

LESSON 1: Why Four Gospels?



REFERENCE

Page 289-290 [THE WRITING OF THE GOSPELS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) Flipchart paper, crayons & prestik
- (3) (4) Bibles

AIM

- To create an awareness of why we have 4 Gospels as opposed to a single one

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners have a basic understanding of why there is more than one Gospel in the New Testament canon.
- KUI Learners give some examples of similarities and differences between the Gospels.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson sets the scene for the rest of the lessons in this unit, which focuses on the Gospels. The unit addresses two main concerns:

- Studying how the Gospels came to be written, in order to be able to understand what the writers actually intended to communicate; and
- Studying the Gospel texts, so that they can speak for themselves (CORD p 289)

BACKGROUND

In order to answer the question of why four gospels, a few things need to be kept in mind. First, it's useful to remember that biblical scholars now tend to emphasise that the gospels are accorded to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John and that it cannot be said with certainty that these individuals actually authored the gospels in the sense of writing them down. Usually, each gospel is now viewed as the product of a particular early Christian community – perhaps with some link to the apostle in question. What we now call gospels met the communal living and worshipping needs of these communities and, thus, came to be written down in the form we know today. So, the question of authorship is now located in the question of the kind of community that produced a gospel and how its experience might have shaped the production of this text. Differences between the gospels are then ascribed to the differences (setting and social make-up for instance) between these communities. Second, it's clear that Mark, Matthew and Luke have many similarities that they 'see together' on certain things – so they are called the synoptic gospels. But how can this be explained. Today, most scholars would accept Mark as the earliest gospel. Thus, they suggest, communities associated with Matthew and Luke had access to the Gospel of Mark and were able to use it as one of their sources. But Matthew and Luke also have passages of agreement that are not in Mark, so many scholars argue that a source, referred to as Q, was available to the compilers of Matthew and Luke. (Note: it's an interesting question as to whether the compilers of Mark had access to Q or not. But we can't know this since, the existence of Q is posited on the areas where Matthew and Luke depart from Mark, and yet still show large agreement with each other. This means that we can't with any certainty discern where Mark, Matthew and Luke could all have made use of Q.)

Second, these four gospels (among a range of writings) gradually came into widespread use in the early church. Out of the range of writings available, a consensus around which ones were to be regarded as authoritative came to be made. Eventually a collection was settled on – and this collection is what Christians now call the New Testament.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

- i. Divide the class into groups of 4 – 6.
- ii. Tell the class to imagine that they have been given the task of compiling the school magazine.
- iii. Hand out flipchart paper and crayons and ask each group to discuss and agree on the following, in 10 minutes:
 - a. What theme should it have?
 - b. What content should the magazine cover?
 - c. What should the order of the contents be?

2 Feedback

- i. Display the reports of the different groups.
- ii. Invite the class to look at them briefly, and to say what they notice.
- iii. Invite group leaders to share what is on their poster, reporting on how they came to it. Did they have consensus on the theme, the contents, and the priorities? (Whether within a group, or across the groups, it becomes clear that individuals and groups will have different thoughts and perspectives. Furthermore, they were under great time pressure.)

3 The Gospels

Explain that in the same way that the learners have different perspectives on what should go into a school magazine, so the Gospel writers would have had different perspectives on what should have gone into the Gospels. They would also have had different aims and different audiences and all are very relevant and useful for us today as they were in early Christian times. Ask learners, as an example, to look up John 20:30 to find out why the author says he wrote his Gospel.

4 Similarities and Differences

Assign each row/group of learners one of the Gospels and ask them to find the stories of:

- Christmas. (Let them discover that only Luke covers the Annunciation, Visitation, and Magnificat. Explain that this is where we get most of our information on Christmas.)
- The Samaritan woman at the well. (They should discover that only John tells this story.)
- The call of Levi. All 3 Synoptics cover this. Get one person to read each of the 3 Gospel accounts. Ask them to compare. They should see that they are very similar.

5 Conclusion

Tell the class that in the next lesson they will be taking a closer look at the Gospels from the point of view of authorship. Who were the writers? Who were their audiences? What were the particular aims of each author?

Conclude by telling learners the following story:

An old Rabbi met a member of his congregation, who began to boast: *“I have been through our Torah many times.”* Rather than praise him, the Rabbi said gently: *“The important thing is not how often you have been through the Torah, but how often the Torah has been through you.”*

In brief, the purpose of the 4 Gospels is not to recreate the words and works of Jesus, but to let them recreate us.

(Mark Link. 1978. *The Seventh Trumpet*. Allen, Texas: Tabor Publishing, p 14)

OTHER IDEAS

6 Cinderella

As an alternative introduction, ask the learners each to write the story of Cinderella (or any other story they know well) in their RE books. If you are sure they know or have heard of it before. Then ask them to compare their accounts. Invite learners to comment on their findings. After thorough deliberation, point out that the various written versions of the story are all based not on some definitive written texts but on layers and layers of telling and retelling; in the same way, the four Gospels too were based on oral tradition – the repeated telling of stories about Jesus for at least thirty years after his death. (See CORD p 289)

7 The Number 'Four'

To answer the question, 'Why *four* Gospels?' ask learners to find out the significance of the number 'four'. *Four* is the number of the great elements—earth, air, fire, and water. *Four* are the regions of the earth—north, south, east, and west. *Four* are the divisions of the day—morning, noon, evening, and midnight. *Four* are the seasons of the year—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. *Four* are the great variations of the lunar phases – new moon, first quarter, full moon, and last quarter. What does all this suggest? The scriptural connection is with the four animals in the book of Revelation [4:2-7]. Mark is the lion, Luke is the ox, Matthew is the man, and John is the eagle. These symbols are still used to identify the four gospels.

MATERIALS



There are no further materials provided for this lesson.

LESSON 2: Authors of the Gospels



REFERENCE

Page 289 – 291 [THE WRITING OF THE GOSPELS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) Bibles
- (2) LSM: 'About the Gospel Writers'
- (2) LSM: 'The Gospel of Mark'
- (2) LSM: 'The Gospel of Matthew'
- (2) LSM: 'The Gospel of Luke'
- (2) LSM: 'The Gospel of John'
- (3) Newsprint, kokis, prestik (optional)

AIM

- To provide learners with a background to the authorship of the Gospels in order to enrich their understanding

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners have a basic understanding of the issue of the authorship of the Gospels.
- KUI Learners are familiar with the broad characteristics of each of the four Gospels.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson is aimed at introducing learners to the authors of the Gospels and the situation in which they wrote them. You will probably not have enough time to allow all learners to study all four Gospels in this lesson. Rather divide the class into four (or eight) groups and allocate different Gospels to the groups.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Motivation

As with many works of literature, knowing more about the writers and the times in which they wrote often helps us to understand them better. It gives more insight into the background and the meaning to the characters, their words and the storyline. This is also true of the Gospels. To give us a better understanding and to shed more light on the characters, and the meaning of events, we're going to have a look at the background of the four Gospels.

