Matthew’s Gospel was composed by an Apostle who had been an eyewitnesses of the life and preaching of Christ. Luke’s Gospel was used, and thereby authorized, by another eyewitness, Peter. Mark wrote exactly what the eyewitness, Peter, had spoken. Then the eyewitness Apostle, John, endorsed the Synoptic gospels in his own Gospel. So the four Gospels owe their importance to having been either authored by an eyewitness or having been approved by an eyewitness. It is no wonder why the early Christians would’ve included them in the biblical canon.

## Chapter 21

### The Impact of Markan Priority on Teaching Christianity

The Markan Priority theory has had a devastating impact on public confidence in the historical reliability of the Christian message. The theory rests on the study of the Gospels as literature only (i.e. internal evidence). It is based on the 'poor' Greek of Mark's gospel. The records of the ancient historians (external evidence) are ignored.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German government, for political reasons, imposed the exclusive teaching of the Markan Priority theory at all universities. After taking root amongst Protestant clerical students, it spread to the English-speaking world.

Based on the acceptance of the theory, a logical progression of reasoning could claim that the gospels were written generations after the life of Christ. They were therefore not reliable historical records of what he said and did. In America, a Protestant backlash led to the birth of Fundamentalism based on a literalist reading of the bible. Other Protestants accepted the theory, and their churches drifted from firm doctrinal positions.

In 1893, Pope Leo XIII led the Catholic reaction. He issued an Encyclical condemning any theory which relied on internal analysis alone and ignored the evidence of the ancient historians. He called for greater historical and linguistic research and allocated funds for it.

This was a positive move but, in 1907, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) was established. Its mission was to give safe guidance to educational establishments. But, under Pope Pius X, it became very cautious and its strictures gravely hindered the freedom required for meaningful research.

In 1912, the PBC decided that Catholic institutions had to hold that the order of writing had been Matthew-Mark-Luke-John. In doing so, it prevented the development of Catholic scientific research. In 1943, Pope Pius XII eased the strictures but not enough to prevent Catholic biblical exegetes from becoming increasingly frustrated.

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council (1962-5), it was agreed that there should be greater intellectual freedom and, in 1971, the PBC was abolished in all but name. At the time of the Council, the pent-up frustration of Catholic biblical scholars had exploded with joy and, from that time, the strictures of the PBC were ignored.

Catholic Scripture exegetes faced freedom after fifty years of restrictions and stagnation. In 1968, three leading American researchers, Raymond Brown, J. Fitzmyer and R. Murphy published *The Jerome Bible Commentary*. In it they judged that despite years of Protestant endeavor only two 'orders of dependence have really been able to hold any ground: Matthew-Mark-Luke, and Mark as the source of Matthew and Luke.' (i.e. Markan Priority).

The first was based on the historical traditions (external evidence), while the second put its trust in internal evidence only. In union with most other Catholic experts, they decided that the

second order was more likely to be correct. They hoped the theory would also be a means of protecting youth from the teachings of Fundamentalist sects.

The Markan Priority theory had not been proved and most experts, Protestant and Catholic, were not fully convinced of its correctness. It was taught widely because there didn't seem to be anything better. Brown appeared to some Catholics to be a heretic, but he and his colleagues were dedicated Catholics. Protestants had been studying the problem in freedom for decades. So Brown and his colleagues, by accepting the best evidence provided by Protestant logical scientific research, saw themselves as bringing Catholics to face reality and become up-to-date.

In their 1968 Commentary, they showed a spirit of humility. At the conclusion of an article on the Synoptic Problem, they wrote, "We are still a long way from a completely satisfactory answer. Perhaps the problem will never be totally solved. The challenge however still remains and will continue to be accepted by dedicated scholars." In 1972 and again in 1996, Rome appointed Brown to be a member of the reorganized consultative PBC. He was also much admired by Cardinal Ratzinger.

The 1968 Commentary did not consider the theory, put forward in 1764, by Henry Owen. He had claimed the synoptic gospels were written in the order of Matthew-Luke-Mark. As the first to challenge the order established by Jerome, Owen (an Anglican vicar) had launched modern scriptural research.

Owen's approach was not developed within the Protestant world and Catholic research of his theory was prevented by the 1912 PBC statement, "it was not permissible to depart from the opinion that Matthew, Mark and Luke were composed in that order."

### **Catechetical Renewal**

On returning home from the Council, the bishops were keen to renew catechetical methods. These had become distorted and unbalanced due to the need for responses to Protestant challenges. The renewal would emphasize the centrality of Christ and be more firmly based on Scripture.

