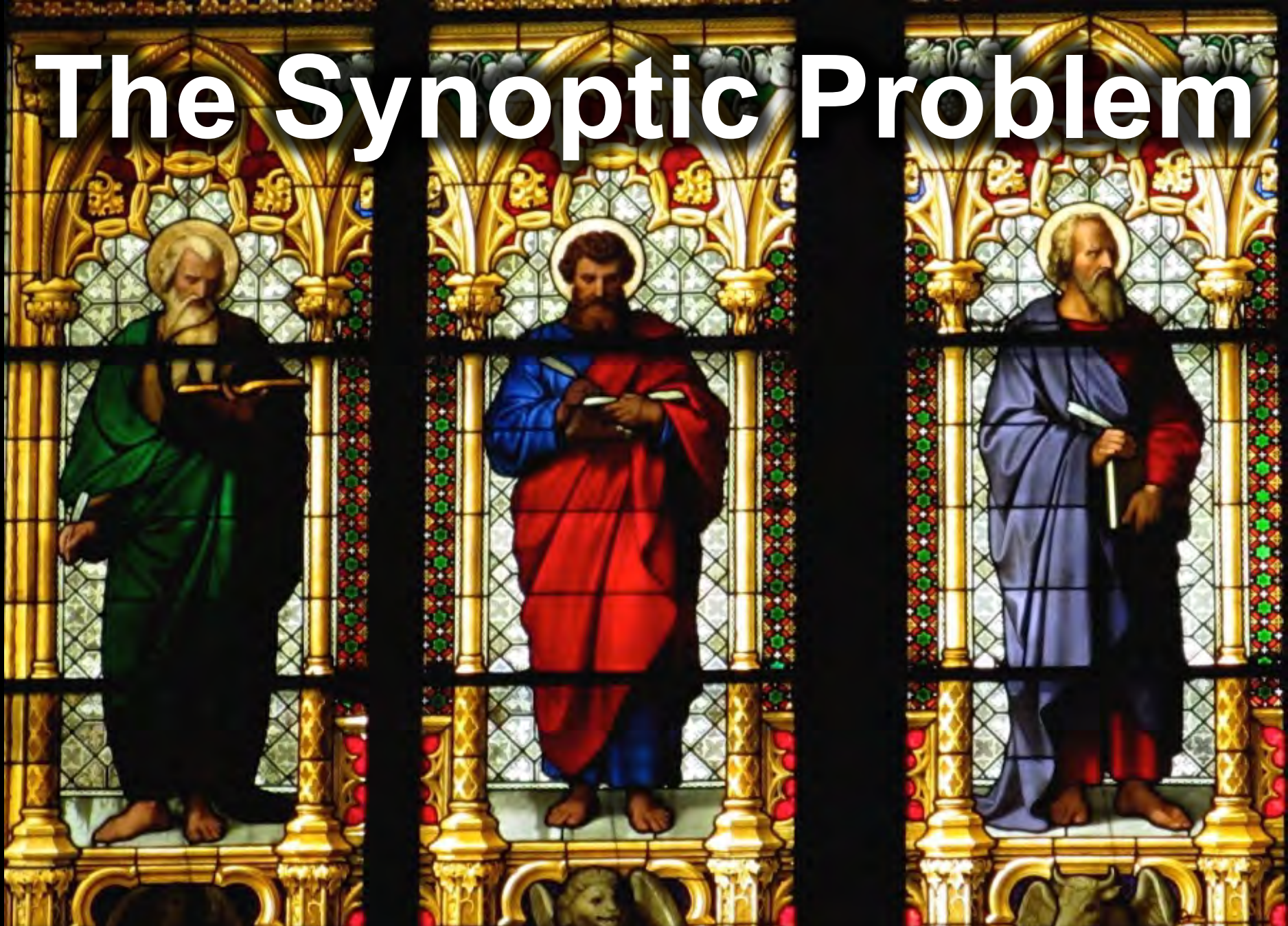


The Synoptic Problem



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BibleStudyDownloads.org

The Synoptic Problem



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

