

An Aerial View of the New Testament



A Historical Timeline of Jesus of Nazareth

- 1) In the NT era there were a number of ways eras were marked.
 - Seleucid
 - Older Macedonian calendar – Dios 1 = Oct. 7, 312 BC
 - Babylonian calendar – Nisanu 1 = April 3, 311 BC
 - Greek era of the Olympiads – July 1, 776 BC
 - Roman era from a rounded date for the founding of the city of Rome – January 1, 753 BC.
- 2) There was no standard New Year, but a variety of times when the New Year began.
 - Egyptian – Thoth 1 = Aug. 29
 - Syro-Macedonian – Hyperberetaios = Oct. 1
 - Jewish – Tishri 1 = Sept/Oct; or Nisan 1 (Mar/Apr)
 - Julian – January 1
- 3) Reckoning from the Christian era, based on the birth of Christ, did not begin until 525 AD.
 - Work of Dionysius Exiguus
 - Easter tables: "We have chosen to note the years from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A Historical Timeline of Jesus of Nazareth

- Dates adapted from:
 - Primary resource: Thomas & Gundry's *A Harmony of the Gospels*
 - *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.
 - *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*.
 - *MacArthur Study Bible & MacArthur Bible Handbook*
- Also helpful:
 - Harold Hoehner's *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*
 - Argues for slightly different timeline

The Birth of Christ

- 1) Census of Quirinius
 - 8 BC – 6 AD
- 2) Star of the Magi
 - the Glory Cloud
- 3) Course of Abijah
 - The priests served in rotations based on families.
 - Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, heard about his birth while he was serving at the temple.
 - A six-year almanac among the Dead Sea Scrolls tells us the annual rotation began on Tishri 1.
 - Annunciation to Mary in the Spring
 - Jesus' birth around the time of the winter solstice

The Day of His Birth

- Ancient tradition
 - Eastern church: January 6, 5 BC
 - Western church: December 25, 6 BC
 - According to Hippolytus (Dan. IV, 23) this date was held to be Christ's birth date in the 2nd century BC.
 - Began to be observed in the time of Constantine.

The Birth of Christ

- 4) Death of Herod
 - Herod was alive when Jesus was born.
 - He ordered the death of the infants in Bethlehem in response to the arrival of the Magi.
 - Herod died between March 29 and April 4, 4 BC.
 - Jesus was born
 - No later than the winter of 4 BC
 - No later than 6 BC
 - Herod had all the children 2 and under killed; that means the time the Magi gave him was less than 2 years.

The Commencement of His Ministry

- 1) The 15th year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1)
 - His rule had two beginnings.
 - Sole ruler at his father's death + 15 years = 28-29 AD.
 - Co-regent with his father + 15 years = 26-27 AD
 - The earlier date is more likely.
- 2) Jesus was "about 30 years of age" (Luke 3:23)
 - Likely that means 28-32.
 - If he was born in 5 BC, he was thirty in the year 26.
- 3) 46 Years of Temple Remodeling (John 2:20)
 - It wasn't complete until many years later.
 - This statement was made at the first Passover of Jesus' ministry.
 - Herod began the work at some point in 20-19 BC.
 - 20-19 BC + 46 years = 26-27 AD.

The Length of His Ministry

- 3 Passovers (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55)
- Period 1:
 - Several months
 - From his baptism to His first Passover (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23a)
 - In Galilee and Judea
- Period 2:
 - First full year (between Passovers)
 - Ended with a Passover not in the biblical record
 - Several months after John 4:35
 - Six months before Feast of Tabernacles in John 5:1.
 - In Judea and Galilee
- Period 3:
 - Second full year (between Passovers)
 - Ended with Passover of John 6:4
 - Mostly in Galilee
- Period 4:
 - Final year (between Passovers)
 - Around Galilee, Judea, and Perea
 - Ended with the Passover of John 11:55

The Day of His Death

- Thorough biblical evidence: Friday
 - Day called "preparation" (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42)
 - Always Friday
- The 14th of Nisan, Passover
 - Sadducees & John – sunset to sunset (the 14th);
 - Pharisees & Matt., Mark, Luke – sunrise to sunrise (the 15th)

The Year of His Death

- Crucified during the governorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 AD).
- Nisan 14 only fell on Friday two years that work:
 - April 7, 30 AD
 - April 3, 33 AD

A Summary Timeline of the Life of Christ

- 6-5 BC – Birth of Christ
- 4 BC – Death of Herod the Great
- 26 AD
 - Spring – beginning of John's ministry
 - Summer – baptism of Jesus
 - Fall – temptation
- 27 AD
 - Winter – end of John's ministry/beginning of Christ's
 - Spring – 1st Passover of His Public Ministry
- 28 AD
 - Winter – 12 Disciples Called
 - Summer – Galilean Ministry Commences
 - Fall – 1st public rejection; parabolic ministry begins
- 29 AD
 - Winter – Final Galilean Campaign
 - Fall – Later Judean Ministry
- 30 AD
 - Winter – Ministry in and around Perea
 - April – Passion Week
 - April 7 – Crucifixion
 - April 9 – Resurrection
 - May – Ascension (40 days after resurrection; Acts 1:3)
 - May – Pentecost (50 days after Feast of Passover)

A Special Introduction to the Gospels

“The Gospel according to...”