2 Group Activity

- i. Allocate one Gospel to each group, but give each learners all the material at the end of the lesson for future study.
- ii. Distribute the Lesson Materials pages 'The Gospel of Mark', 'The Gospel of Matthew', 'The Gospel of Luke', and 'The Gospel of John' to the respective groups, together with the table 'About the Gospel Writers' to each learner.
- iii. Ask learners to read through the information and then complete their column of the table.

3 Gathering Information

Take one Gospel at a time and gather feedback from the groups so that each learner can complete the columns of the table their group did not deal with. Fill in any missing detail yourself. It will be helpful to record the information on the chalkboard in four columns. Another way of gathering this information would be to give groups newsprint. They reproduce their column on it and fill in the information for display. Learners then fill in their tables by doing

a gallery walk. Highlight the main themes of the Gospels, and ask the learners if they can think of ways in which the writers achieve their aims.

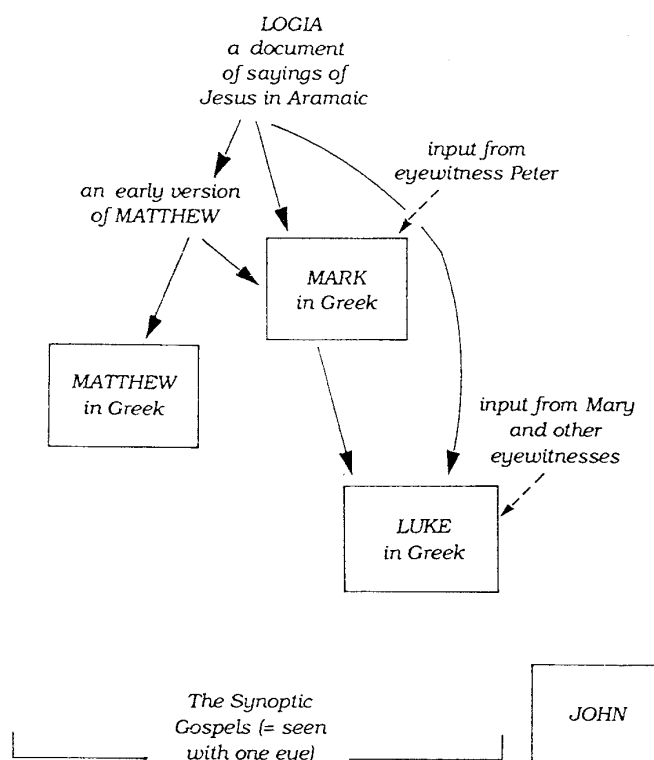
4 Conclusion

Conclude by telling the learners that in this activity we have discovered the different objectives that the Gospel writers had when they wrote. We have seen how the historical detail has influenced their writing. However, they have this in common: each one opted for a faith-presentation of Jesus' words and works so as to invite people to believe in him. John says: "These have been recorded to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, so that through this faith you may have life in his name. [20:31]"

OTHER IDEAS

5 Evolution of the Gospels

Present the following model of how the Gospels evolved.



(Michael Burke. 1991. 'One theory of how the Gospels came to be written' 123 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 132)

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- CIE. 2005. 'About the Gospel Writers'
- Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of Mark' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 81 – 83
- Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of Matthew' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 114 – 117
- Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of Luke' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 137 – 139
- Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of John' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 172 – 175
- Link Mark. 1978. 'Four Gospel Views' in *The Seventh Trumpet*. Allen, Texas: Tabor Publishing, p 14-21



Lesson Materials



About the Gospel Writers

| GOSPEL | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
|---------------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| About the author | | | | |
| Date of writing | | | | |
| Where it was written | | | | |
| Language in which written | | | | |
| Audience | | | | |
| Message or Emphasis | | | | |
| Interesting points/notes | | | | |

Lesson Materials



The Gospel of Mark

Authorship, Date, Outline of Mark

The Author

First-century Christians who read the gospels probably did not know who the authors were. Unlike writers of most other kinds of literature, the evangelists stayed in the background as they testified to the good news. It is only from the second century that we get some indication of who is the author of the earliest gospel.

As we have seen above, around the year 140 the Christian bishop Papias attributed authorship of this gospel to Mark, the interpreter and secretary of Peter. More accurately, the author was one John Mark, a Jew from the Greek-speaking world. John was his Jewish name; Mark was his assumed Greek name.

Mark is referred to several times in Acts and some epistles. They tell us that Mark's mother was Mary, a leading Christian in Jerusalem who used her house for early Christian liturgies (Acts 12:12). His cousin was Barnabas (Col4:10) whom he accompanied on St. Paul's first missionary journey. Mark was an assistant on that journey, but later deserted it much to Paul's extreme unhappiness (Acts 15:39). One of the final references to Mark is St. Peter calling him affectionately "my son" (1 Pt 5: 13). This reference is important in substantiating Papias' claim that Mark served Peter. This early gospel becomes even more meaningful knowing that it may well have been written by an associate of both Paul and Peter.

READING ABOUT MARK

Paul was quite angry with Mark for leaving the first missionary journey. To find out how his attitude to Mark changed, read Philemon 24, Colossians 4: 10 and 2 Timothy 4: 11.

The Date

For a long time most scholars dated Mark's gospel shortly after the Roman Emperor Nero persecuted the Christians in 64. You may recall the story of Nero fiddling while the city of Rome burned. The citizens were angry with Nero, who was probably responsible for the fire, so he found a scapegoat in the Christians. Tradition maintains that Peter died by crucifixion that year and that his secretary -Mark - wrote down the essence of his preaching shortly thereafter. Early tradition also held that Mark's gospel was written for a group of Gentile Christians, probably Romans. Mark stressed that disciples of Jesus need to be ready to suffer as Jesus did.

Today several leading scholars hold that Mark's gospel was written shortly after the destruction of the Jewish Temple by Titus in 70. They look to chapter 13 in Mark's gospel to fix a date. This chapter includes Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the Temple. By reading between the lines, these scholars conclude that this event had already 'taken place by the time Mark wrote his gospel. They also conclude that Mark may have written not for a group of Roman Christians but for a community in Syria, not too far from Jerusalem.

Outline of Mark/...

Lesson Materials

THE GOSPEL OF MARK (cont.)

Outline of Mark

As an aid to reading Mark and understanding his theological point of view, here is a brief outline of his gospel.

Prelude: 1: 1-13

Part 1: Who Is the Messiah? 1:14-8:26

- A. Jesus begins his ministry. He is welcomed but also challenged. 1:14- 3:6
- B. Jesus spends time in his own country. 3:7-6:6a
- C. The meaning of discipleship and mission. 6:6b 8:26

Transition: Jesus = Messiah = Son of Man = Suffering Servant 8:27-8:33

Part 2: Who Is the Son of Man? 8:31-16:8

- A. The Son of Man is to suffer. 8:31-10:52
- B. Jesus in Jerusalem. 11:1-13:37
- C. Passion, death, resurrection. 14:1-16:8

Second Ending of Mark: 16:9-20

© Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of Mark' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 81 – 83

Mark's Gospel

Mark's brisk account of Jesus' life and teaching has been called the "Gospel of Jesus-on-the-Go." Jesus is always going somewhere: to Jericho, to Nazareth, to Capernaum, to Jerusalem.