So the bishops appointed priests who had specialized in Scripture to re-organize catechetics. They were eager to help the church embrace the modern age by accepting the 'scientific' truth of the Markan Priority theory. The introduction of modern catechetics was thereby greatly influenced by the theory. This often led to the replacement of firm doctrinal teaching by vague speculations as to what Christ actually taught. The confusion provoked some to oppose all renewal.

In 1971, Cardinal Wright (U.S.A.) wrote, "...wheat, the harvest of the Council, is rich and abundant, but some enemies, not all outside the Church, have sown cockle in the midst of the wheat."

Cardinal Heenan (U.K.) agreed, "Some of our Catechists are teaching a theology of their own ... the faithful will be led to believe that there is no dogmatic theology left and that everything is a matter of free speculation."



To meet this situation, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* was issued in 1992. Afterwards, Cardinal Ratzinger noted that most of the criticism of it had come from biblical experts who accused it of ignoring modern exegesis.

### **A Third Way**

When the authors of the 1968 American Commentary forecasted that the challenge of the Synoptic Problem would continue to be accepted by dedicated scholars, they were correct. English researchers, accepting that the strictures of the PBC had been superseded by the teachings of Vatican II, were already researching Owen's ideas.

They were led by Bernard Orchard O.S.B. Before the Council, he had negotiated and edited the Catholic edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (RSVCE). It was refused an Imprimatur but, immediately after the Council in 1966, it obtained one. Orchard was a joint founder of the British and the World Associations of Catholic biblical scholars, and editor of both editions of *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (1953 and 1981).

Orchard was saddened to see Catholic exegetes accepting Markan Priority. Fellow English Benedictines, John Chapman O.S.B. and Abbott Butler O.S.B., had published books defending Matthew's Gospel as being the first written. (e.g. *The Priority of Matthew* in 1951). But they had failed to account for Mark's 'poor' Greek.

Orchard set his mind to solving the Synoptic Problem and especially the 'poor' Greek of Mark. With a small circle of colleagues including Harold Riley, an Anglican, and W. R. Farmer, an American Methodist, he was eventually successful.

Orchard pointed out that the well-informed Clement of Alexandria had stated, "The first written of the gospels were those having the genealogies." Then from other evidence, Orchard deduced that Mark had used Greek shorthand to record talks by Peter. Peter had used common (i.e. poor) Greek while conflating the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Based on this scenario, it can be seen from Clement's account that copies of Mark's notes were distributed before Luke published his gospel widely. So, the sequences of Matthew-Mark-Luke and Matthew-Luke-Mark were both correct. It depended whether the sequence referred to was that of writing or of publication.

In various articles Orchard indicated the way his mind was moving. He started to compose a definitive book setting out his researches and conclusions in full. Unfortunately, he died before its completion. This present booklet has been produced to insure Orchard's creative breakthrough, based on the Clementine's tradition, is not lost.

### **Ecumenism and the Future**

Those who, over many years, contributed to the vindication of the Clementine tradition came from a broad background. Henry Owen (Anglican), J.J. Griesbach (Lutheran), H.U. Meijboom (Lutheran), J. Chapman (RC), B.C. Butler (RC), W.R. Farmer (Methodist), J.J. Kiweit

(Calvinist), E.R. Richards (Baptist), L. Johnson (RC), John Robinson (Anglican), Harold Riley (Anglican), and Bernard Orchard (RC). All Christians are now able to co-operate in re-establishing the public acceptance of the historical reliability of the Gospels.

