

How To Read, Study, and Understand The Bible

New Testament Timeline

Epistles: Pauline & General by 65AD

The Gospels & Acts by 90AD

Revelation 90 AD

The Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

The Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

- ✓ Each provide an account of what Jesus taught and did during His life, particularly His three year public ministry, with special attention given to His suffering, death, and resurrection.
- ✓ They were written between 70-90AD
- ✓ The word “Gospel” means “Good News”
- ✓ Attributed to named authors

The Good News

1. What Jesus himself talked and taught about God (Mark 1:14)
2. Early Christian preaching about the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 1:1-5; I Corinthians 15:1-8)

The Good News

3. Preaching that included both what Jesus had taught about God and what Christians had said about Jesus and the events of His life (Acts 10:34-43)
4. Books that offer in written form what had been proclaimed orally within communities.

The Good News

To what genre of literature does a Gospel belong?

The Gospels are “sermons in story” (Howard Kee).

- ✓ Biographical and historical
- ✓ Written with an intended goal of effecting definitive changes in the way we think and believe (John 21:25)

The Authors

- ✓ Most of the gospels were written one generation after Jesus Christ sometime around the beginning of the deaths of the Apostles
- ✓ Most of the writers were anonymous and ascribed the authorial names to their works
- ✓ Used literary devices that were meant to be rhetorically effective (Mk. 5) to their readers as opposed to being concerned with chronological accuracy - this accounts for some of the inconsistencies among the gospels

Materials in the Gospel

- Sayings: memorable quotations – legal, prophetic, wisdom, autobiographical
- Stories: biographical, controversy, didactic, commissioning
- Parables
- Miracles: exorcisms, healings, resuscitations, nature, feeding
- Hymns
- Genealogies

The Synoptics

- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels : *syn* = *same* & *opto* = *to see*
- They follow the same order of events

Markan Priority

The order of events favor Mark as an early source for Matthew and Luke

✓ Mt & Mk v. Lk

✓ Lk & Mk v. Mt

✓ but *never* Mt & Lk v. Mk

Markan Priority

- ✓ Mark is shorter, less detailed, more difficult, and lacks the speeches/sayings of Matthew and Luke
- ✓ A later writing would not have omitted the sayings of Jesus

From Jesus to Us

Transmission of the Gospel Traditions

Transmission of the Gospel

1. The Historical Jesus: The things Jesus actually did and said
 - *The Jesus Seminar*
2. Early Traditions
 - Written Sources – people wrote down what Jesus said and preserved them
 - Oral Traditions – people remembered what Jesus said and did and shared their stories, e.g. Peter

Transmission of the Gospel

3. Redaction of the Gospel: The Gospel writers compile their books by taking, merging, and editing the early traditions.

This was done by more than the four gospel writers of our New Testament

Other Known Existing Gospels

- ✓ Gospel of James (stepbrother of Jesus): focuses on Mary and then follows Matthew and Luke
- ✓ Infancy Gospel of Thomas: The lost years, 5-12, of Jesus' life
- ✓ Gospel of Peter: Descriptive account of Jesus' death and resurrection
- ✓ Gospel of the Hebrews: Quoted in other works but not found itself

Other Known Existing Gospels

- ✓ Gospel of Thomas: A collection of Jesus' sayings, accepted as accurate by most scholars
- ✓ Gospel of Mary (Magdalene): Emphasizes the role and place of women as disciples
- ✓ Apocryphon of James: Conversation of Jesus with Peter and James before His ascension
- ✓ Dialogue of the Savior: Debate between Jesus, Matthew, Judas, and Mary