A provocative technique Mark occasionally uses is to ask a question and leave it unanswered. When Jesus casts out an unclean spirit, bystanders ask: "What does this mean?" (1:27) When Jesus forgives the paralytic his sins, Pharisees ask: "Who can forgive sins: except God alone?" (2:7) When Jesus calms the sea, his disciples ask: "Who can this be?" (4:41)

Little is known of Mark, personally. Some think he was the young man who showed the disciples to the upstairs room (his house?) where they ate the Last Supper. (Mark 14:14) Afterwards, he followed them to Gethsemane, narrowly escaping arrest. (Mark 14:51)

Mark eventually went to Rome with Peter. There he wrote his gospel for Christians suffering under Nero's bloody persecution. Perhaps this explains his stress on Jesus' role as the suffering messiah.

Mark opens his gospel with the words: "This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." These words point to Mark's 2 main concerns: Jesus as "Christ" and Jesus as "Son of God." Appropriately, Mark's gospel divides in 2 parts.

The geographic focus of the first part is Galilee. The faith focus is Jesus as "Christ," that is, "the promised messiah of Israel" The first part ends with Peter saying to Jesus: "You are the Messiah." (8:29)

The geographic focus of the last half is Jerusalem. The faith focus is Jesus as "Son of God." The last half ends with a Roman saying of Jesus: "This man was really the Son of God" (15:39)

© Link Mark. 1978. 'Four Gospel Views' in *The Seventh Trumpet*. Allen, Texas: tabor Publishing, p 14-21

Lesson Materials



The Gospel of Matthew

Authorship, Date, Outline of Matthew

The Author

Ancient tradition taught that the apostle Matthew wrote the gospel named after him. This tradition is based on the belief that there was an earlier version of the gospel written in Aramaic between A.D. 40-45, the so-called Hebrew gospel. If it existed, this Aramaic gospel was lost some time in the first century. The gospel we have today is written in Greek for a community of Jewish Christians who spoke that language. It may or may not have been based on the earlier Aramaic gospel. Several New Testament commentators believe that if it was based on the earlier work, the Greek gospel has been substantially reworked. Authorship of the Greek Matthew is attributed to an anonymous: Jewish scribe or rabbi.

The author of Matthew assumes that his audience has a familiarity with Jewish customs. For example, he uses terms like *Preparation Day*, *Gehenna* (the Jewish term for "hell") and *Beelzebul* (a Hebrew name for "the devil"). He refers to Jewish customs such as the ritual washing of hands before eating and the wearing of phylacteries. * In none of these cases does he explain his terms.

Furthermore, two of the major themes of the gospel would have been burning concerns for a former Jew. First, the author is very interested in showing the relationship between the old Law and Jesus' Law of Love. Second, he is quite concerned with the fate of Israel which had, by and large, rejected the Messiah.

*A *phylactery* was a small leather capsule which was fastened either on the forehead or on the upper left arm so that it hung at the level of the heart. It contained miniature scrolls with four passages from the Jewish Law, all alluding to the need to keep the Law of God before one's eyes and heart. A pious Jewish male-like a Pharisee-would wear these all day once he reached adulthood (age 14).

READING ABOUT MATTHEW

Some scholars suggest that the author of Matthew's gospel may have been a former Jewish scribe. They conclude this by noting what the author of Matthew has done in several cases when he borrowed his material from Mark. See this for yourself. Read Mark 14:43, then Matthew 26:47. Answer these two questions:

1. What did Matthew leave out?
 2. What is a possible motivation for his doing so?
-

The Date

Matthew is generally dated between the years 70 and 90. These dates seem reasonable because Matthew used Mark's gospel and, as a result, had to be written sometime after Mark circulated his work. In addition, evidence in Matthew's gospel suggests antagonism between the Pharisees and the followers of Jesus. This may reflect somewhat the antagonism between Jewish Christians and the Jews (Pharisees) of Matthew's day. History tells us, for example, that the Pharisees were greatly upset that the Christians did not fight alongside Jews against the Romans in the revolt of 66-70. As a result, Jews who survived the revolt made it very difficult for Christians to participate in the synagogue services after about 75. These tense relations between Jews and their Christian brothers and sisters may well have influenced some viewpoints expressed by the author of Matthew when he wrote his gospel. These viewpoints, often appearing as sharp sayings against the Pharisees, should *not* be read as a condemnation of either the Jews or the Pharisees as such. Rather, they should be read as reflecting the controversies which were taking place at the time that Matthew's gospel was written.

Lesson Materials

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (cont.)

The Controversy

To get a flavour of the controversy raging between the Christians of Matthew's day and the Pharisaic branch of Judaism, read Matthew 23. There Jesus is addressing the people and his *disciples*, telling them what kind of leaders they are supposed to be. The remarks there apply to any Christian who wishes to follow Jesus. After reading Matthew 23, answer these questions:

1. How should a Christian teacher act?
2. List three hypocritical things Jesus condemns:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Outline of Matthew's Gospel

Matthew wrote a highly structured gospel. It falls neatly into seven major divisions. The heart of the gospel is the five sections from chapters 3-26. These sections each contain a narrative and a major speech or discourse of Jesus. Each of them ends with a formula that goes something like this: "Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say. . ." (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1 and 26:1).

For many years scholars thought this fivefold division was intended by the author of Matthew to show that Jesus was like the new Moses. The five sections supposedly corresponded to the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Today the more popular opinion is that Matthew collected together sayings and teachings of Jesus into a kind of catechism for new believers. Jesus is presented as a supreme teacher who answers questions like these for new Christians: How am I to live as a Christian? What is Christian leadership like? What is God doing in the world? How should the Christian community conduct itself? What is the new age going to be like? Matthew's gospel, then, should be seen as a book of Christian instruction and administration. Here is the outline:

I Prologue: Birth of the Messiah. (Chapters 1-2)

II Coming of the Kingdom

Narrative: Jesus' commission and the selection of the disciples (3-4)

Discourse: Sermon on the Mount (5-7)

III Works of Jesus

Narrative: Ten miracles (8-9)

Discourse: Mission of the disciples (10)

IV God's Kingdom

Narrative: Jesus and his opponents (11-12)

Discourse: Parables of the kingdom (13)

V. The Kingdom Developing

Narrative: Messiah as shepherd of Israel (14-17)

Discourse: Advice to the church (18)

VI. Mounting Opposition to Jesus

Narrative: Controversies (19-22)

Discourse: Judgment (23-25)

VII. Death and Resurrection of Jesus (26-28)

© Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of Matthew' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 114 – 117

Lesson Materials

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (cont.)

