A painting of a man with a beard and long hair, wearing a purple robe, sitting at a desk. He is looking upwards and to the right, with his right hand raised in a gesture of thought or explanation. On the desk in front of him are several rolled-up scrolls and an open book. The background is a stone wall with a window. The overall style is classical and religious.

Interpreting NT Literature



*Interpreting
the Gospels &
Acts*

Parallel OT & NT Structure

Foundation

Past

Present

Future

OT Torah

History

Wisdom

Prophecy

NT Gospels

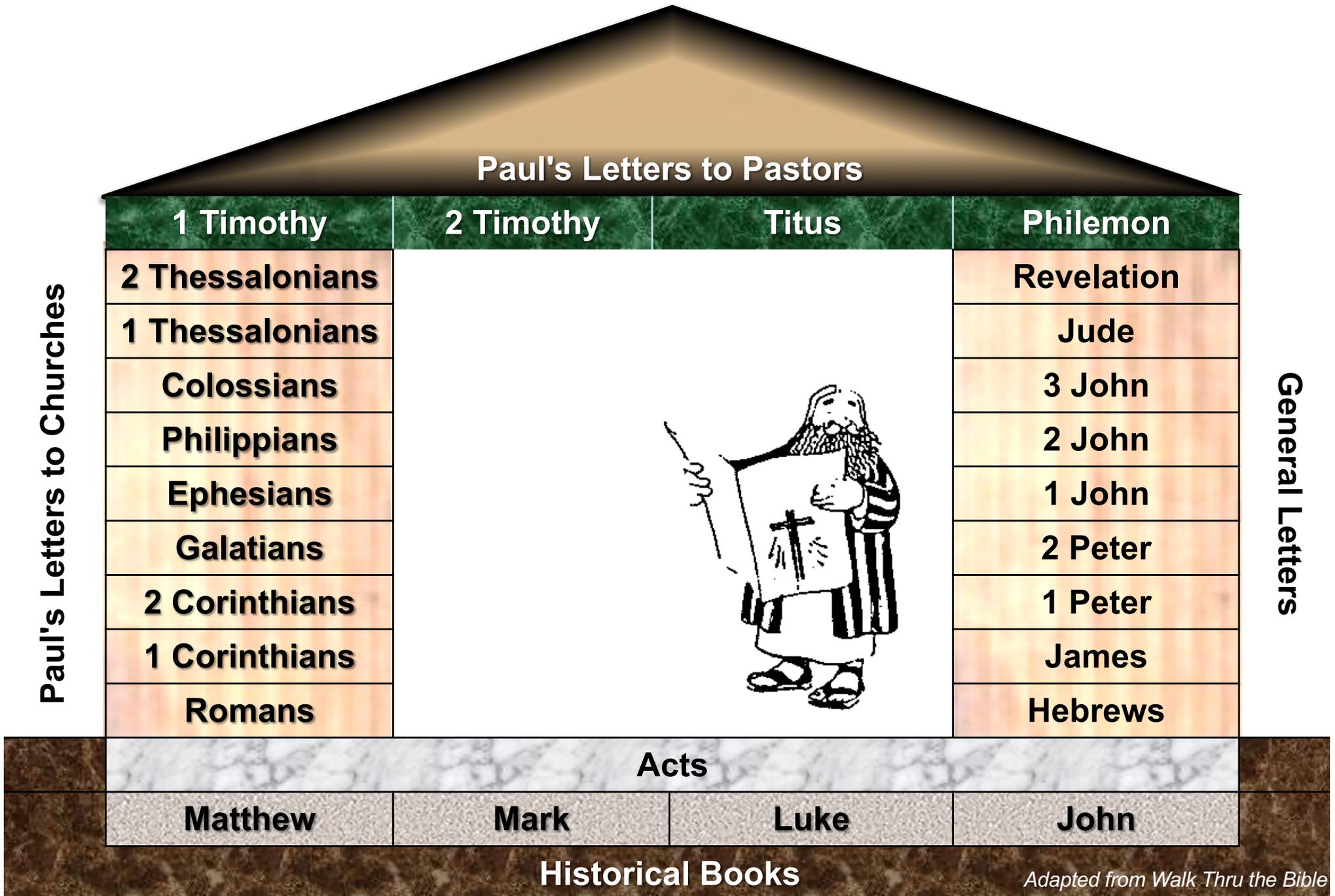
Acts

Epistles

Revelation

Erich Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlehammer, 1995), 34; cited in Gregory Goswell, "Two Testaments in Parallel: The Influence of the Old Testament on the Structuring of the New Testament Canon," *JETS* 56 (2013): 461.

The New Testament "Building"



The Gospels

Bible Visual Resource Book, 177

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

48

- The word "Gospel" comes from the Old English "God-spell." It translates the Greek word for "good news."
- In antiquity king's heralds announced "glad tidings" of the king's birthday throughout the cities of the realm.
- It has the same meaning in our New Testament. The four Gospels announce the glad tidings about Jesus.
- The ancient world knew of history, poetry, prophecy and letters. But a "gospel" was new to them.
- Here, inspired writers gave more than just history. They also created faith (John 20:30-31) by proclaiming the good news that, just as the OT had promised, God had sent His Messiah to the world.

