

Life of Christ Survey of the Gospels

I. Defined

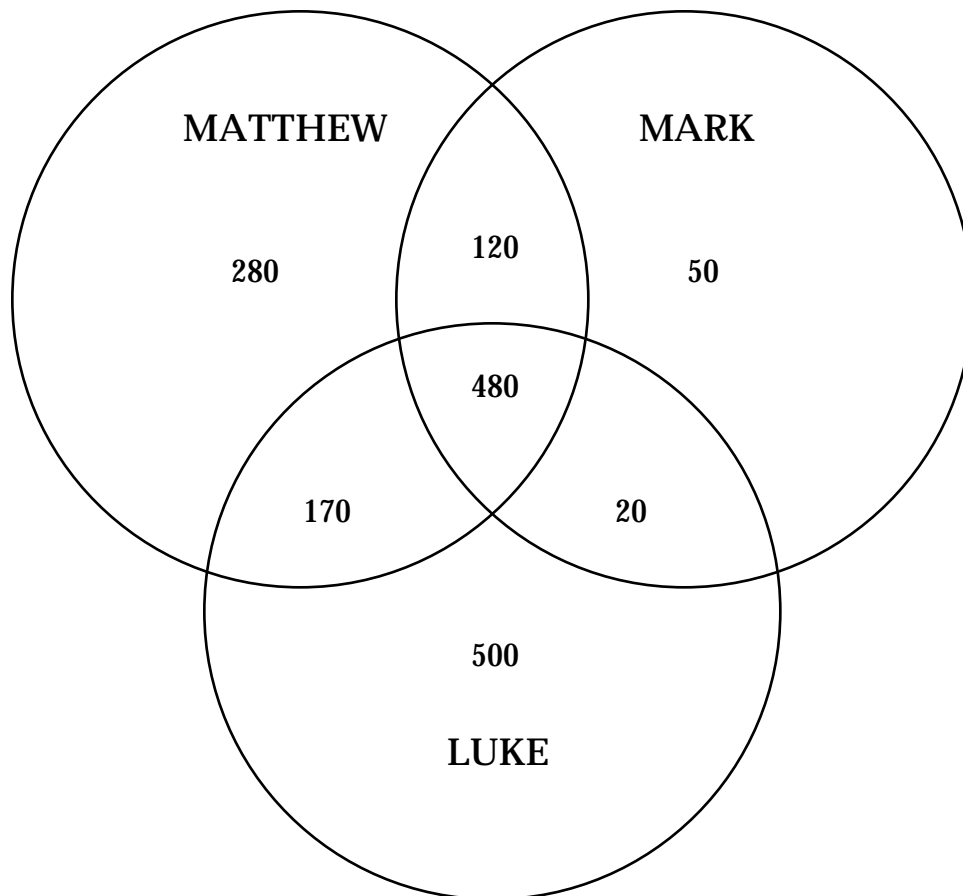
Matthew, Mark, and Luke appear very similar in subject matter and overall outline.
John is markedly different.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke - Baptism, Galilean Ministry, Last Judean Ministry
John - Baptism, last six months ministry

Mark - 93% agreement with Matthew and Luke.
John - 92% difference with Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

The Synoptic Problem - How can Matthew, Mark, and Luke be so similar, yet so different?

Verse Comparison of Synoptic Gospels



II. Possible Solutions

- A. A common original - one of the gospels was an original and was copied by the others.
- B. Many fragments - many fragments were edited to produce the gospels.
- C. Mutual dependence - two of the gospels used the third as a basis for their chronology.
- D. Two document - Mark and "Q" were used to produce the gospels.
 - based on an evolutionary concept.
 - where did Matthew and Luke get their extra material?
- E. Four Document - Mark, "Q", "L", and "M".
- F. Form Critical - reduces the gospel writers to mere editors of existent material.
- G. Oral Tradition - the message of the gospels was passed on orally at first (Acts 10:37-39), and then written down by the gospel writers.

III. A Balanced Solution

- A. The writers were early witnesses - they did not need to depend on others for their viewpoints.
 - Matthew was an original eyewitness.
 - Mark received his material from Peter, an eyewitness.
 - Luke collected data from eyewitnesses.
- B. The writers probably followed an oral tradition.
- C. The writers may have used short, written accounts.
- D. The writers were verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Gospel of Matthew

I. Attestation and Authorship

- Matthew is quoted by many church fathers and heretics.
- Written by Levi=Matthew, the son of Alphaeus.