## Chapter 22

### References

- AD AD 2000, 582 Queensbury Street, Vic 3051, Australia.
- AF The Documents of the Second Vatican Council by Austin Flannery, 1975.
- AH1 Harmony of the Gospels by Augustine of Hippo, book 1 (web EP 445)
- AH4 Harmony of the Gospels by Augustine of Hippo, book 4 (web EP 447)
- AJMT Two Gospel Hypothesis by A.J.McNicol, Perkins Journal, 1987.
- AMJ Ante-Marcionite Prologue to John, Regul MSS S2, 3, 7, 8.
- AMM Ante-Marcionite Prologue to Mark, Regul MSS J2, S2, 3.
- AP The Acts of Peter chapter 20, by author unknown, circa 180 (web ecw).
- AS Corpus scriptorium ecclesiasticorum latinorum [908] by A. Souter
- BHSG The Four Gospels by B. H. Streeter, 1924.
- BMM The Early Versions of the New Testament by Bruce M. Metzger, 1977.
- BOA Annales Theologici, vol.7 (in English) by Bernard Orchard, 1993.
- BOF The Four Gospel Hypothesis by Bernard Orchard, 1993
- BOM Matthew, Luke and Mark by Bernard Orchard, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1977.
- BOO The Origin and Evolution of the Gospels by B. Orchard (pamphlet), 1993.
- CCHS A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, 1953
- CMT The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis by C. M. Tuckett, 1983.
- COR Epistle of Clement of Rome to Corinthians, Kirsopp Lake. (web EP 503).
- CTG The Gospel of Matthew by Claude Tresmontant, 1986.
- CTH The Hebrew Christ by Claude Tresmontant, 1989.
- CTJ Jesus: Life or Legend by Carston Thiede, 1997.

- CTP The Jesus Papyrus by Carston Thiede, 1997.
- CTR Rekindling the Word by Carston Thiede, 1995.
- DAS Divino Afflante Spiritu by Pope Pius XII, 1943. (web E).
- DVI De Viris Illustribus by Jerome (web na Fathers).
- DBP Mark's Use of Matthew and Luke, edited by D.B.Peabody, 2002.
- EB The Historicity of the Bible by Edith Black, H&PR, 1980 (web ca).
- EH Ecclesial History, Eusebius Pamphili, (Kirsopp Lake) 1980 (web EP 189-191)
- FM Faith Magazine, 16a off Coniston Way, Reigate, RH2 0LN.
- GS Historical Introduction to the New Testament by George Salmon, 1885.
- HO Observations on the Four Gospels by Henry Owen, 1764.
- HR Preface to Luke by Harold Riley, 1993.
- HVC The Formation of the Christian Gospel by Hans von Compenshausen (1972)
- IAH Adversus Haereses, book 3, by Irenaeus tr. by J. Keble 1872 (web EP 13).
- IDU Ancient Christian Writers-Irenaeus, book 1, trans. intro. by D.Unger, 1992
- IJK Irenaeus to Florinus translated by J. Keble, 1872 (web na second item).
- JATR Redating the New Testament by J.A.T. Robinson, 1976.
- JC The Birth of the Synoptics by Jean Carmignac, English, translated 1987.
- JJK History/Critique of Marcan Hypothesis, Meijboom 1835-66, J.J. Kiweit, 1993.
- JMA First Apology to Emperor Antonius Pius by Justin Martyr. (web EP 2).
- JMD Dialogue with Trypho the Jew by Justin Martyr. (web EP 4).
- JNDK The Pastoral Epistles by J.N.D. Kelly, 1960.
- JPFR Fides et Ratio by Pope John Paul II, 1998 (web E).
- KCH The K. C. Hanson Collection of Ancient Documents (web kch).

- MFGR Muratorian Fragment by Hippolytus, tr. by G. Rauschen 1905(web EP 97).
- MP Paul the Letter Writer & the 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Timothy by Michael Prior, 1989.
- NCCHS The New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, 1969, 1981.
- PCB Peake`s Commentary on the Bible, 1962.
- PT Turmoil and Truth by Philip Trower, Family Publications/ Ignatius, 2003.
- RBM The Birth of the Messiah by Raymond E. Brown, 1977.
- RDCA Clement of Alexandria fragment trans. by Robert-Donaldson (web ecw)
- RL The Truth of Christmas by Rene Laurentin, 1986.
- RO The Order of the Synoptics by H. Riley and B. Orchard, 1987.
- SB Scripture Bulletin, Newman College of H.E. Birmingham, B32 3NT.
- SGP The Syrian Christians by S. G. Pothan, 1963.
- SNTW Interpretation of the New Testament by Stephen Neill & Tom Wright 1988.
- TE The Tertullian Project by R. Pearse (web te).
- WW The Relationship Among The Gospels edited by W. Walker, 1978.
- WRF The Synoptic Problem by W. R. Farmer, 1976.
- WRFN New synoptic Studies by W. R. Farmer, 1983
- Birger Gerhardsson in his book *Memory & Manuscript* (Eerdmans (1961,1998) [ch. 11]
- The Progressive Publication of Matthew* (2010), B. Ward Powers [ch. 11]
- BC

When a website reference has been added for a document, there may be a variation in translation compared with that of a printed version in a book.

Copyright © ; Estate of Dennis Barton & Mark Alder 2017