The Synoptics

Matthew

Mark

Luke

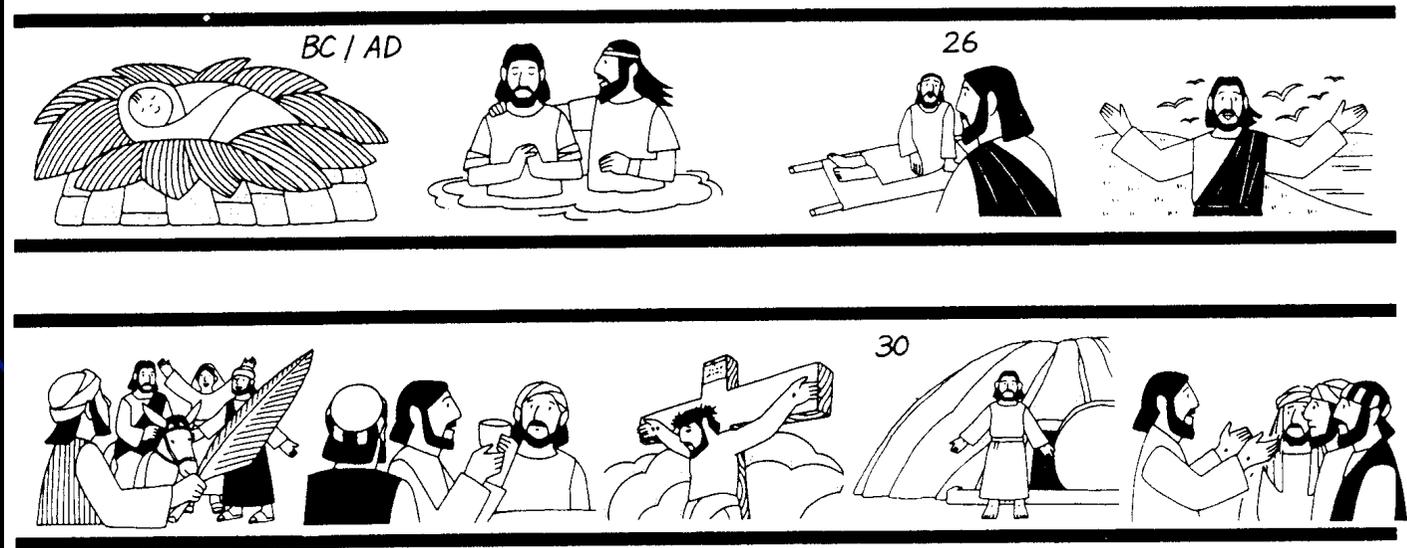
John

- Why are there four Gospels? Perhaps for the same reason different descriptions of a finely cut jewel would appeal to different people.

- These three Gospels are so much alike that they are called *Synoptic* (*syn*, "together with"; *optic*, "seeing"; thus "see together"). They all view Christ's life from an historical lens while John dwells more on the inner meaning of Jesus' life and teachings.

Matthew describes one facet of the life of Christ, *Mark* another, *Luke* a third, and *John* completes the picture.

When Events Happened





***"A FINISHED PORTRAIT
OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST"***

**AS SEEN THROUGH
FOUR DIFFERENT LENSES**

STUDY HELP #21

EACH GOSPEL WRITER HAD:

- **His specific audience**
- **His unique presentation of the person of Jesus Christ**
- **His foundational purpose for writing his Gospel**
- **His own date of writing**

FOUR INDIVIDUAL PORTRAITS...

51a

1

2

3

4

FRAMING THE GOSPELS...

1 MATTHEW

2 MARK

3 LUKE

4 JOHN

THE AUDIENCES FOR THE GOSPELS...

1 MATTHEW

TO: JEWS

2 MARK

TO: ROMANS

3 LUKE

TO: GREEKS

4 JOHN

TO: CHURCH

...PORTRAYING JESUS AS...

1 MATTHEW

TO: JEWS
AS: KING

2 MARK

TO: ROMANS
AS: SERVANT

3 LUKE

TO: GREEKS
AS: GOD/MAN

4 JOHN

TO: CHURCH
AS: GOD

THE MESSAGE IN A NUTSHELL...

1 MATTHEW

TO: JEWS

AS: KING

WHAT

HE: SAID

2 MARK

TO: ROMANS

AS: SERVANT

WHAT

HE: DID

3 LUKE

TO: GREEKS

AS: GOD/MAN

WHAT

HE: FELT

4 JOHN

TO: CHURCH

AS: GOD

WHAT

HE: MEANT

THAT STRANGE SOUNDING WORD...

1 MATTHEW 2 MARK: SYNOPTIC:

TO: JEWS TO: ROMANS

AS: KING AS: SERVANT

WHAT HE SAID HE DID

**SYNOPTIC:
"TO SEE TOGETHER"**

3 LUKE

TO: GREEKS

AS: GOD MAN

WHAT HE FELT

"TO SEE TOGETHER"

THE SYNOPTICS: "TO SEE TOGETHER"

1 MATTHEW

TO: JEWS
AS: KING
WHAT HE SAID

2 MARK

TO: ROMANS
AS: SERVANT
WHAT HE DID

3 LUKE

TO: GREEKS
AS: GOD/MAN
WHAT HE FELT

4 JOHN

AS: WHAT HE

When I Think They Were Written...