Matthew's Gospel

Some years after Mark recorded his gospel, Matthew set to work on a similar project. Writing a more detailed account than Mark, he seems to have had Mark's gospel at hand when he wrote. He utilized parts of it almost word for word. (Mark 9:2-13 and Matthew 17:1-13)

But Matthew also included new material not found in Mark. (Matthew 1-2)

Matthew designed his gospel beautifully. He cast the teaching of Jesus into 5 sections. Each section has 2 parts: narrative followed by instruction. Each section, also, ends with a similar formula: "When Jesus finished his teaching. . . ." (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1) Matthew introduced the 5 teaching sections with a prologue of Jesus' early years, and ended them with an epilogue of his passion and resurrection. Matthew's five sections of instruction call to mind the 5 books of the Jewish Torah. Matthew presents Jesus' instruction as the new Christian Torah. The heart of Jesus' instruction is God's kingdom:

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| its demands, | 5:1-7:28 |
| its proclamation, | 10:5-11:1 |
| its development, | 13:1-13:51 |
| its community, | 18:1-19:1 |
| its completion. | 23:1-26:1 |

Matthew's fondness for order appears, also, in his prologue and his epilogue. His prologue quotation from Isaiah, "God is with us," is matched with his epilogue quotation from Jesus, "I am with you always." (1:23, 28:30) Similarly, Jesus' birth is matched with his resurrection (rebirth). (2:1, 28:1) Jesus' baptism is matched with his passion, which Jesus called a baptism. (Mark 10:38, Luke 12:50) Lastly, Jesus' prologue temptation in the desert is matched with his epilogue temptation on the cross. Satan and the mob make the same proposition, "If you are the Son of God. . . ." (4:3, 27:40) Poets call such a matching pattern a chiasmus: 1, 2, 3:3, 2, 1.

Saint Matthew
J. C. FENTON

It may be that Matthew has ordered the whole of his Gospel so that it forms one great chiasmus. . . The first teaching section (5-7) and the last (23-25) are similar both in length and in subject matter (entry into the kingdom); similarly the second (10) and the fourth (18) are of much the same length, and whereas the former describes the sending-out of apostles, the latter describes the receiving of people who have been sent in Christ's name. In the same way, the beginning of the whole Gospel matches the end.

Writing mainly for Jewish Christians, one of Matthew's main concerns was to show how everything about Jesus matched with Jewish expectation and teaching. Thus, he took great pains to link key events in Jesus' life with Old Testament prophecies. Describing Jesus' return from Egypt, he says: "This was done to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet." (Matthew 2:15) Describing the slaying of the infants, he says: "What was said through Jeremiah the prophet was then fulfilled." (Matthew 2:18)

Matthew's point is this: Jesus is the messiah, the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Lesson Materials



The Gospel of Luke

Authorship, Date, Outline of Luke

The Author

Luke, a Gentile Christian, is mentioned three times by name in the New Testament as a companion of Paul. He also refers to himself when he uses "we" in Acts (16:10-17, 20:5-21:18 and 27:1-28:16). All of these passages underscore the fact that Luke travelled with Paul.

The Greek of Luke's gospel is polished. An ancient tradition says that Luke was an artist and that he even painted a portrait of Mary. Whether he was in fact a painter or not, most scholars would agree that Luke's is the most artistic gospel stylistically.

READING ABOUT LUKE

The three references to Luke in the epistles are Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24, 2 Timothy 4:11. Please read them and answer the following two questions:

1. What profession did Luke practice?
2. Based on these references, what kind of relationship did Luke have with Paul?

The Date

Like all the gospels, Luke cannot be dated with any precision. Most commentators suggest anywhere from 70 to 85 or so. This seems probable for the following reasons: 1) Luke used about 65% of Mark's gospel. Thus, Luke had to be written after Mark. 2) Luke's gospel probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (see 19:43-44 and 21:20). 3) Luke's gospel was widely used by the end of the first century. A common opinion is that Luke wrote his gospel for a Gentile-Christian audience probably in southern Greece (Achaia). He seems to avoid matters with which Gentiles might not be familiar. For example, he eliminates passages about the traditions of the Jews (Mk 7:1-23), the return of the prophet Elijah (Mk 9:11-13) and the references to the Old Law in the Sermon on the Mount. In addition, Luke omits all exclusively Jewish names; for example, he writes "master" (teacher) for rabbi and "lawyer" for scribe. Finally, he calls special attention to Gentiles throughout his gospel; for example, the parable of the Good Samaritan and Jesus' cure of the 10 lepers.

Outline of Luke's Gospel

When Luke wrote, he drew from three major sources: Mark's gospel, Q and material known to him (designated "L"). His overriding organizing theme is Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.

Everything begins (Zechariah in the Temple in Luke 1:10) and ends (Christians praising God in the Temple in Luke 24:53) in the Holy City. The events of the first two chapters take place in and around Jerusalem; Jesus' third temptation is set there (Lk 4:9-12). In chapter 5 the Pharisees and lawyers come from Jerusalem. In chapter 9 we find a pivotal verse:

Lesson Materials
THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (cont.)

Now as the time drew near for him to be taken to heaven, he resolutely took the road for Jerusalem. . . (v. 51).

With heart and mind set on his destiny in Jerusalem Jesus journeys there to do his Father's will: passion, death, resurrection, and glorification. Acts continues this journey theme as the apostles go to the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire to spread the good news about Jesus.

Here is a commonly accepted outline of Luke's gospel:

Prologue: 1:1-4

Part I: From the Temple to the End of the Ministry in Galilee. 1:5-9:50

- A. Infancy narratives. 1:5-2:52
- B. Preparation for the ministry. 3:1-4:13
- C. The ministry in Galilee. 4: 14-9:50

Part II: Journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. 9:51-19:27

Part III: Events in Jerusalem. 19:28-24:53

- A. Jerusalem ministry. 19:28-21:38
- B. The passion. 22-23
- C. After the resurrection. 24

KEY READING EXERCISE

By now you have already read many sections of Luke. For example, in chapter 4 you read the infancy narratives. In this exercise you and your classmates will read the middle sections of Luke's gospel, the chapters about Jesus' ministry in Galilee and his journey to Jerusalem. Divide into five groups, each group taking one of the following sections of Luke's gospel:

- Group 1: 4:14.6:49
- Group 2: 7:1-9:50
- Group 3: 9:51-12:59
- Group 4: 13:1-16:31
- Group 5: 17:1-19:27

To focus your reading, try to discover concrete examples to illustrate Jesus' attitude to the following groups. Report what you find to your classmates.

1. the poor
2. Gentiles
3. Samaritans
4. women
5. sinners and outcasts

Lesson Materials

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (cont.)

Luke's Gospel

Whether Luke wrote before or after Matthew is disputed by scholars. Luke identifies himself and his purpose in a brief preface. (Luke 1:1, Acts 1:1)

Tradition says Luke came from Antioch (Syria). He travelled extensively with Paul. His travel diary makes up much of Acts and reflects clearly when he was with Paul and when not. (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-21:18, 27:1-28:16) It is Paul who tells us much about Luke.

The goal of producing a master copy continues. Much has been accomplished already; much more still remains to be done.