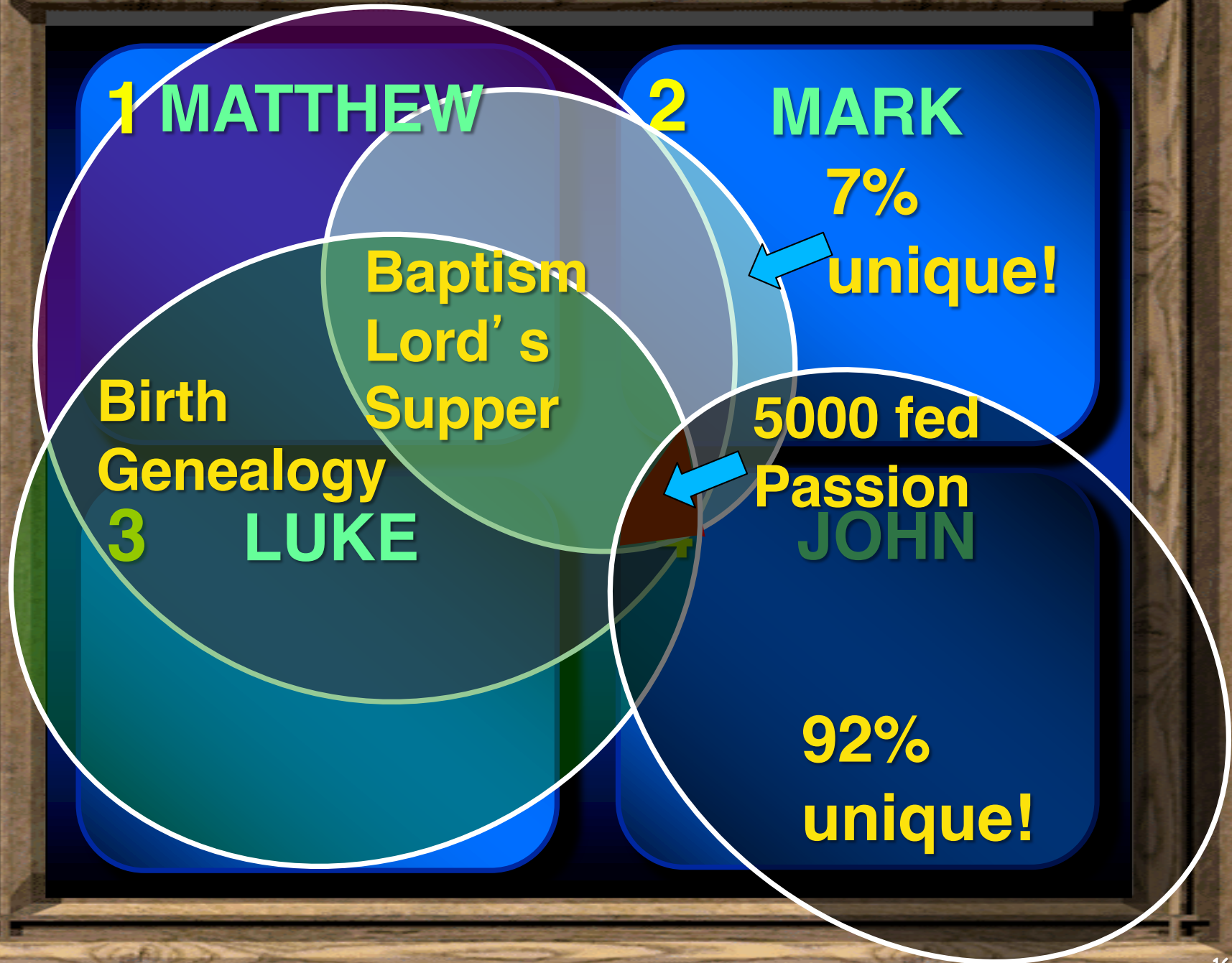
TO: GREEKS

AS: GOD/MAN

WHAT HE FELT

JOHN
Σ

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 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.