1 MATTHEW

TO: JEWS
AS: KING
WHAT HE SAID
A.D. 40s

2 MARK

TO: ROMANS
AS: SERVANT
WHAT HE SAID
A.D. 64-68

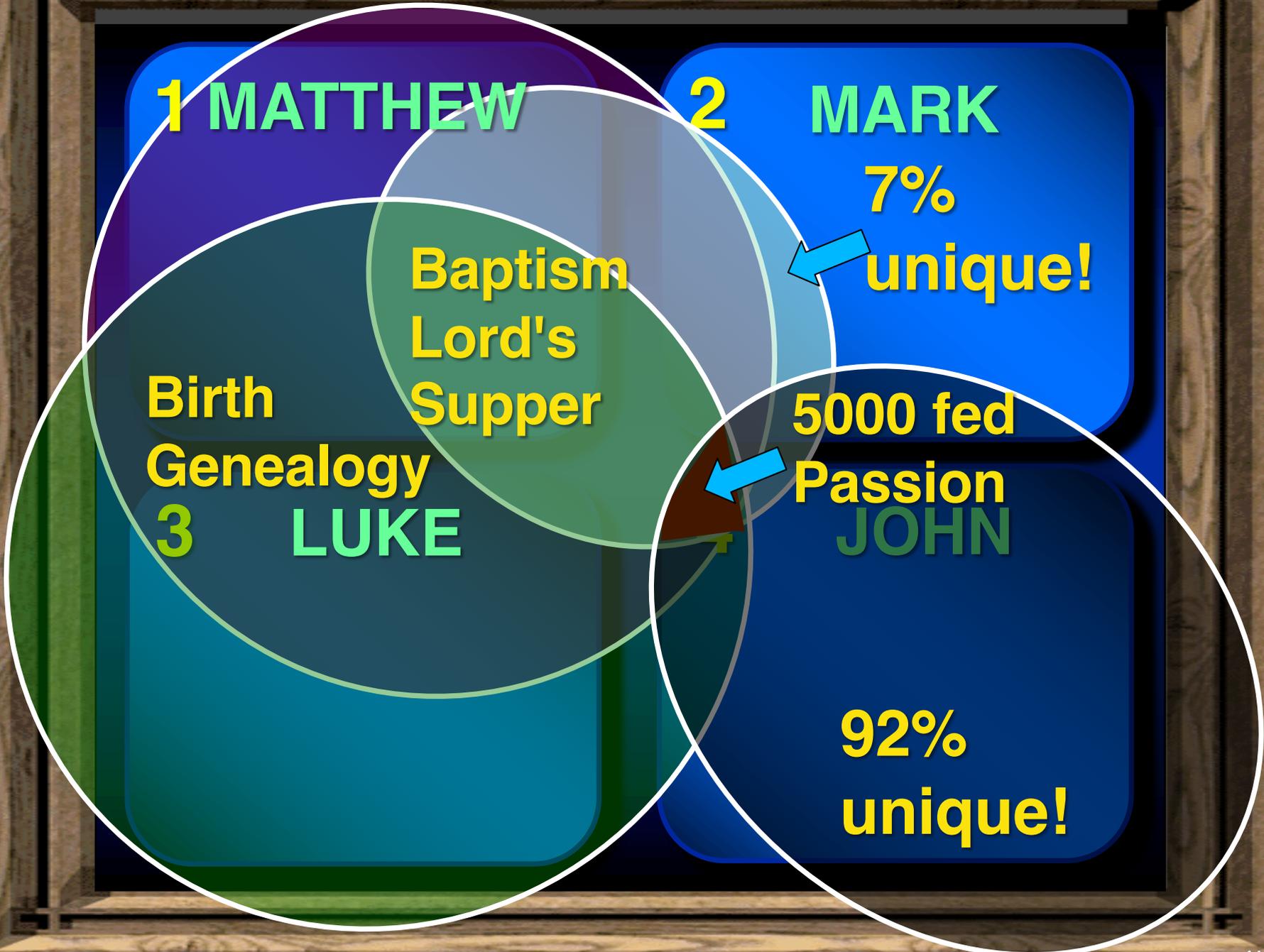
3 LUKE

TO: GREEKS
AS: GOD/MAN
WHAT HE SAID
A.D. 57-59

4 JOHN

TO: CHURCH
AS: GOD
WHAT HE SAID
A.D. 69
AFTER THE
SYNOPTICS

OVERLAPS IN THE GOSPELS



JOHN: SUMMING UP THE MESSAGE

1 MATTHEW
 TO: JEWS
 AS: KING
 WHAT HE SAID

2 MARK
 TO: ROMANS
 AS: SERVANT
 WHAT HE DID

3 LUKE
 TO: GREEKS
 AS: GODMAN
 WHAT HE FELT

4 JOHN
 TO: CHURCH
 AS: GOD
 WHAT HE MEANT



The Synoptic Problem



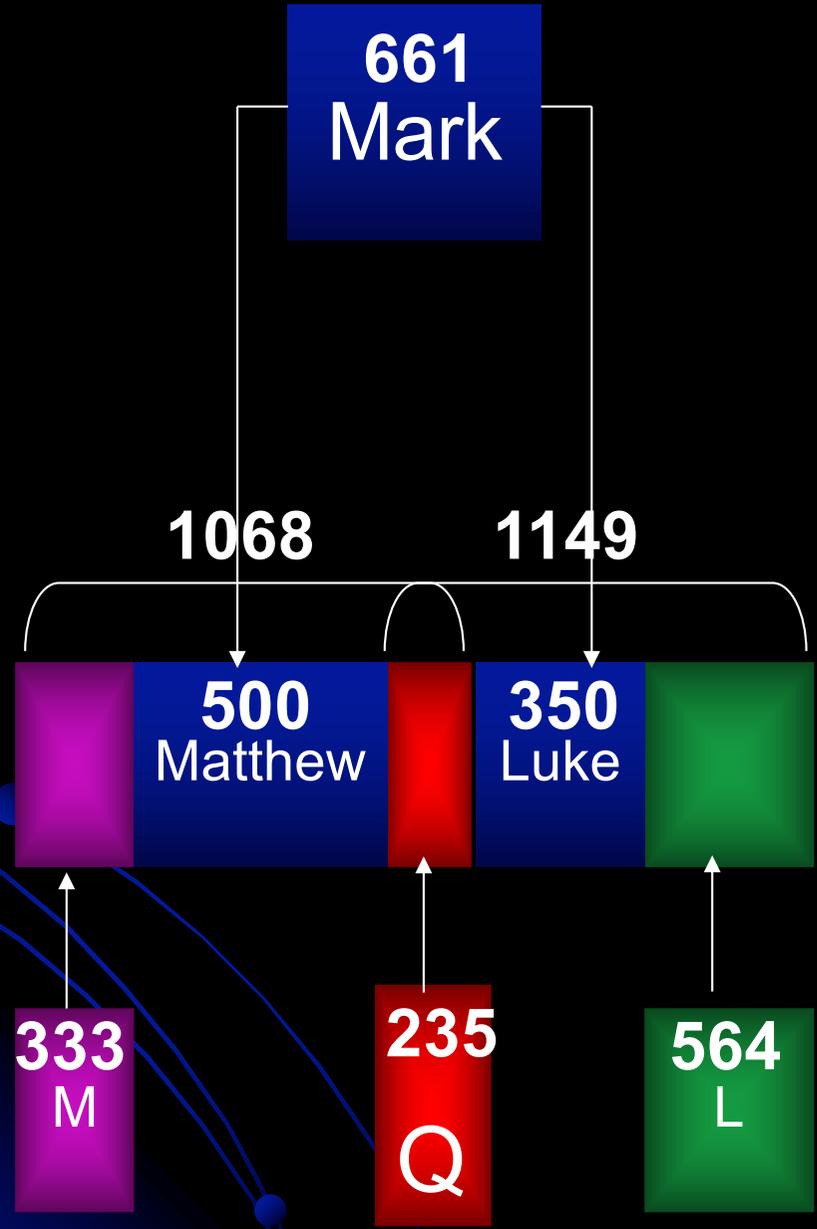
- **Matthew, Mark & Luke in a nutshell:**
 - How do we explain their **similarities**?
 - How do we explain their **differences**?