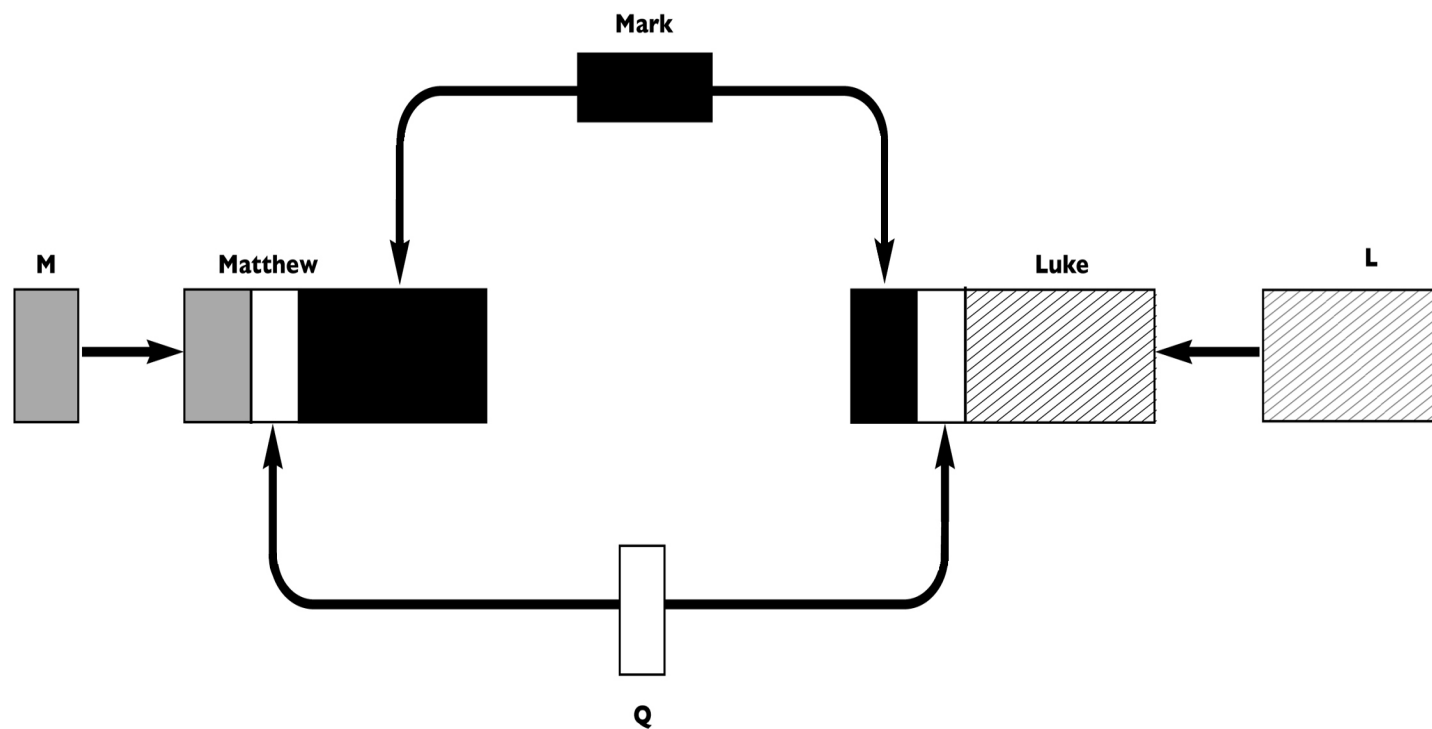
Q Source

“*Q*”, German for *Quelle* = Source, is an early non-preserved tradition (oral and/or written) of the sayings of Jesus used by both Matthew and Luke