Synoptic Similarities

NIV Study Bible, 1471

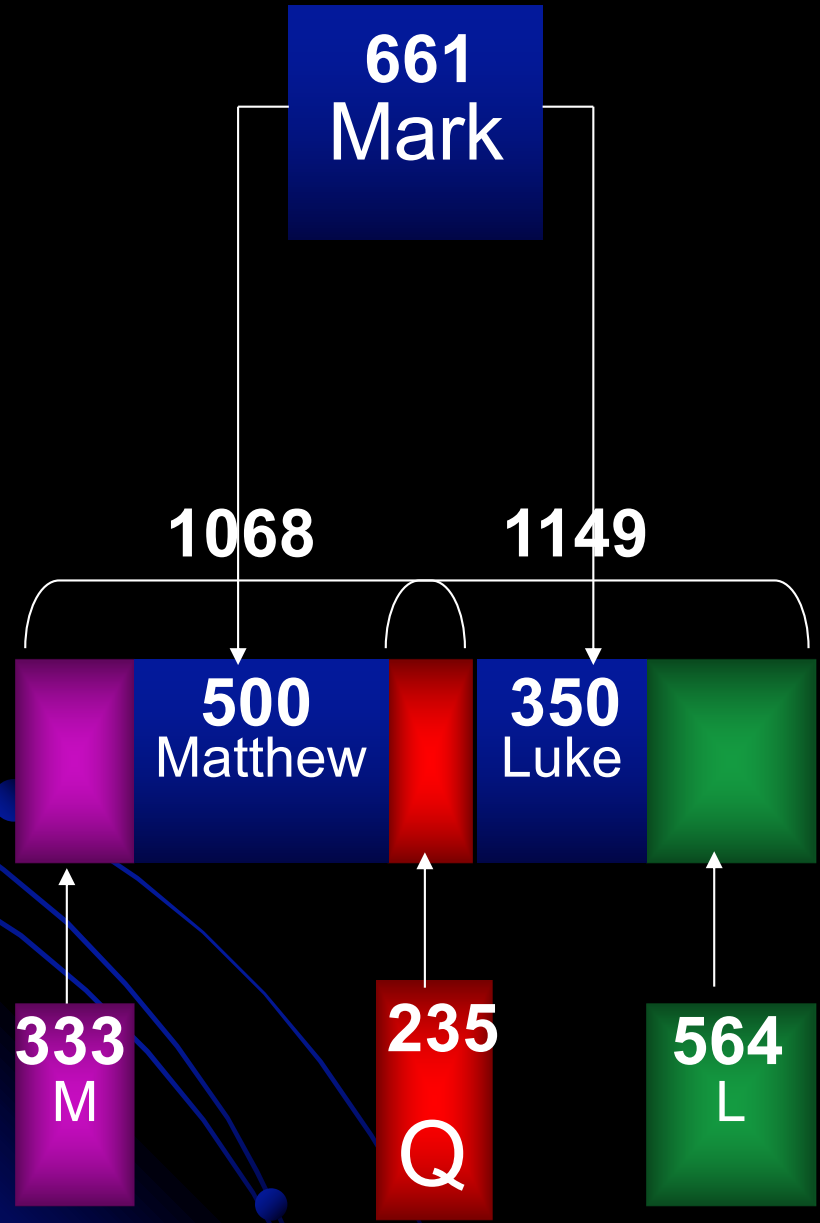
- **Matthew, Mark and Luke are noticeably similar, while John is quite different.**
- **How do the first three Gospels agree?**
 - Language
 - Material they include
 - General order of the events and sayings from Christ's life
- **The math facts:**
 - 91 percent of Mark is found in Matthew
 - 53 percent 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?**

The Synoptic Problem

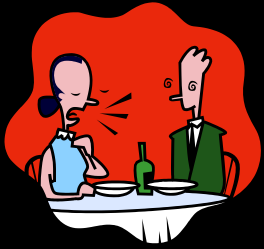


- **Matthew, Mark & Luke in a nutshell:**
 - How do we explain their **similarities**?
 - How do we explain their **differences**?

Marcan Priority Diagrammed



Numbers indicate the verses in each proposed source



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:

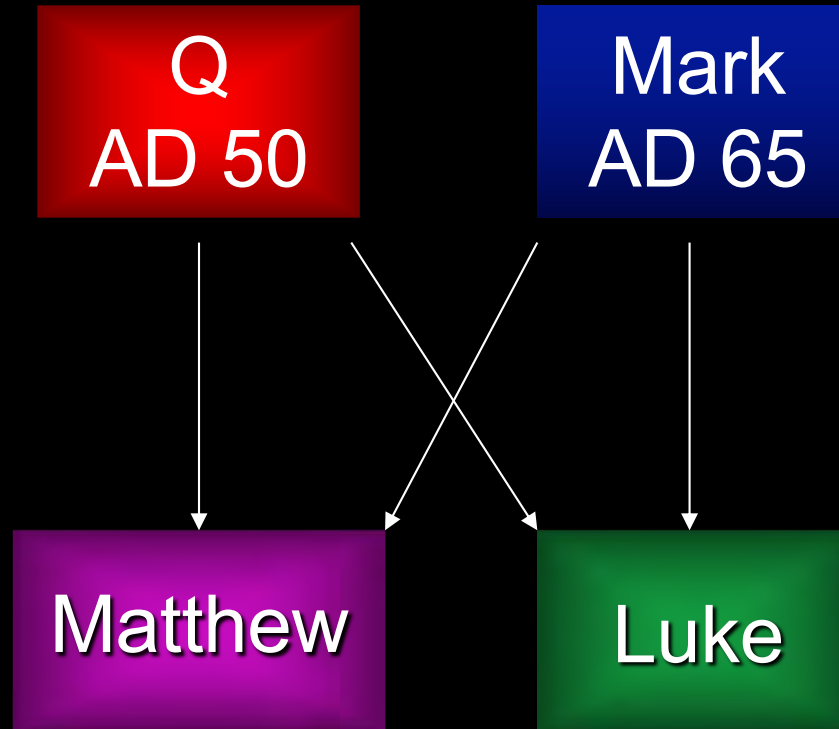
1. *The use of oral tradition.* Some have thought that tradition had become so stereotyped that it provided a common source from which all the Gospel writers drew.
2. *The use of an early Gospel.* Some have postulated that the Synoptic authors all had access to an earlier Gospel, now lost.
3. *The use 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