Synoptic Similarities

NIV Study Bible, 1471

- **Matthew, Mark and Luke are noticeably similar, while John is quite different.**
- **How do the first three Gospels agree?**
 - Language
 - Material they include
 - General order of the events and sayings from Christ's life
- **The math facts:**
 - 91 percent of Mark is found in Matthew
 - 53 percent of Mark is found in Luke
- **Such agreement raises questions as to the origin of the Synoptic Gospels. Did the authors rely on a common source? Were they interdependent?**

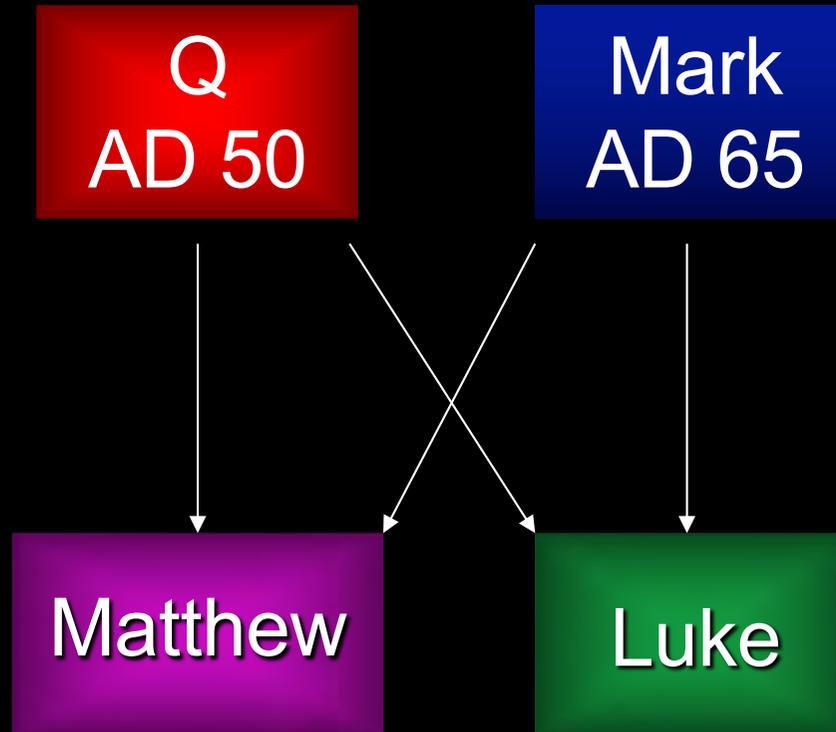
Marcan Priority Diagrammed



Numbers indicate the verses in each proposed source

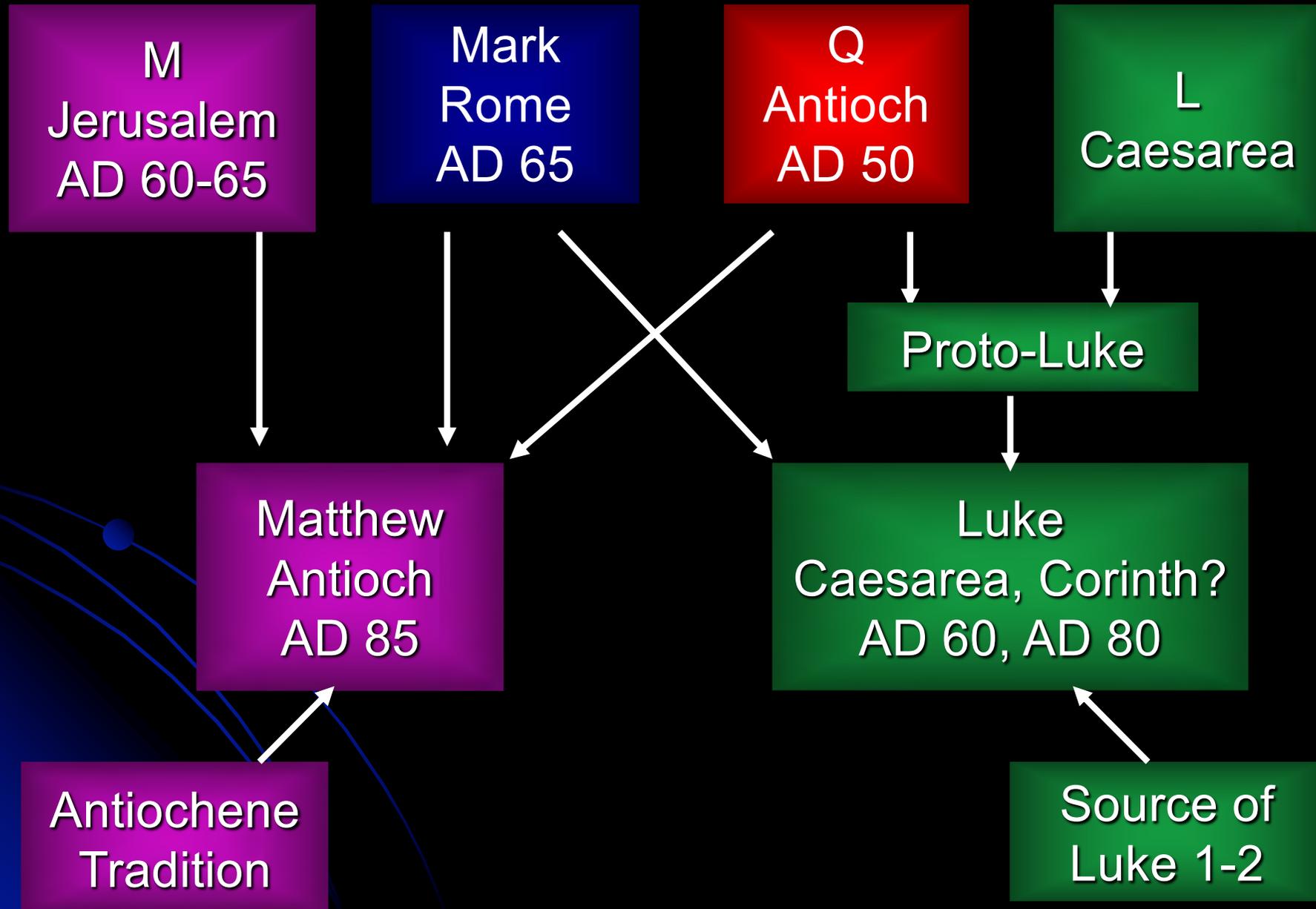
Two-Source Hypothesis

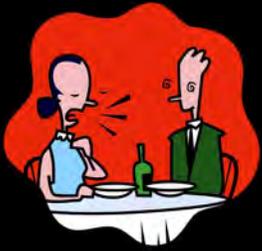
50



Four-Source Hypothesis

50





Dating the Synoptic Gospels

Adapted from the *NIV Study Bible*, 1431

MARK

MATTHEW

LUKE

MARK

MATTHEW

LUKE

ASSUMPTION A:

Matthew and Luke used
Mark as a source



View #1

Mark written in the 50s
or early 60s

- (1) Matthew written in
late 50s or the 60s
- (2) Luke written 59-63



View #2

Mark written 65-70

- (1) Matthew written in
the 70s
- (2) Luke written in the
70s

ASSUMPTION B:

Matthew and Luke did not use
Mark as a source



View #1

Mark could have been written
anytime between 50 and 70



View #2

Mark written 65-70

- (1) Matthew written early 50s (see
Matthew notes)
- (2) Luke written 59-63 (see Luke
notes)

Taught in this class

Solutions to the Synoptic Problem

Questions like these constitute what is known as the Synoptic Problem. Several solutions have been advanced:

1. *The use of oral tradition.* Some have thought that tradition had become so stereotyped that it provided a common source from which all the Gospel writers drew.
2. *The use of an early Gospel.* Some have postulated that the Synoptic authors all had access to an earlier Gospel, now lost.
3. *The use of written fragments.* Some have assumed that written fragments had been composed concerning various events from the life of Christ and that these were used by the Synoptic authors.
4. *Mutual dependence.* Some have suggested that the Synoptic writers drew from each other with the result that what they wrote was often very similar.