II. Occasion and Date

- Produced in response to the need to have a written history of Christ.
- Written approximately A.D. 37-50.

III. Purpose and Plan

- To present Christ as the King of the Jews.

IV. Points and Peculiarities.

1. Matthew is Jewish.
2. Chapters 1-4, 14-28 chronological, 5-13 topical.
3. "Righteous" and "righteousness" occur more in Matthew than all the other synoptics combined.
4. Only gospel in which the word "church" occurs.
5. Six great addresses.
 - Sermon on the Mount - Matthew 5-7
 - Address to the Twelve - Matthew 10
 - Parables of the Kingdom - Matthew 13
 - Discourse on the Childlikeness of the Believer - Matthew 18
 - Denunciation of the Pharisees - Matthew 23
 - Olivet Discourse - Matthew 24-26
6. 15 parables, 20 miracles of which 10 parables and 3 miracles are peculiar to Matthew.
7. Matthew shows an interest in the Gentiles.
8. Records Judas' "repentance."

The Gospel of Mark

I. Attestation and Authorship

- Papias affirmed the authorship of Mark as being John-Mark.
- Ancient church uniformly attest to the Gospel of Mark.
- Irenaus affirms the authorship of Mark with the help of Peter.
- Mark is very detailed.

II. Occasion and Date

- Peter wanted to give a gospel to the Roman people, hence Mark writes the gospel with Peter's help.
- Written approximately A.D. 67-68.

III. Purpose and Plan

- Present Christ as the Servant - Mark 10:45.
- 5/16 chapters refer to Christ's last week.

IV. Points and Peculiarities

1. Jesus is presented as the Servant of Jehovah.
2. Mark is a gospel of deeds.
3. No genealogy - servants need to know no heritage.
4. Emphasis on teaching.
5. Peter is mentioned by name many times.
6. Great detail in it's incidents although it is the shortest gospel.
7. Quotes from the Old Testament only once.
8. Records 19 miracles, 5 parables of which 2 miracles and 2 parables are unique to Mark.
9. Order of events are chronological.

The Gospel of Luke

I. Attestation and Authorship

- There is a completely uniform agreement by church fathers that Luke is the author.
- Internal evidence points to Luke:
 1. Luke wrote Acts - writer of Acts wrote Luke - hence Luke wrote Luke.
 2. Medical terminology and viewpoint.

II. Occasion and Date

- Greeks needed a gospel for them and Luke was a Greek.
- Written A.D. 58-60 during Paul's Caesarean imprisonment.

III. Purpose and Plan

- Show Christ as a Man.
- Luke contains Christ's Perean ministry (Decapolis) - Luke 9-19.

IV. Points and Peculiarities

1. Gospel of the perfect humanity of Christ.
2. More about prayer than any other gospel.
3. Makes much of praise and blessing.
4. Women and children prominent.
5. Most literary and beautiful - has the best Greek in the New Testament.
6. Use of medical terms.
7. 20 miracles and 23 parables of which 6 miracles and 18 parables are unique to Luke.
8. 9:51-18:14 have Christ's Perean ministry in the area of the Decapolis.

The Gospel of John

I. Attestation and Authorship

- From the earliest recorded time John was universally accepted as the author.
- Papias is quoted as saying "John the elder wrote it."

II. Occasion and Date

- John wrote the gospel in response to the need for a "spiritual gospel."
- Written A.D. 85-90.

III. Purpose and Plan

- Written to prove that Christ was the Son of God - John 20:30-31.
- Written to supplement the other gospels.

IV. Points and Peculiarities

1. John 20:30-31 is the key verse and gives the reason for its writing.
2. Omits birth and boyhood narrative.
3. Only gospel which reports the "early Judean" ministry.
4. John has no parables.
5. Eight recorded miracles, 6 unique.
6. Covers only 20 days of Christ's ministry (out of 3-1/2 years).
7. Characteristic words are "belief", "father", and "verily verily."
8. 60 separate titles for God are found in John.