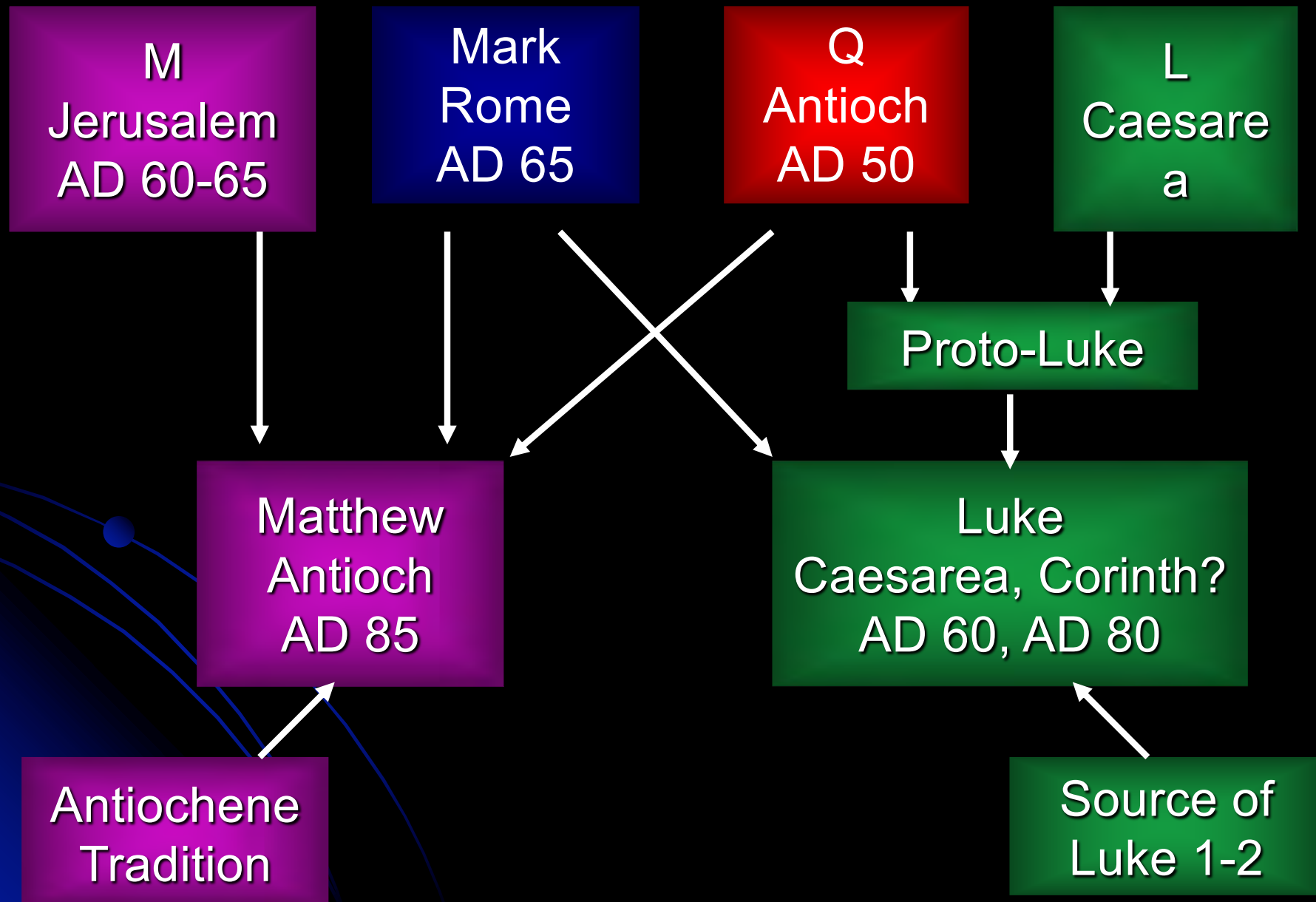
4. *The use of **two major sources**.* The most common view currently is that Mark and a hypothetical document, called *Quelle* (German for "source") or Q, were used by Matthew and Luke as sources for most of the materials included in their Gospels.
5. *The **priority and use of Matthew**.* Another view 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.