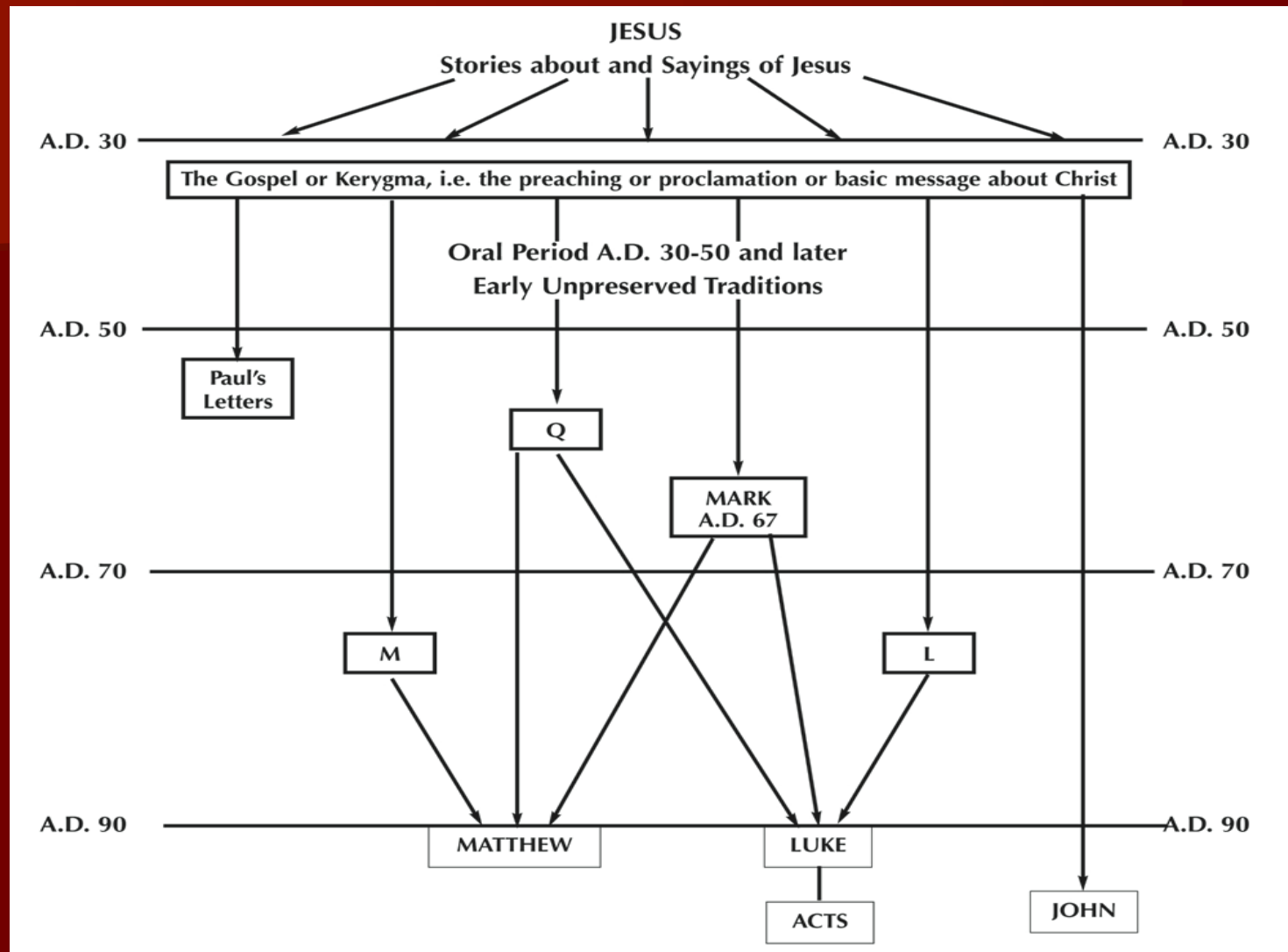
Q Source

These sayings are used and ordered differently by Matthew and Luke which suggests that they/it were used independently along with their other sources

The Synoptics



Proposed Timeline of Gospel Formation



Transmission of the Gospel

4. Preservation of the Manuscripts: People made copies of the completed Gospels and shared them around the world
5. Translation: Scholars translate copies of the Gospels into other languages
6. Reception: We read about what Jesus said and did in our modern editions of the Bible
7. Proclamations and Paraphrases

Next Week:

Johanine Literature