Paul says Luke was a gentile by birth and a doctor by profession. (Colossians 4:10-11) As a gentile, Luke sought to tell gentiles about Jesus. Luke's writing reflects that his readership is ignorant of Palestinian geography. He explains town names and locations. (4:31, 23:51, 24:13)

He also explains Jewish customs. (22:1, 23:56)

Besides his contact with Paul, where did Luke learn about Jesus? Again, Paul helps us. He tells us that Luke had contact with Mark. (Colossians 4:10) He suggests, also, that he may have met Peter in Antioch, Luke's home town. (Galatians 2:11)

Luke's own writing suggests another interesting source: Manaen, "who was brought up with Herod." (Acts 13:1) This would explain Luke's remarkable coverage of certain events involving Herod. (Acts 12, Luke 9:7-9, 23:6-12)

Writing mainly for gentiles, Luke underscores the fact that Jesus fulfilled not just Jewish dreams, but also gentile dreams. Luke also underscores Jesus' special concern for the "second-class citizens" of society.

Concerning women, for example, Luke records 4 incidents that are found in no other gospel: the widow of Naim, (7:11-17) Joanna and Susanna, (8:1-3) the woman and the lost coin, (15:8-10) the widow and the unfair judge. (18:1-8)

Similarly, Luke notes Jesus' concern for sinners and religious outcasts. This group included those who were "unclean" because of occupation.

Thirdly, Luke underlined Jesus' deep concern for the poor:

Blest are you poor; the reign of God is yours.

Blest are you who hunger; you shall be filled.

Blest are you who are weeping; you shall laugh. LUKE 6:20-21

"The Jesus of Luke," says W. D. Davies, "might well have uttered the words written on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor: 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. . . . Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me.'"

In conclusion, we might point out that the general flow pattern of Luke's gospel is similar to that of Mark and Matthew:

1 infancy prologue, 1:5-2:52

2 ministry prelude, 3:1-4:13

3 Galilean ministry, 4:41-9:50

4 Jerusalem journey, 9:51-19:27

5 Jerusalem ministry, 19:28-21:38

6 death-rising epilogue. 22:1-24:53

© Link Mark. 1978. 'Four Gospel Views' in *The Seventh Trumpet*. Allen, Texas: Tabor Publishing, p 14-21

Lesson Materials



The Gospel of John

Authorship, Date, Outline of John

The Author

No one knows for sure who wrote the fourth gospel. The earliest tradition about its authorship comes from Irenaeus, a church Father who wrote around the year 180. He attributed the gospel to John, the disciple of Jesus, son of Zebedee and brother to James. For a long time this tradition was accepted.

Today, however, scholars note the complex nature of John's gospel. They point to many characteristics in the gospel which indicate that it was written in a number of stages and may even have been produced in several editions. For example, some material is written down twice with wording only slightly changed (see 6:35-50 and 6:51-58). For another example, they point to chapter 21 as an appendix which was added later by someone other than the original author.

There seems to be agreement that the gospel is based ultimately on the witness of the apostle John, son of Zebedee. This same John is probably the beloved disciple mentioned in the fourth gospel. Around him grew a community of followers who took his testimony, reflected on it prayerfully and wrote a gospel which addressed the concerns of their own particular community. This community seemed to be made up of Christians who had come from different backgrounds—many Jews from Palestine, Samaritans and some Gentiles. The community suffered at the hands of the Jews who expelled them from the synagogues after the Roman Revolt. The gospel was put together in its final form by an unknown editor, perhaps a close disciple of John the apostle. Tradition sometimes identifies this final editor as John the Elder who wrote the three letters of John. (He is mentioned by name in 2 John 1: 1 and 3 John 1: 1.)

READING ABOUT THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

Read in John the following references to the beloved disciple, John, son of Zebedee, and discuss the questions: 13:23 19:26 20:2-10 21:7,20-23,24

1. How was this disciple especially favoured by Jesus?
2. Describe him in relation to Peter. Do you see any significance in the beloved disciple stepping aside to allow Peter to enter the tomb first (20:3-5)?
3. What verse do scholars use to reach the conclusion that the beloved disciple had a hand in writing the gospel of John?

The Date

John's gospel was written between 90 and 100, probably from Ephesus in modern-day Turkey. The earliest fragment from any of the New Testament books was found this century in Egypt. This early fragment (known as the John Rylands Greek papyrus) is a selection from John's gospel and has been dated at around 130. What this discovery shows is that the fourth gospel was certainly used far and wide in the Roman Empire only 30 or 40 years after its composition.

The very end of John's gospel gives us the reason why it was written: "There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name" (Jn 20:30-31).

Lesson Materials

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (cont.)

This short statement of purpose shows that the evangelist was not interested in recounting all that Jesus did; he was not interested in simply giving the same kind of information that could be found in the synoptic gospels. His prime aim was to help his audience believe that Jesus is God's Son. The focus in the fourth gospel is clearly on Jesus. We might say that this gospel *interprets* the many traditions about Jesus, the familiar stories that people knew. This interpretation attempts to show how Jesus is the fullness of God's revelation, how he alone is saviour of the world.

The second part of the quote is important, too. John's gospel attempts to lead the reader to *belief* because belief brings eternal life. The theme of eternal life is important in John's gospel. The concept of "eternal life" is similar to the idea of "kingdom of God" in the synoptic gospels. In John, eternal life is something we can have right now - not only in some distant future - if only we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Outline of John's Gospel

What did the author of John's gospel use when he wrote his gospel? What were his sources? There seem to be three that are agreed upon. First, the fourth gospel reinterprets many of the traditions about Jesus. The author is very familiar with much that went into the synoptic gospels. Some scholars even maintain that he might have directly known Mark's gospel. A common example used to back up this conclusion is the arrangement of chapter 6 in John which seems to rely directly on Mark.

Second, John seems to have had access to a separate tradition of the miracles of Jesus called the signs source. Some of the seven signs treated in John's gospel appear in the synoptics as well, for example, the multiplication of loaves. But others are unique to John, such as the wine miracle at Cana and the raising of Lazarus. As we shall see later in this chapter, John attaches special meaning to the signs of Jesus.

Third, John used the passion narrative which had been formulated before any of the gospels were written.

Characteristic of John's gospel are the long discourses of Jesus which include a special kind of language using opposites: truth and falsehood, light and darkness, above and below. This language is known as *dualism*-two extremes are contrasted. You have already seen another characteristic of the fourth gospel in the last section of this chapter: a Christology where the Word descends from above only to re-ascend to the Father. These characteristics led some people to think that John was deeply influenced by the gnostic philosophy which was prominent in the second century, a philosophy which used dualistic concepts. (Gnosticism was an anti-worldly religious movement which was considered heretical by the church.)

However, the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls (Essene literature) has shown that this kind of language was also common to the Jews. Few people today believe that John was greatly influenced by Gnosticism. In fact he rejected their beliefs by showing both in his gospel and in his three letters that Jesus was God-become-flesh. By emphasizing the bodily aspect of Jesus, John rejected a key belief of the Gnostics who held that the body was evil.

The simplest outline of John's gospel looks like *this*:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Prologue | 1:1-18 |
| Part I: Book of Signs | 1:19-12:50 |
| Part II: Book of Glory | 13:1-20:31 |
| Epilogue | 21: 1-25 |

© Michael Pennock. 1982. 'Authorship, Date and Outline of John' in *The New Testament*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, pp. 172 - 175

Lesson Materials

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (cont.)

John's Gospel

John's opening prologue tips us off that he approached Jesus' words and works differently than did the other 3 evangelists. John used the story format less than they did. Moreover, when he did use it, he was more interested in the symbolism underlying it than he was the story itself.