- English *gospel*
 - From Anglo-Saxon
 - *Godspell*
 - means “a good story”
 - Translated from Greek *euangelion*
 - Means “a good message or good news”
 - Secular Greek, a report about an important event
- Four gospels are reports of the most important event in all of human history
- The gospel is the announcement that God has made to men of the pardon of sin, the restoration to His favor, the renovation of their nature, and eternal life, all received freely by grace alone, through faith alone, based on the Person and work of Jesus Christ alone.

Why Four Gospel Writers?

- 1) No one account can adequately exhaust the life and character of Jesus Christ.
 - John 21:25 - there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.
- 2) Each account of the life and death of Jesus was written with a particular audience and purpose in mind.
 - Each writer chose the deeds and words of Christ that would best communicate his main objective.

Matthew



Matthew - Authorship

- Papias (70-150 AD) said that Matthew wrote his oracles in the Aramaic dialect, and that every man interpreted them as he was able.
- Irenaeus (140-203 AD) indicated that Matthew wrote his gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome.
- Origen (c. 185-250 AD) acknowledged that tradition taught that Matthew wrote the first Gospel.
- Evidence uniformly in favor of the authorship of Matthew
- No other author ever suggested.

A Biography of Matthew

- Name means “gift of God”
 - Also known as Levi.
- Before conversion was a tax collector (Matt. 10:3).
- All synoptics record his call.
 - Usually listed 7th or 8th in listing of disciples
 - In the Gospels, mentioned only in connection with his call, and his inclusion with the twelve.
- Last mentioned in N.T. in the upper room in Acts 1:13
- Tradition gives many conflicting details about subsequent life and ministry.
 - E.g., he ministered in Judea—in India—in Parthia.
 - Nothing definite known about life or death.

Matthew - Date

- Before the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD)
- Before the deaths of Peter and Paul (cf. Irenaeus' statement)
- Aramaic Matthew
 - Tradition; see Papias' comment.
 - Written in Jerusalem before Matthew left to preach abroad (Eusebius).
 - If so, written about 50 AD.
- Greek Matthew
 - Written in early 60's.
 - Cf. Josephus' writings.
 - Originally in Aramaic, then translated into Greek.
 - Hypothesis: written in Syrian Antioch
 - Only the Greek remains.

Matthew - Audience

- The Jewish People
- Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius all testify that it was written for Jewish believers living in the land of Palestine.
 - Origen: "it was prepared for the converts from Judaism."
 - Eusebius: "Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other people, committed his gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence."

Matthew - Purpose

- To present Jesus as...
 - Messiah
 - King
- Or...
 - The fulfillment of the Messianic promise
 - The rightful heir of the throne of David.
- Quotes more than 60 OT prophecies to show that Christ is the fulfillment of those promises.

Mark



Mark - Authorship

- Mark's name does not appear within the book itself.
- The unanimous testimony of the early church was that Mark was the author.
 - Papias (c. 70-150 AD):
 - His evidence came directly from the Apostle John.
 - Mark was the interpreter of Peter.
 - Mark wrote down "accurately, though not in the exact order" the things that Christ did and said.
 - Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD): Mark "wrote the memoirs of Peter."
 - Irenaeus (c. 140-203 AD): Peter and Paul went to Rome to preach the gospel, and after their exodus (departure? death? cf. 2 Pet. 1:15), Mark preserved what Peter preached.
 - Clement of Alexandria (c. 155-215 AD): after Peter had preached in Rome, those who heard him asked Mark to write out the messages.
 - Tertullian (150-222 AD): simply said that Mark's gospel was Peter's.
 - Origen (c. 185-250 AD): "Mark wrote his gospel as Peter guided him."

A Biography of Mark

- John, whose surname was Mark (Acts 12:12)
- Not an official disciple; acquainted with many of the activities of the life of Christ (cf. Mk. 14:51-52)
- Possibly led to Christ by Peter, who calls him "my son" (1 Peter. 5:13)
- A cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10)
- His childhood home, a center of church activity in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12)
- Accompanied Paul and Barnabas on 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:5)
- Quickly returned home (Acts 13:13)

A Biography of Mark

- On 2nd Missionary Journey Barnabas determined to take him again.
- Led to a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41)
- Apparently there was reconciliation between Paul and Mark
 - Colossians (4:10)
 - Philemon (v. 24)
- Possibly remained in Rome after Paul left, and joined with Peter when he arrived (1 Pet. 5:13; if "Babylon" means Rome).
- Last mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:11:
 - Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

Mark - Date

- Uncertain
- Before 70 AD (cf. 13:2)
- Probably in the 50's AD.