Solutions to the Synoptic Problem

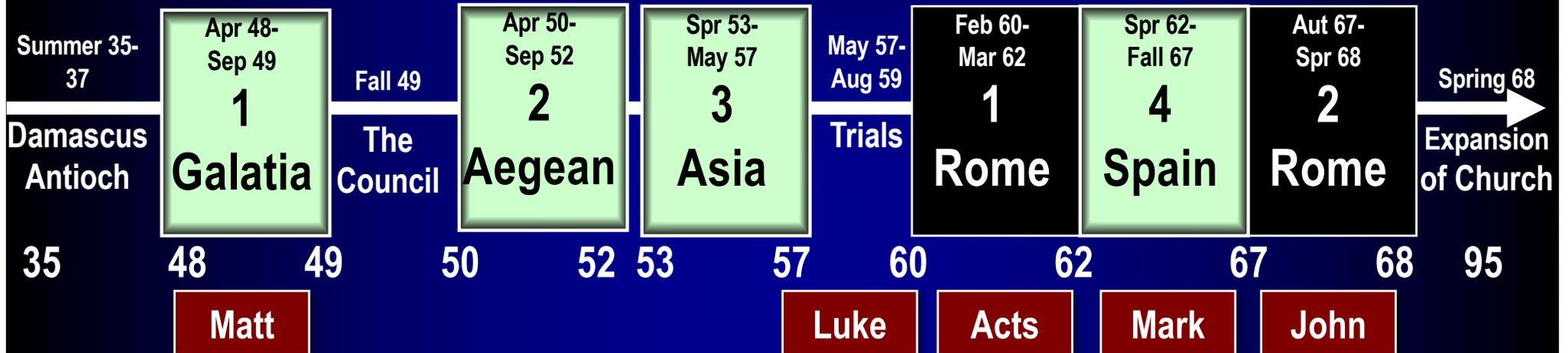
4. *The use of **two major sources**.* The most common view currently is that Mark and a hypothetical document, called *Quelle* (German for "source") or Q, were used by Matthew and Luke as sources for most of the materials included in their Gospels.
5. *The **priority and use of Matthew**.* Another view suggests that the other two Synoptics drew from Matthew as their main source.
6. *A **combination** of most of the above.* This theory assumes that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels made use of oral tradition, written fragments, mutual dependence on other Synoptic writers or on their Gospels, and the testimony of eyewitnesses.

NT Overview (History)

38
124
39-41

"To the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8)

Acts 9 13 14 15 16 18 21 27 28



Gospels & Acts

1234

Journeys

Rome

Imprisonments

Authors of the Gospels

Name	Nationality	Home Town	Occupation	Relationships	Chapters Written	Verses Written	Books Written
Matthew	Jew	Capernaum	Tax Collector	Apostle of Jesus Christ	28	1,071	Gospel of Matthew
Mark	Jew / Roman	Jerusalem	Missionary	Disciple of Peter	16	678	Gospel of Mark
Luke	Greek	Antioch	Physician	Disciple of Paul	52	2,158	Gospel of Luke Acts
John	Jew	Bethsaida or Capernaum	Fisherman	Apostle of Jesus Christ	50	1,414	Gospel of John 1 John 2 John 3 John Revelation

The Four Gospels Compared

52

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Author	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
Job before Saved	Tax Collector	None (Youth)	Medical Doctor	Fisherman
Race	Jew	Jew	Gentile	Jew
Office and / or Spiritual Gift	Apostle	Service or Pastoring	Service or Teaching	Apostle
Readers	Jews	Romans	Gentiles	World
Ethnically	Jewish	Roman	Gentile (Greek)	World
Interest	Signs (1 Cor. 1:22)		Wisdom (1 Cor. 1:22)	
Spiritually	Unbelievers	Believers	Unbelievers	Unbelievers
Primary Need:	Messiah and Kingdom Offer	Model in Suffering (exhorts discipleship)	Universality (and kingdom expansion)	Deity

The Four Gospels Compared

52

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Date Written	40s	64-68	57-59	late 60s
Place Written	Antioch or Syria	Rome	Caesarea or Rome	Ephesus
Place Sent	Palestine	Rome	To Theophilus	Asia, etc.
Jesus is...	King of Israel (Messiah)	Suffering Servant (Deity)	Ideal Man (Messiah)	Son of God (Deity)
Key Verse	21:5	10:45	19:10	20:31
Themes	Law	Power	Grace	Glory
Literary Emphasis	Sermons	Miracles	Parables	Allegories
Arrangement	Topical	Chronological	Chronological	Topical
Genealogy	Abraham to Joseph	None	Adam to Mary	None

The Four Gospels Compared

52

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Scope

**Birth to
Resurrection**

**Ministry to
Resurrection**

**Birth to
Ascension**

**Ministry to
Resurrection**

Tone

Prophetic

Pastoral

Historical

Spiritual

Christ's Words

60%

42%

50%

50%

Chapters

28

16

24

21

Verses

1068

661

1149

878

**Verses per
Chap.**

38

41

48

42

OT Quotations

53

36

25

20

OT Allusions

76

27

42

105

OT References

129

63

67

125

**Unique
Material**

42%

7%

59%

92%

Broad Division

----- **Synoptic Gospels** -----

**Supplementary
Gospel**

Subject <i>What the book says</i> <i>(Theme)</i>	+	Purpose <i>Why it says it</i> <i>(Reason)</i>	=	Message <i>Main (Big) Idea</i> <i>(Summary Statement)</i>
---	----------	--	----------	--

Matthew

- Matthew proves Jesus is the **Messiah** so that the **unbelieving Jews will trust Him**.
- Matthew also explains that the **earthly kingdom is delayed** because Israel rejected Christ as their king.
- This explanation is to convince the **believing Jews** that Christ's present kingdom authority resides in the **church**.