A case in point is the miracle stories. Mark devotes 200 of 425 verses of chapters 1-10 directly or indirectly to miracles. John, on the other hand, describes only 7.

Moreover, John refers to miracles as signs. This suggests that his concern lies elsewhere than in the miracles themselves.

One of John's concerns is to show the link between Jesus' ministry of signs (miracles) and the church's ministry of signs (sacraments).

For example, Jesus' instruction to Nicodemus concerning rebirth inspires the church's ministry of baptism. (3:5)

Jesus' forgiveness of the paralysed person becomes a model of the church's forgiveness of its own members. (5:2)

The hillside supper, at which Jesus and his disciples minister, becomes a sign of the Lord's Supper. (6:11, 32-35)

Jesus' anointing of the blind man's eyes becomes a model of the church's rite of anointing the sick of the community. (9:6)

John climaxes Jesus' ministry of signs with the raising of Lazarus to new life. (11:11) Thus it sums up, symbolically, Jesus' mission: that all may have life and have it to the full. (10:10)

John's gospel relates Jesus' ministry of signs (miracles) to the church's ministry of signs (sacraments). He sees both bringing the fullness of new life.

© Link Mark. 1978. 'Four Gospel Views' in *The Seventh Trumpet*. Allen, Texas: Tabor Publishing, p 14-21

LESSON 3: Synoptic Accounts



REFERENCE

Page 291 [THE WRITING OF THE GOSPELS]



AT YOU NEED

- (2) TSM: 'The synoptic problem'
- (3) (4) LSM: 'A Synoptic Account'
- (3) Colour pens, pencils or highlighters

AIM

- To give learners an understanding of the 'synoptic problem' and an appreciation of the similarities in the synoptic Gospels

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners describe the 'synoptic problem' in broad outline.
- KUI Learners are aware of the similarities found in the synoptic Gospels.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Before the lesson make sure you read the Lesson Materials page 'The synoptic problem' so that you are able to explain it to your learners. Note the difference between the diagram on this Page from Etienne Charpentier and that offered in the previous lesson under 'Evolution of the Gospels'. Charpentier's 'triple tradition' seems to be equivalent to Burke's 'logia' in that it suggests a common source for the three synoptic Gospels. This is the essential point which learners need to understand. Charpentier's addition of the Q source, common to Matthew and Luke, refines the theory and makes it more complex.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

We've had a look at the authors of the Gospels and spoken of the great similarity between these Gospels, especially Matthew, Mark and Luke. We are now going to study some of these similarities to appreciate, in miniature, the work of biblical scholars.

2 The Synoptics

- i. Because the Synoptics are so similar, many theologians and Scripture scholars have tried to suggest reasons or plausible theories for this. The lesson will look at some of these similarities and look at a theory of why they are so similar. Ask learners the following questions:
 - a. What do you understand by the word synopsis or synoptic?
 - b. Which Gospels are regarded as synoptic gospels and why?
- ii. Then explain 'the synoptic problem' using the Lesson Materials page of that name.

3 A Synoptic Account

Give each learner a copy of the Lesson Materials page 'A Synoptic Account'

Provide learners with coloured pens, pencils or highlighters if they do not have any.

Ask them to compare the texts from the three synoptic gospels about 'The Healing of Peter's mother-in-law' by underlining each word with a particular colour as indicated below. Make this instruction very clear to every learner.

GRADE 11 Scripture

- a. When a word is used only in Matthew, underline it in red
- b. When a word is used only in Mark, underline it in blue
- c. When a word is used only in Luke, underline it in yellow
- d. Underline a word common to Matthew and Mark in purple (a combination of red and blue)
- e. Underline a word common to Matthew and Luke in orange (a combination of red and yellow)
- f. Underline a word common to Mark and Luke in green (a combination of blue and yellow)
- g. Underline a word common to all three gospels in brown (a combination of red, blue and yellow)

4 Discussion

Get them to comment as they go, and again, when they have completed the exercise. Invite them to read the comments on Mark, Luke and Matthew on the Lesson Materials page.

5 Conclusion

Conclude the lesson by clarifying any misunderstandings that may have arose from the discussion and then summarise the lesson.

OTHER IDEAS

6 The Call of Levi

If time allows, share another illustration of similarities found in The Call of Levi:

- Matthew 9: 9-13
- Mark 2: 13-17
- Luke 5: 27-32

Ask learners to refer to these texts in their Bibles and to briefly share a few similarities and a few differences in the texts.

7 Lectionary Cycle

Remind learners that the Catholic Church and some (usually 'mainline') Protestant Churches (e.g. Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian) follow a three-year lectionary cycle, using the Roman Lectionary and the Revised Common Lectionary respectively. Thus, the Sunday gospel readings are drawn from each of the synoptic gospels in turn – Matthew (Year A), Mark (Year B), and Luke (Year C). John's Gospel is used at special times in the liturgical year, particularly around Lent and Easter.

MATERIALS

TEACHER

- Etienne Charpentier. 1989. 'The Synoptic Problem' in *How to Read the New Testament*. New York: Crossroad, p 15

LEARNER

- Etienne Charpentier. 1989. 'The Healing of Peter's mother-in-law' in *How to Read the New Testament*. New York: Crossroad, p 16

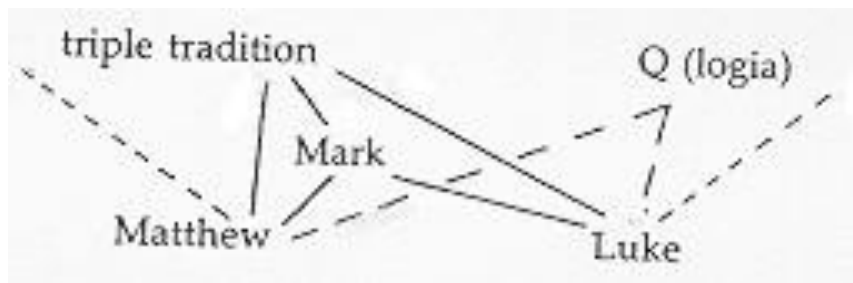


Lesson Materials

The Synoptic Problem

A synopsis is a book which presents the Gospels in parallel columns, in such a way that you can read all similar texts at a single glance (Greek *synopsis*). The first three Gospels are similar enough for us to be able to put them in columns like this all the way through; that is why Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels (or just 'the synoptics', for short).

This similarity has raised the question whether these Gospels are not based on one or more *written* sources. For centuries scholars have produced one solution after another, sometimes extremely complicated and always hypothetical. To simplify things in the extreme' (which inevitably means distorting them), one might say that it looks as though those who produced the Gospels as we now have them resorted to two 'quarries' of material. Matthew, Mark and Luke had access to one of these, which is referred to as the triple tradition; only Matthew and Luke had access to the other, which is often called the Q source (from *Quelle*, German for source). This source is seen as a collection of *logia* (from a Greek word *logion*, plural *logia*, which means words, sentences). This might be summed up in a diagram:



It is difficult to say whether Matthew and Luke had direct access to the first 'quarry', or whether they knew of it only through Mark. At all events, it is accepted that Matthew and Luke knew Mark's work, but are independent of each other.