Mark - Audience

- Romans
 - More Latin expressions instead of Greek ones (5:9; 6:27; 12:15, 42; 15:16, 39)
 - Translates Aramaic expressions (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22, 34)
 - Omits Jewish elements and makes fewer references to the OT
 - Uses the Roman system of time (6:48; 13:35)
 - At the crucifixion, identifies Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus, possibly for the benefit of Roman Christians (cf. Rom. 16:13)
 - Explains things no Jew would need explained (15:42; 13:3)
 - Key word is "immediately" (41x); more than the other gospels combined

Mark - Purpose

- Key Verse: 10:45 – "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."
- Jesus is presented to the Romans as
 - the Servant of the Lord
 - the Son of God (1:1)
- D. Edmond Hiebert: "What He did proved who He was. What He wrought authenticated what He taught."
- As "the Servant of the Lord" suffered, so the Roman Christians, the slaves of Christ who received this gospel, could find comfort in their suffering.

Luke



Luke - Authorship

- External evidence
 - Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) Quotes from Luke 22:44 and 23:46
 - Muratorian fragment (c. 160-200)
 - Represents the views of those at Rome.
 - "The third book of the Gospels Luke compiled in his own name."
 - Tatian's Diatessaron (c. 170) an early harmony of the Gospels, included Luke.
 - Irenaeus (140-203 AD):
 - "Luke put down in his book the Gospel which Paul preached."
 - Irenaeus quotes from nearly every chapter of the Gospel of Luke.
 - Tertullian of Carthage (c. 150-222):
 - Matthew and John were written by apostles and that the other two Gospels were written by companions of the apostles.
 - The reading of the Gospel of Luke was an established practice in the churches.
 - Origen (c. 185-250 AD): "The third [gospel] according to Luke was written for the converts from the Gentiles."
- The testimony of the early church was unanimous in assigning the third Gospel to Luke.

Luke - Authorship

- Internal Evidence
 - The "we" sections in Acts (16:10-17; 20:5--21:18; 27:1--28:16)
 - The author was one of Paul's traveling companions on his journeys.
 - The rest of the book was written by the writer of the "we" sections--same vocabulary and style.
 - The final "we" section includes Paul's imprisonment in Rome (ch. 28).
 - From Rome Paul wrote Philemon and Colossians.
 - Luke is mentioned in both these letters as a current companion (Philemon 23-24; Col. 4:10-17).
 - In fact, all of Paul's traveling companions can be ruled out except Luke and Titus.
 - There is no internal or external evidence for Titus but there is strong evidence for Luke.
 - The writer of Acts and the third gospel are the same.
 - The testimony of the early church was unanimous in assigning the third gospel to Luke.
 - The medical language of Luke/Acts may confirm that Luke was the writer (cf., Col. 4:14).

A Biography of Luke

- "Luke" (Gr., *Loukas*) is probably an abbreviation of *Loukanos*.
- Only appears by name in the text of the NT 3x: Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24
- A Gentile
 - In Colossians 4:11-14 Paul contrasts Luke, Epaphras, and Demas with those who are "from the circumcision" (i.e., Jews).
 - Only gentile author of Scripture (except Dan. 4)
- Well-educated in Greek culture and language
- Most believe his hometown was Syrian Antioch.
- Luke joined Paul in Troas on his second missionary journey and stayed in Philippi until Paul came through on his third journey.
- Once reunited, Luke and Paul seem almost inseparable.

A Biography of Luke

- A physician by profession (Col. 4:14)
- Three educational centers in the first century:
 - Athens, Alexandria, and Tarsus
 - Possible Luke and Paul met while Luke was attending university there
- In 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul identifies Luke as his only companion during his second imprisonment
- A Latin writer claims that Luke never married and died at the age of 74.

Luke - Date

- 60-61 AD
- Possibly researched during the 2 years in Caesarea (57-59 AD)
- Written during Paul's 1st imprisonment (60-62 AD)



Luke - Audience

- Luke consistently brings out the wider implications of the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.
 - Angel's message is to all men (2:10-14).
 - Simeon foretells that Christ is to be a light for the Gentiles (2:32).
 - "All flesh" is to see the salvation of God (3:4-6).
 - The Great Commission is directed to all nations (24:47).

Luke - Audience

- Special interest in social outcasts
 - Immoral woman (7:36ff)
 - Transformation of Zaccheus (19:1ff)
 - Repentance of the robber (23:39ff)
 - Prodigal son (16)
 - The publican (18)
 - Samaritans are put on same level with the Jews (9:54; 10:33; 17:16).