Two-Source Hypothesis

50



Four-Source Hypothesis



When I Think They Were Written...

1 MATTHEW

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

2 MARK

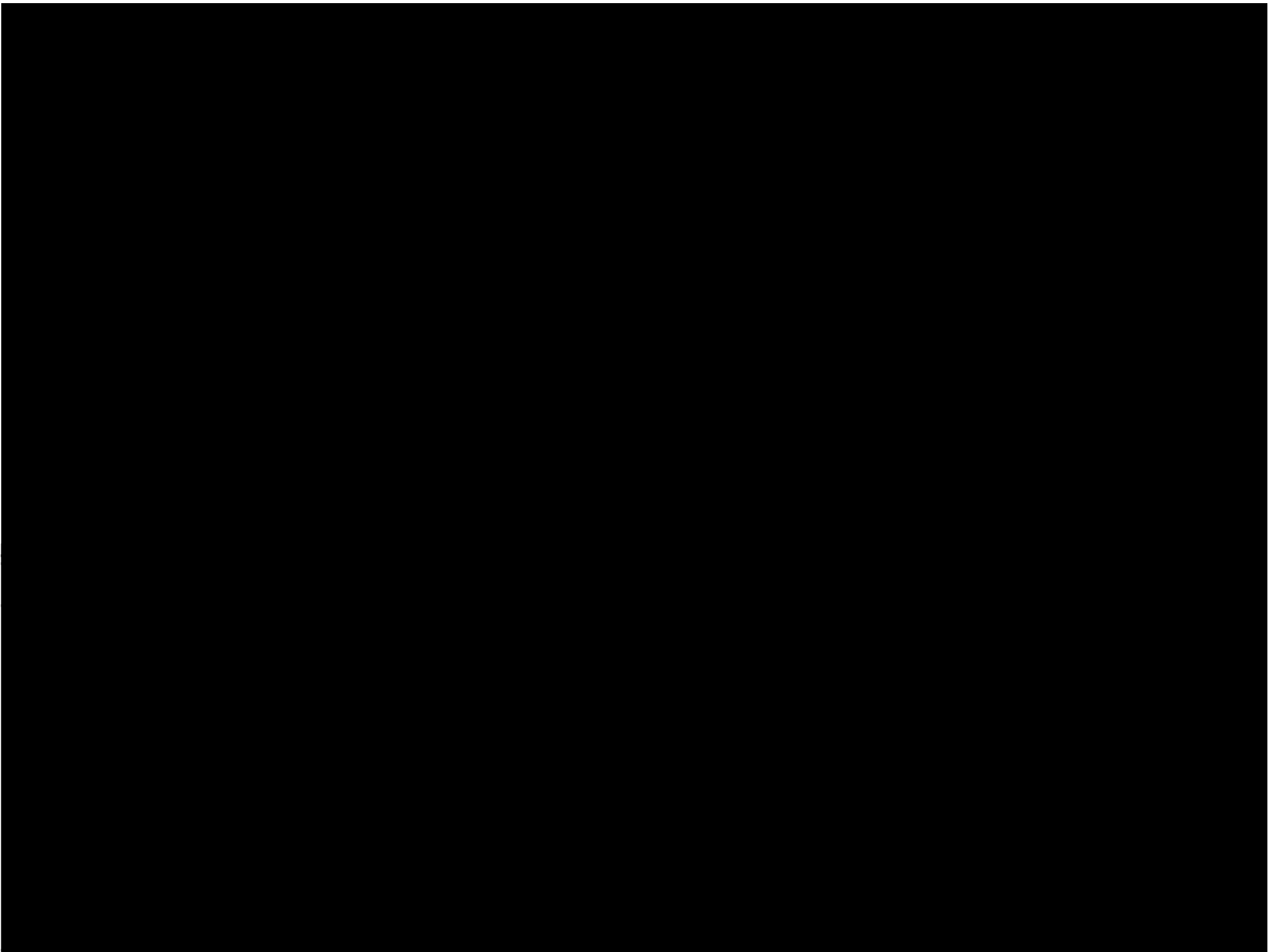
TO: ROMANS
 AS: **A.D.**
 SERVANT
 WHAT: **64-68**
 HE: DID

3 LUKE

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

4 JOHN

TO: **A.D. 69**
 SHURCH
 AS: **AFTER THE**
 GOD
 WHAT: **SYNOPTICS**
 HE: MEANT



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