Mark seems to be the inventor of the literary genre of the Gospel; in this way he provided a geographical and chronological framework for the story of Jesus. Matthew and Luke followed him.

Matthew and Luke made different use of what they discovered in the second 'quarry': Matthew ground it all up before incorporating it in his Gospel; Luke preferred to insert it into the framework he took over from Mark in two great blocks of material.

Both Matthew and Luke have texts which can be found only in their Gospels; Mark has very few of these.

© Etienne Charpentier. 1989. 'The Synoptic Problem' in *How to Read the New Testament*. New York: Crossroad, p 15

Lesson Materials



A Synoptic Account

| Matt. 8 | Mark 1 | Luke 4 |
|--|---|--|
| <p>14 And when</p> <p>Jesus entered Peter's house,</p> <p>he saw his mother-in-law</p> <p>lying sick with a fever;</p> <p>15 and he touched her hand</p> <p>and the fever left her, and she rose and served him.</p> | <p>29 And immediately they left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew.</p> <p>30 Now Simon's mother-in-law</p> <p>was ill with a fever, and immediately they told him of her.</p> <p>31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up,</p> <p>and fever left her; and she served them.</p> | <p>38 and he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house</p> <p>Now Simon's mother-in-law</p> <p>was ill with a high fever, and they besought him for her.</p> <p>39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever</p> <p>and it left her and immediately she rose and served them.</p> |

The first thing we must do is to compare the texts. A simple way of doing that is to underline each word with a particular colour. There are naturally three primary colours: red, blue and yellow; mixing them produces all the rest. Red and blue make purple, red and yellow make orange, blue and yellow make green, red and blue and yellow make brown. Since there are three synoptic Gospels, simply give each of them one of the primary colours.

When a word is peculiar to Matthew, underline it in red; to Mark, in blue; to Luke, in yellow.

Underline a word common to Matthew and Mark in purple; to Matthew and Luke in orange; and to Mark and Luke in green; if it is common to all three, underline it in brown.

This work might seem very academic to you. But try it for yourself! It will help you to make discoveries, and you will have to read the texts very closely.

This brief study/...

Lesson Materials

A SYNOPTIC ACCOUNT (cont.)

This brief study already enables us to note one or two things in the text as a whole. It is clear that Matthew is the shortest account and Mark the longest, but the three stories seem the same. You will have coloured few things in brown (common to all three): entered, house, mother-in-law, fever, left her, she served. There will be a good deal of red, blue and yellow, i.e. the words peculiar to each Gospel, and also green, words common to Mark and Luke. We might suppose that underlying what we have now is a common story which has been worked over by each evangelist.

The comments on each story will become clearer when we have looked at each of the Gospels in detail.

Mark is very specific; we can almost hear Peter talking. Do the words peculiar to him come from the earliest story? Have they been added by Mark, who is a skilful narrator? It's hard to tell.

However, Mark is also a theologian. 'Jesus and his disciples' is a characteristic way of talking about Jesus in this Gospel, hence his 'they', not 'he'. The expression 'lifted her up' almost certainly recalls the power of Jesus' resurrection: 'lift up' and 'raise, resurrect', is the same word in Greek. And Mark twice uses 'take by the hand' in a miracle story (5.41; 9.26-27).

Luke improves the text from a literary point of view. He stresses the power of Jesus: immediately.

Above all, Jesus rebukes, threatens the fever: this is the word used for driving out demons, and Luke uses it three times in a very few verses (4.35, 39, 41). We shall come back to this.

Matthew, as often in his miracle stories, keeps only two people: Jesus and the person concerned. He suppresses all secondary details, and this brings out the person of Jesus: he is the one who takes the initiative in coming to Peter's house, in seeing the sick woman.

She rises (again the same word as resurrection in Greek) and serves Jesus. We shall see that in this way she becomes a symbol of the church which serves its Lord.

© Etienne Charpentier. 1989. 'The Healing of Peter's mother-in-law' in *How to Read the New Testament*. New York: Crossroad, p 16

LESSON 4: Other New Testament Books



REFERENCE

Page 291 [THE WRITING OF THE GOSPELS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (3) (4) LSM: 'New Testament Writings'
- (3) Bibles

AIM

- To give learners a brief overview of the books of the New Testament, other than the Gospels

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners identify the books of the New Testament.
- KUI Learners name some of the authors of the books of the New Testament.
- KUI Learners give a brief overview of some of the books of the New Testament.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This should be a fun exercise, which could be done as a competition between groups. If you do decide to run the lesson as a competition, you may like to reward the winning group with something appropriate.

By the end of the lesson the learners will probably not be able to remember all the details, but they should be able to name the books and most of their authors, and give an overview of some of the individual books.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Written on Reflection

Put the students in touch with their own experience of this common phenomenon: that when something wonderful happens, the story of what went before it becomes transformed in the telling, because events are seen in the light of their significance as perceived afterwards... for example, a show that becomes a smash-hit, a doctor who makes history with a medical breakthrough, a world war that ends in a peace treaty, etc. Think of how people talk and write about the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela now that he is national icon. What stories are told to tourists who visit Robben Island? Invite the learners to give other instances of this from their own reading and experience. It is vital that the students understand that this same pattern lies behind the writing of the gospels: the story of Jesus was told in the light of years of reflection on his death and resurrection. By way of illustration, note that the first New Testament writings were not the Gospels but some of the Letters and their subject is quite explicitly the RISEN Christ. (CORD p 289-290)

2 New Testament Canon

Ask learners the following questions:

- Can you name any books of the New Testaments, other than the four Gospels?
- Who wrote these books?
- Why were they written?

Explain to the learners that they will be looking at the rest of the New Testament books through a matching exercise.

3 Group Activity

Divide learners into groups. Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'New Testament Writings'. It contains a list of the books of the New Testament (Gospels excluded), and a separate list of descriptions. They need to use a Bible to match which description belongs to which book. A key to the exercise is given below.

| | | | |
|----------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Acts of the Apostles | 1 | Titus | 20 |
| Romans | 4 | Philemon | 14 |
| 1 Corinthians | 8 | Hebrews | 2 |
| 2 Corinthians | 6 | James | 3 |
| Galatians | 18 | 1 Peter | 5 |
| Ephesians | 12 | 2 Peter | 7 |
| Philippians | 16 | 1 John | 9 |
| Colossians | 15 | 2 John | 11 |
| 1 Thessalonians | 17 | 3 John | 13 |
| 2 Thessalonians | 19 | Jude | 10 |
| 1&2 Timothy | 21 | Revelation to John | 22 |

4 New Testament Composition

Now being more familiar with the books of the New Testament, the learners can look at the question of the historical order of their composition. Ask them to study the box on the next page, and then discuss it. It is also found on the Lesson Materials page 'New Testament Writings'.

OTHER IDEAS

5 Plan of Paul's Letters

Paul writes in the manner of his time. Study the following letters: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians. Note the following broad pattern:

Address. Letters began: So and So to So and So, Greetings. Paul names both himself and his fellow workers; he names his correspondents and sends them greetings.
(Read all the addresses straight through. What is the Christian pattern of greeting?)