Message Statements for the New Testament Books

Subject	+	Purpose	=
		Message	
<i>What the book says</i>		<i>Why it says it</i>	<i>Main (Big) Idea</i>
<i>(Theme)</i>		<i>(Reason)</i>	<i>(Summary)</i>

Mark

- Mark presents in a pastoral concern selected events about Christ, the Son of God (deity) who serves as the model *Suffering Servant*, to exhort persecuted Roman believers to true *discipleship* for Christ.

Luke

- Luke presents the *sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message* from the Jewish rejection of Christ as Messiah to Gentile acceptance to confirm the faith of Gentile believers by affirming Him as *Savior of believing Gentiles* as well as Jews.

John

- John proves Jesus to be the *Son of God* (deity) made man through selected signs and discourses of Christ to convince unbelieving Gentiles to *believe* in Him and receive eternal life.

Acts

- Luke presents God's *sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message* from Jerusalem Jews to Roman Gentiles in early church history in order to prove *God as responsible* for His Church and to exhort believers to *witness everywhere*.

The New Testament Canon During the First Four Centuries 36

H. Wayne House

Acceptance of
the Four
Gospels Before
Nicaea

X= Citation
or allusion

O= Named
as authentic

Individuals **Canons** **Translations**

Pseudo-Barnabas (70-130)
Clement of Rome (95-97)
Polycarp (110-150)
Hermas (115-140)
Didache (120-150)
Papias (130-140)
Irenaeus (130-140)
Justin Martyr (150-202)
Origen (185-254)
Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386)
Marcion (140)
Muratonian (170)
Barococcio (206)
Apostolic (300)
Tatian Diatesseron (170)
Old Latin (150-170)
Old Syriac (200)

Matthew	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mark	X		X	X		O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Luke	X		X		X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
John				X		O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Gospel of
Thomas
AD 50-140

Gospel of
Judas
AD 170?

1st
Cent.

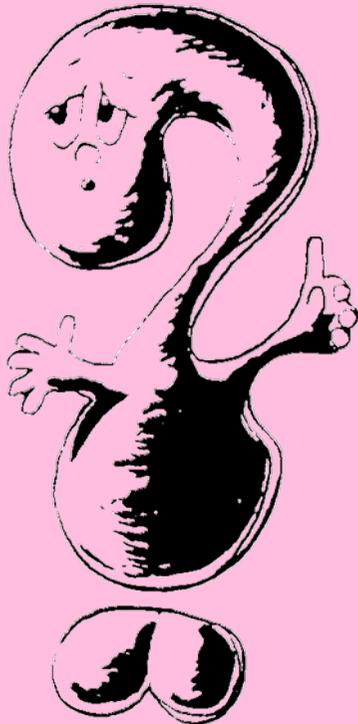
AD 325

Council of Nicaea

How Well Do You Know the Life of Christ?

53

Can you
number these
events in
chronological
order?



- 4 Guest at Wedding
- 6 Interview with Nicodemus
- 3 Enemy's 3 Temptations
- 7 Message on Mount
- 1 Birth in Bethlehem
- 5 Housecleaning the Temple (1st time)
- 10 Washing Disciples' Feet
- 8 Parables of Kingdom
- 2 Carpenter in Nazareth
- 9 Tomb of Lazarus

Reasons Mark is Seen as First

- 1. Details are most vivid**
- 2. Grammar and style roughest**
- 3. Embarrassing or misleading details**
- 4. Shortest gospel**
- 5. Little material not in Matthew or Luke**
- 6. Text order same in Matthew & Luke**
- 7. High incidence of Aramaic words**
- 8. Omits all material common to Matthew & Luke**
- 9. Consistent theology of Matthew & Luke**

Indicators that Matthew wrote the First Gospel



External Indicator #1: Testimony of Eusebius (4th cent.)

“Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition [from 2nd cent. Origen] that **the first [Gospel] was written by Matthew**, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language.”



(Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 6.25.4
quoting Origen of
the 2nd century)

External Indicator #1: Testimony of Eusebius (4th cent.)

“The second is by **Mark**, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter, who in his Catholic [i.e., General] epistle acknowledges him as a son, saying, ‘The church that is at Babylon elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus, my son.’ And the third by **Luke**, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts. Last of all that by **John**.”



(Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 6.25.4
quoting Origen of
the 2nd century)

Oxford papyrus 'is eyewitness record of the life of Christ'

By MATTHEW D'ANCONA

A PAPYRUS believed to be the oldest extant fragment of the New Testament has been found in an Oxford library. It provides the first material evidence that the Gospel according to St Matthew is an eyewitness account written by contemporaries of Christ.

In a paper to be published next month, Carsten Thiede, a German papyrologist, will claim that three scraps of Matthew belonging to Magdalen College date from the mid-first century AD. The fragments, which have been kept at the college since 1901, were thought originally to have been written in the late second century.

Not since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 has there been such a potentially important breakthrough in biblical scholarship. The new date is important evidence that Matthew was written a generation after the Crucifixion, or even earlier.

Little work has been done on the Magdalen papyrus since it was edited in 1953. Dr Thiede, who works in Paderborn, consulted the papyrus out of curiosity when his family visited Oxford in February.

Examination of the writing style led him to conclude: "The Magdalen fragment now appears to belong to a style of handwriting that was current in the first century BC and slowly petered out around the mid-first century AD. Even a hesitant approach to questions of dating would therefore seem to justify a date in the first century, about a hundred years earlier than was previously thought."

The lines on the fragments are from the 26th chapter of the gospel and therefore in-

clude the oldest surviving written reference to the treachery of Judas and to Mary Magdalene.

The publication of Dr Thiede's paper in the specialist journal *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie* is expected to provoke a fierce argument among scholars. Early opposition is being led by Peter Parsons,



Thiede and one of the gospel fragments



Det

...ing article, page 15

Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. "We are not now inclined to date things late just because they have Christian content... On the other hand, that's no reason to push things too early," he said.

Professor Parsons, a papyrologist at Christ Church, said that Dr Thiede's argument was "sloppy" and based on the misassumption that all scribes of the Jewish diaspora wrote in the same script.