Luke - Audience

- Elevates the role of the woman.
- Women mentioned 43x (only 49 times in Matthew and Mark combined)
 - Exciting experience of Elizabeth.
 - Christ's birth told from Mary's point of view (cf. Matthew, Joseph's).
 - Prophetess Anna (2:36-38)
 - Widow of Nain (7:11-18)
 - Hunchbacked woman healed in synagogue (13:10)
 - Women figure prominently at birth and resurrection narratives

Luke - Audience

- Target audience
 - Gentile
 - Greek
 - Men & Women
 - All Socio-economic groups



Luke - Purpose

- Luke 1:1-4
- Luke's purpose is to highlight the perfect humanity of Christ.
 - Genealogy
 - Matthew to Abraham
 - Luke to Adam
 - More information on birth, infancy, and normal human development than the other Gospels (cf. 2:21-52).
- Luke presents Christ as the perfect man.

John



John vs. the Synoptics

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • The Synoptics | • The Gospel Of John |
| – A presentation of Jesus | – An interpretation of Jesus |
| – Focus on Jesus outwardly | – Focuses on Jesus inwardly |
| – Emphasizes humanity | – Emphasizes deity |
| – Begins with the human genealogy | – Begins with the divine relationship |
| – Primarily public discourses | – Primarily private discourses |
| – Focus on the Galilean ministry | – Focus on the Judean ministry |

John - Authorship

- External evidence
 - Universally accepted by the entire church.
 - Eusebius (c. 325): "His Gospel must be acknowledged as genuine... The writings of John have been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times."
 - Irenaeus (140-203 AD) explicitly names John as the author of the book.
 - He informs us that John lived in the region of Ephesus until the time of Trajan (98-117).
 - He had known Polycarp and "insisted" he could recall the teachings of Polycarp.
 - Polycarp had been a Christian for 86 years when he was martyred in 155.
 - Polycarp frequently reminisced about his conversations with the apostle John and others who had actually seen the Lord.
 - Theophilus of Antioch (c. 180) quotes John 1:1 as belonging to the writings of the apostle John.
 - Tertullian (c. 150-222) specifically ascribes the fourth gospel to John.

John - Authorship

- Internal evidence
- This evidence was first presented by B.F. Westcott, and is followed by most writers after his day...
 - The author was Jewish.
 - The author was a Palestinian Jew.
 - The author was an eyewitness
 - e.g., Malchus, the high priest's servant who lost his ear
 - The author was an apostle.
 - The author was a member of the inner circle.
 - In the Synoptics, the inner circle is Peter, James, and John.
 - But in John, John is never mentioned by name.
 - But in John 21:20, 24, the disciple whom Jesus loved and who was next to Christ at the Last Supper, is the one who wrote.
 - The author was the apostle John.

A Biography of John

- Father - Zebedee, apparently well-off since he had hired servants (Mk. 1:20).
- Mother - Salome.
 - On basis of John 19:25 cf. Mt. 27:56; 27:61 and Mk. 15:40, 47, most agree she was the sister of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.
 - James and John the cousins of Jesus.
- By trade he was a fisherman.
- Was an early follower of John the Baptist and was pointed by John to Jesus (John 1:19-51).
- Chosen as one of the twelve by Christ.
- One of the inner circle by Christ (Peter, James and John).
- He (the youngest disciple) and Peter (the oldest disciple) prepared the last Passover.
- Banished to Patmos (Rev. 1:9).
- According to tradition, he later returned to Ephesus, where he spent the rest of his life.
- Died around the end of the first century.

John - Date

- No evidence to determine the exact date.
- Eusebius said that John wrote after the other Gospels had been completed.
 - This would put the book after 70 A.D.
- Irenaeus related that John lived until the times of Trajan (98-117).
 - Tradition indicates that John wrote the gospel in his old age.
 - This would put the writing no later than the first days of Trajan.
 - This leaves the date from 70-98 AD.
- Approximate date: 90-95 AD

John - Audience

- The entire world



John - Purpose

- Written at the request of the Ephesian elders
- Written to preserve unique stories from the life of Christ.
 - Matthew has approximately 35% unique material.
 - Mark has about 7% unique material.
 - Luke has about 50% unique material.
 - John has about 93% unique material.
 - Prior to the Passion Week, only two incidents are mentioned that are given in the synoptics: the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the water.
 - John includes no more than 20 days from the entire life of Christ.
 - Seven chapters (13-19) are given to one 24 hour period.

John - Purpose

- **John 20:30-31**
 - Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

The Gospel

- Matthew
 - To Jewish believers
 - Jesus as Messiah & King
- Mark
 - To Romans and other Gentiles
 - Jesus as Servant
- Luke
 - To Greeks & other Gentiles
 - Jesus as Perfect Man
- John
 - To entire world
 - Jesus as the unique Son of God