Prayer. A short prayer was offered to the gods.
(Read all the thanksgivings straight through; for what does Paul bless God?)

The body of the letter. Paul's letters usually have two parts.

- Teaching: Paul develops an important point of teaching, or one that is not properly understood by his Christians.
- Exhortation (or paraenesis, as some Bibles call it): Paul draws practical consequences from the teaching of which he had just reminded his readers. Morality, or the Christian way of behaving, is based on this teaching.

Salutations. Paul ends by giving news of his fellow workers and greeting the Christians to whom he is writing. He concludes with a short form of blessing.

(Etienne Charpentier. 1989. *How to Read the New Testament*. New York: Crossroad, p 49)



Box 1.4
New Testament Books: Approximate Order of Composition

| APPROX. DATE (c.e.) | TITLE OF BOOK | AUTHOR |
|---------------------|---|----------------|
| c. 50 | 1 Thessalonians | Paul |
| | 2 Thess. (if by Paul) | |
| c. 54–55 | 1 and 2 Corinthians | Paul |
| c. 56 | Galatians | Paul |
| c. 56–57 | Romans | Paul |
| c. 61 | Colossians (if by Paul) | Paul |
| c. 61 | Philippians | Paul |
| c. 62 | Philemon | Paul |
| c. 66–70 | Gospel of Mark | Anonymous |
| 66–73 | <i>Jewish War Against Rome: Destruction of Jerusalem and Temple</i> | |
| c. 80–85 | Gospel of Matthew | Anonymous |
| c. 85–90 | Gospel of Luke, Book of Acts | Anonymous |
| c. 85–95 | Hebrews, 1 Peter, Ephesians, James | Anonymous |
| c. 90–95 | Gospel of John | Anonymous |
| c. 95 | Revelation (the Apocalypse) | John of Patmos |
| c. 95–100 | Letters of John | The Elder |
| c. 110–130 | 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus | Anonymous |
| c. 130–150 | Jude, 2 Peter | Anonymous |

(Stephen Harris. 1999. *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*. Mountain View, California, p 11)

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- CIE. 2005. 'New Testament Writings'
- Stephen Harris. 1999. *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*. Mountain View, California, p 11



Lesson Materials



New Testament Writings

Here is a list of the books of the New Testament, excluding the four Gospels.

Match the titles of the books with the 22 descriptions given below the table. Simply write the number of the description next to the name of the book. Consult a Bible.

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Acts of the Apostles | | Titus | |
| Romans | | Philemon | |
| 1 Corinthians | | Hebrews | |
| 2 Corinthians | | James | |
| Galatians | | 1 Peter | |
| Ephesians | | 2 Peter | |
| Philippians | | 1 John | |
| Colossians | | 2 John | |
| 1 Thessalonians | | 3 John | |
| 2 Thessalonians | | Jude | |
| 1&2 Timothy | | Revelation to John | |

1. Receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Chapter 2). The development and spread of the Christian church in the Spirit's power. Written by Luke.
2. A defense of the Christian faith emphasising Jesus as the Great High Priest. The Law of Moses is described as a shadow of the good things to come. In chapter 13, the writer exhorts the people to obey their leaders.
3. A letter concerning the practical aspects of the Christian faith and emphasising that faith is shown to be alive and active by the work it does: "Faith without good actions is dead." (2:14)
4. A letter in which Paul explains how, though we have all "sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (3:23), we can be made acceptable to God.
5. A letter encouraging people to a life of purity and spirituality as God's chosen, a royal priesthood. Written by the first Pope.
6. A letter of Paul, correcting the people's errors, rebuking their sins and calling them to the practice of Christ's love. He describes the many sufferings he has endured for Christ (11:16:33).

Lesson Materials



NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS (cont.)

7. A reminder of the truth of Christ against heresies and warnings to remain in this truth, looking towards the second coming of Christ: “The day of the Lord will come like a thief,…” (3:10)
8. A letter of Paul describing the variety of spiritual gifts (Chapter 12), and emphasising the importance of love above all things.
9. Written by the apostle whom Jesus loved, it describes God as light and love. It ends with a prayer for sinners.
10. A letter strongly condemning false teachers, and admonishing readers to remain in the true faith.
11. A short letter explaining the primary importance and law of love in Christian fellowship and warnings against false teachers. Written by an apostle.
12. Paul’s treatise on the person of Christ and the church, through which God’s wisdom and grace are revealed. In Chapter 6, Paul explains the promise given to children who are obedient to their parents.
13. A short letter concerning hospitality towards travelling Christian teachers.
14. Paul’s most personal letter asking his friend to receive a runaway slave.
15. Paul fights against heresy and errors of faith saying that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world. In Chapter 3:18-21, Paul tells husbands, wives and children how to behave.
16. Despite being in gaol and facing death, Paul writes a love letter revealing the joy and beauty of Christian life. It is known as the epistle of joy.
17. Paul’s first letter to these people, calling them to faith, purity and holiness, to wait in hope for the Lord’s return. Paul greets his readers on behalf of himself, Silvanus and Timothy (Verse 1).
18. Paul maintains that we are justified through faith, not through the Law. No human being can be found upright keeping the Law (2:16). The letter lists the fruits of the Holy Spirit (5:22).
19. Paul’s second letter to this group of Christians concerning the second coming of Christ. Paul calls on them to continue working to earn the food they eat (3:10).
20. Paul’s short letter to a friend and fellow-worker, emphasising sound doctrine and church order.
21. Two letters from Paul concerning the church and duties of church officers. He writes to a “true child of mine in faith”
22. This book, also called the Apocalypse, is full of highly symbolic language, difficult to interpret. It starts thus: “A revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, so that he could tell his servants what is now to take place very soon.”

Lesson Materials

NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS (cont.)



Box 1.4

New Testament Books: Approximate Order of Composition

| APPROX. DATE (c.e.) | TITLE OF BOOK | AUTHOR |
|---------------------|---|----------------|
| c. 50 | 1 Thessalonians | Paul |
| | 2 Thess. (if by Paul) | |
| c. 54-55 | 1 and 2 Corinthians | Paul |
| c. 56 | Galatians | Paul |
| c. 56-57 | Romans | Paul |
| c. 61 | Colossians (if by Paul) | Paul |
| c. 61 | Philippians | Paul |
| c. 62 | Philemon | Paul |
| c. 66-70 | Gospel of Mark | Anonymous |
| 66-73 | <i>Jewish War Against Rome: Destruction of Jerusalem and Temple</i> | |
| c. 80-85 | Gospel of Matthew | Anonymous |
| c. 85-90 | Gospel of Luke, Book of Acts | Anonymous |
| c. 85-95 | Hebrews, 1 Peter, Ephesians, James | Anonymous |
| c. 90-95 | Gospel of John | Anonymous |
| c. 95 | Revelation (the Apocalypse) | John of Patmos |
| c. 95-100 | Letters of John | The Elder |
| c. 110-130 | 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus | Anonymous |
| c. 130-150 | Jude, 2 Peter | Anonymous |