London: The Times 24 Dec 94

External Indicator #2: Papyrus from about AD 50

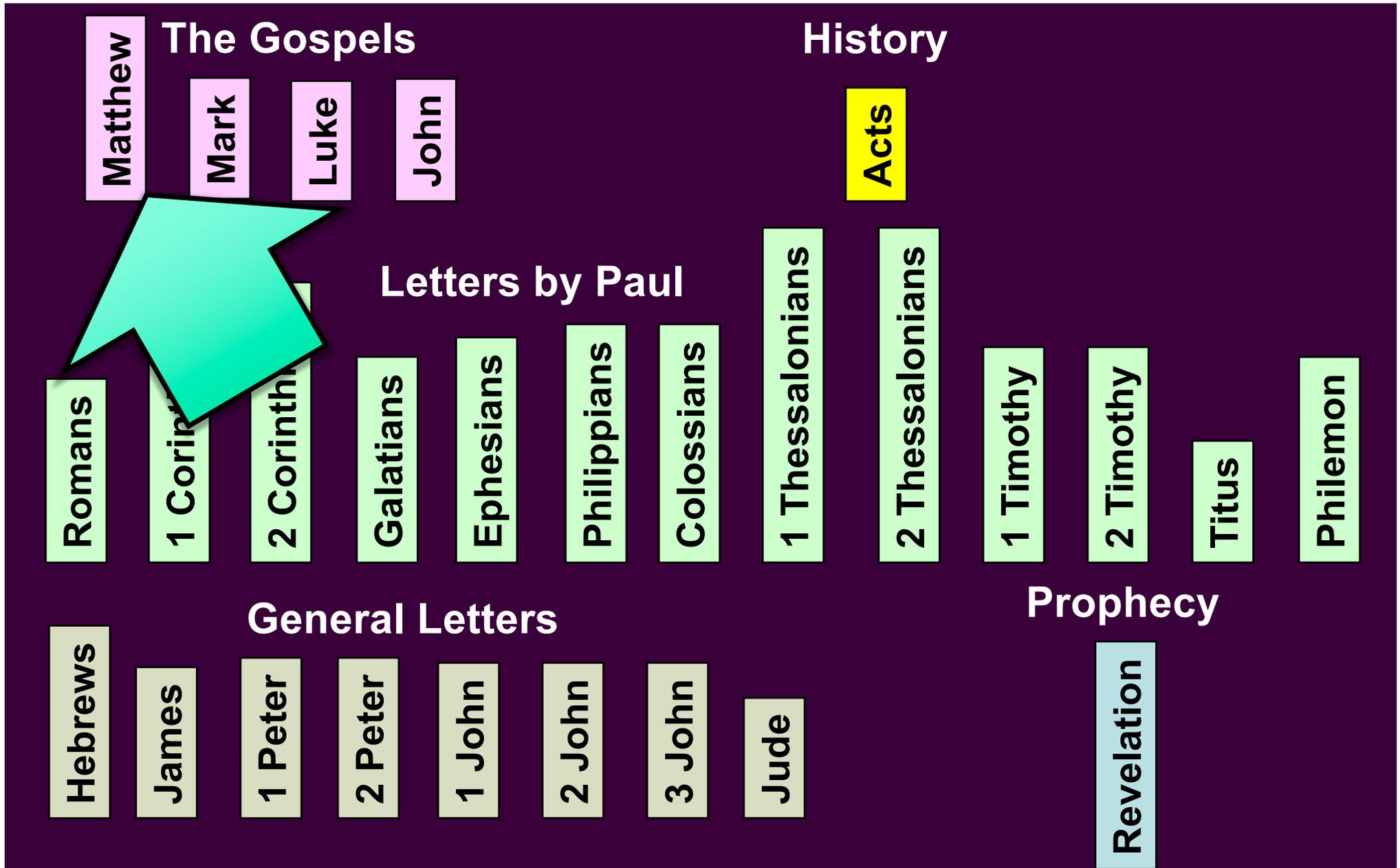


"The Magdalen fragment now appears to belong to a style of handwriting that was current in the first century BC and slowly petered out around the mid-first century AD"
(Dr. Carsten Thiede)



External Indicator #3: Placement First in the NT

78a



Internal Indicator: Matthew Wrote to Jews



Irenaeus
AD 180

Against Heresies 3.1

78a

“**Matthew** also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome [**AD 60-68**], and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure [**post AD 68**], **Mark**, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. **Luke** also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him [**no date given**]. Afterwards [**post 68**], **John**, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”

Principles to Properly Interpret the Gospels

1. Study the **background** of your text.
2. See the text in light of that author's **purpose**.
3. Don't invent **new meanings** to words ("Israel" means Israel, etc.)
4. Don't spiritualize the OT teaching on the **kingdom** (political-spiritual-national-universal)

السامري الصالح (لوقا 10)

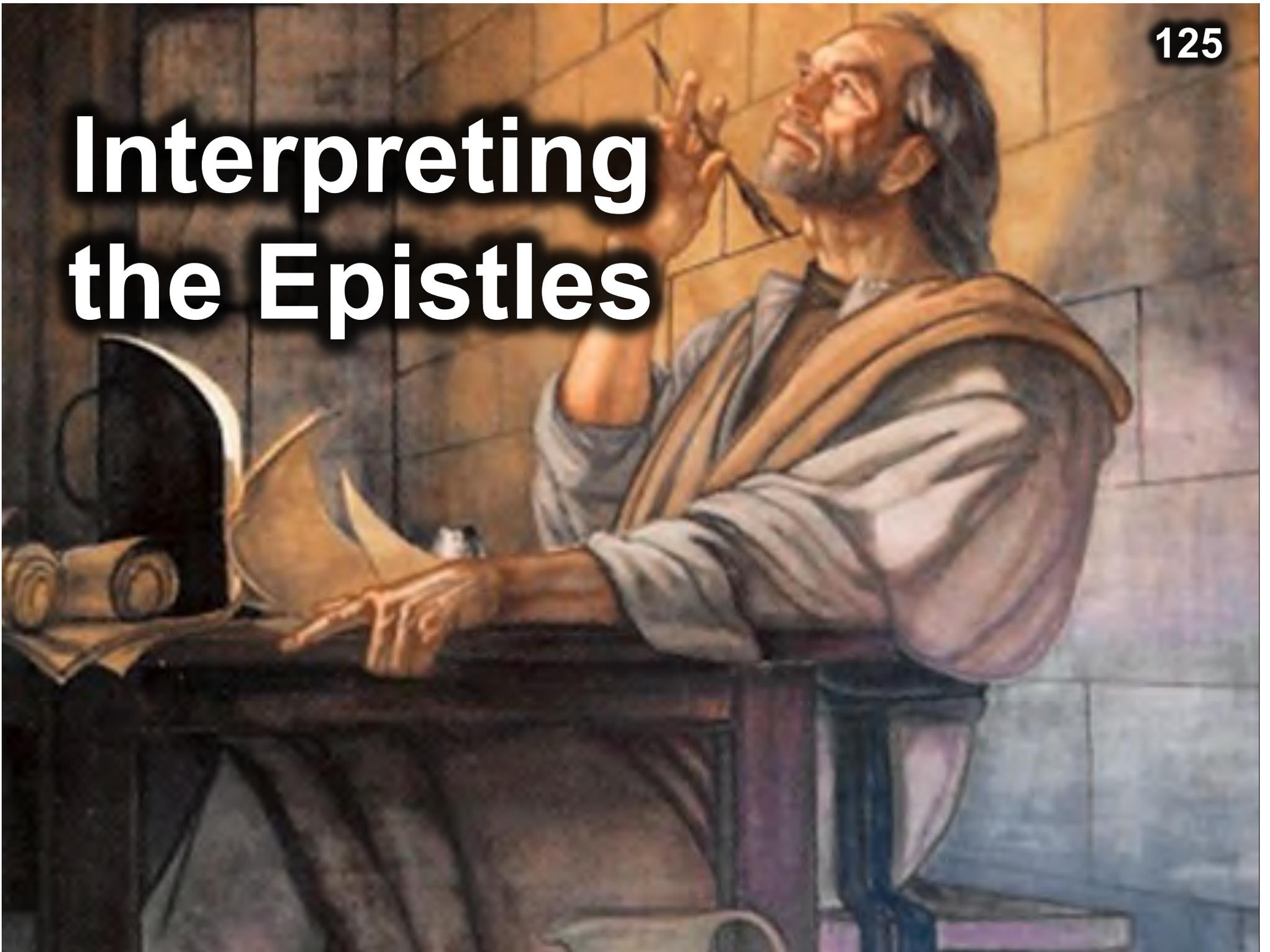
99



تفسير أوغسطينوس الرمزي لمثل السامري الصالح (لوقا ١٥)

التفسير	النص
آدم	الرجل ●
الشیطان والأرواح الشريرة	اللصوص ●
أخذوا أخلاقه	عروه ●
أوقعوه في الخطية	ضربوه ●
خدمة عهد القديم التي لم تفعل شيئاً لآدم	الكاهن واللاوي ●
يح	السامري الصالح ●
بروح متحممة	ضمد جراحة بزيت وخمر ●
الكنيسة	الفندق ●
الرسول بولس	صاحب الفندق ●

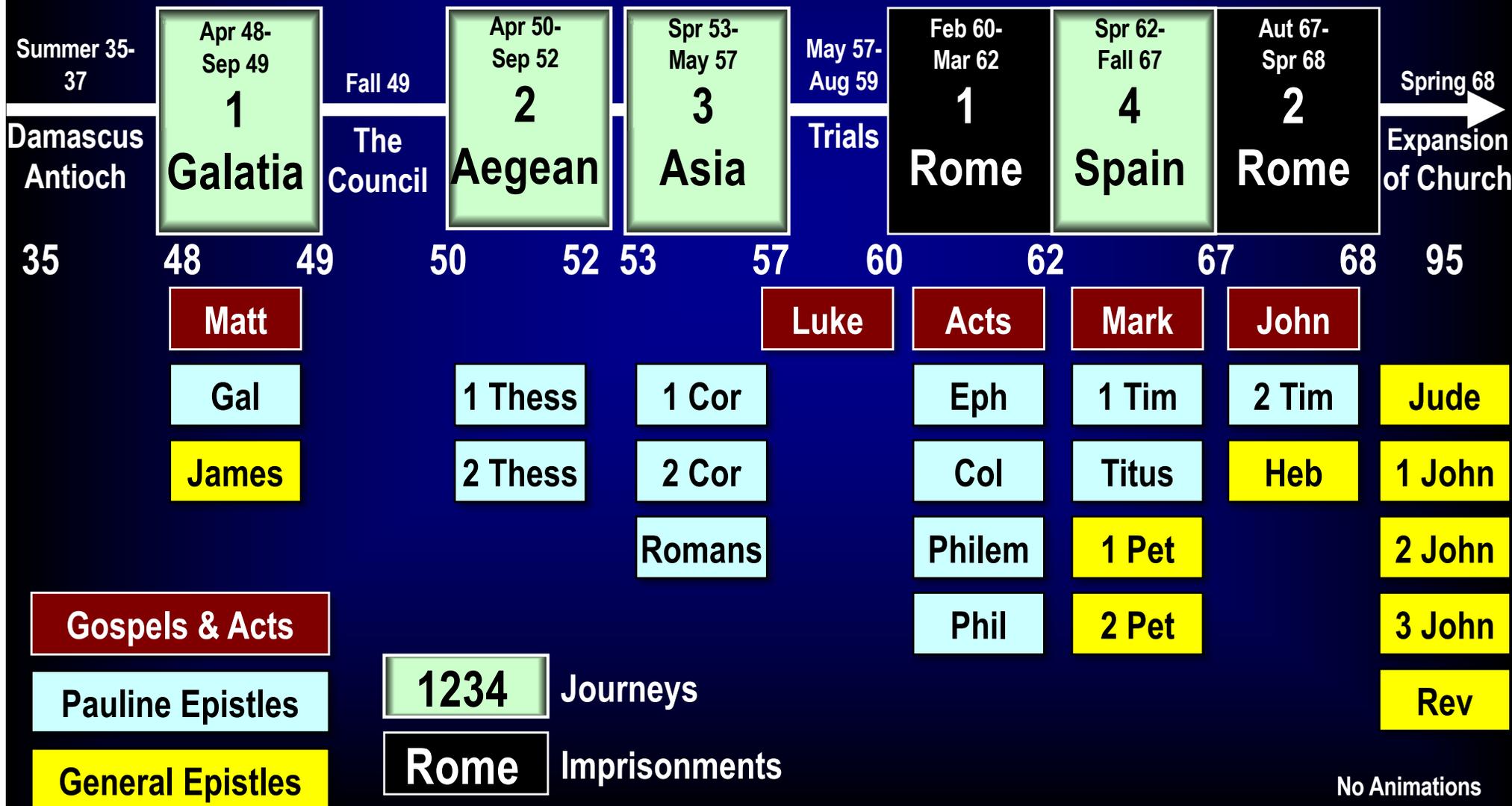
Interpreting the Epistles



NT Overview

“To the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8)

Acts 9 13 14 15 16 18 21 27 28



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