

PANORAMA OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

The Gospel Writers



Synagogues

B. Religious and cultural developments

1. After the Babylonian captivity, many Jews turned from pagan idolatry and worked for holiness through strict obedience to God's Law. Sadly, the Law became their idol.
2. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish people began using the synagogue as a place of learning, making it the center of life in Judea and in other areas with large Jewish populations.

Synagogues

3. Aramaic became the language of everyday speech, but Hebrew was spoken in the synagogues.
4. During this period, the party or sect system was developed in Judaism.
 - a. The Old Testament never mentioned the religious parties or sects that controlled the Jews during New Testament times.

Pharisees

- b. The sect of the Pharisees dominated Jewish religious life during Jesus' lifetime.
 - 1) This sect arose to defend the Jewish way of life against foreign influences.
 - 2) These strict legalists believed in the Old Testament.

Pharisees

- 3) In politics, the Pharisees were nationalists who wanted to end Roman domination and restore the Kingdom of the line of David. Ironically, they rejected the Son of David, Jesus Christ.
- 4) Their zeal for the Law led to their domination of the Jewish people.

Pharisees

- 5) Their lust for power led them to miss the real point of the Law, the impossibility of fulfilling it and, thus, their need for a Savior.

Sadducees

- c. The sect of the wealthy Sadducees was social-minded and wanted to end tradition.
 - 1) This sect was liberal in its theology, even rejecting the supernatural.
 - 2) The Sadducees opposed almost everything the Pharisees supported.
 - 3) They thought like the Greek Epicureans whose philosophy was to “eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow we die.”

Sadducees

- 4) They thought they could dominate their bodily appetites by satisfying them.

Scribes

- d. The sect of the Scribes, which dated back to Ezra's time, included the professional instructors of the Law.
 - 1) This sect focused on the letter of the Law rather than the spirit of the Law.

Scribes

2) Therefore, when King Herod asked them about the location of the birth of the Messiah, they immediately answered Bethlehem but were too busy with their own agendas to go see for themselves.

Herodians

- e. The sect of the Herodians was composed of political opportunists.
 - 1) This Jewish sect sought to maintain Herod's rule.
 - 2) They wanted Herod's descendants to rule on the throne.

Galatians

Galatians 4:4

The KOINE Greek language set the stage for the writing of the New Testament.

The bankruptcy of Greek philosophy and experience prepared people for the reception of the Gospel message.

Roman roads and law made the spread of the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth possible.

Between the Testaments

C. And so God created the perfect time for Christ to come. Galatians 4:4

1. The complex and descriptive Koine Greek language expanded by Alexander the Great prepared the stage for the writing of the New Testament.
2. The bankruptcy of Greek philosophy and experience prepared people to receive the Gospel.

Between the Testaments

3. Roman roads and law allowed the spread of the Gospel to the *uttermost parts of the world*.

PANORAMA OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

The Gospel Writers



Who Wrote the Gospels

II. The Gospel writers

A. Introduction

1. Although there is only one Gospel (one saving message: Jesus died for our sins), the New Testament includes four accounts of the life of Jesus Christ called the Gospels.
2. The Gospels' four authors reported on the same life of Christ, but each emphasized different events and doctrines of particular interest to their different audiences.

Who Wrote the Gospels

- a. Matthew wrote to the Jewish mindset and directed his remarks to the religious Jews of his time.
- b. Mark wrote to the Roman mindset. Romans were people of action who believed that government plus law and order would inevitably control the world (power).

Who Wrote the Gospels

- c. Luke wrote to the Greek mindset. The Greek was the thinking person.
- d. John wrote directly to the whole world so that all could understand who Jesus is and believe in Him as Savior.

Tailored Messages

3. Each Gospel writer tailored his account of Christ's life to his specific audience.
 - a. Matthew demonstrated that the religious man needs the Messiah, not religion; therefore, he bashed the Pharisees and all religious pretentions.
 - b. Mark showed that the man of power needs a Savior who has the power to save him; therefore, he described the most miracles.

Tailored Messages

- c. Luke informed the thinking man that only One Person could meet all his mental and spiritual needs.
- d. John showed that all men everywhere need to know about and believe in the Savior.

Tailored Messages

4. Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels.
 - a. The Synoptic Gospels cover the same information.
 - b. Although Matthew, Mark, and Luke each had distinctive purposes, all three had similar views of the facts and events surrounding Christ's life.

Tailored Messages

- c. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels that cover many of the same events and information, about 90% of John's information is unique to his Gospel.

Matthew's Gospel

B. Matthew

1. Matthew wrote to show unbelieving Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah and to encourage Jewish believers.
2. The characteristics of Matthew's Gospel
 - a. Matthew emphasized the teaching ministry of Jesus. He quoted the longest sections of Jesus' discourses, His teachings.

Matthew's Gospel

- b. Instead of strictly following the historical flow (chronology) of the life of Jesus, Matthew also arranged his material according to subjects (themes).
 - 1) Chapters 1-4 are chronological.
 - 2) Chapters 5-13 are thematic.
 - 3) Chapters 14-28 are again chronological.

Matthew's Gospel

- c. Because of his Jewish audience, Matthew included the most quotes from the Old Testament.

Matthew's Gospel

- 1) Matthew included many references to Gentiles who responded to the message of Messiah, thereby encouraging Jews to respond to Jesus also. (Matthew 2:1-12 – the Magi; Matthew 8:5-13 – the Centurion; Matthew 15:22-28 – Canaanite woman; Matthew 28:19 – the Great Commission)

Matthew's Gospel

d. Matthew focused on Messiah as the King.

Mark's Gospel

C. Mark

1. The author of the Book of Mark was probably John-Mark of Acts 12:12.
 - a. Mark's Gospel is often called Peter's Gospel because many scholars believe Mark got his information from the apostle Peter since it seems to reflect Peter's perspective.

Mark's Gospel

- b. Mark's mother Mary was a prominent, wealthy Christian in the Jerusalem church. Her home was one of the early church's meeting places. Acts 12:12
- c. Peter apparently went to this house often because the servant girl recognized his voice at the gate. Acts 12:13-16
- d. Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas, his uncle, on the first missionary journey.

Mark's Gospel

2. Characteristics of Mark's Gospel

a. Mark wrote a Gospel of action.

1) Mark wrote this Gospel of action to people of action, the Romans.

2) This Gospel of action is graphic and descriptive.

3) This Gospel of action contains only two of Christ's sermons.

Mark's Gospel

- b. Mark rarely quoted from the Old Testament because most Romans weren't familiar with it.
- c. Mark explained Jewish customs, indicating that he wrote to foreigners unfamiliar with Jewish life.
- d. Mark used the language of the street because he wrote for the common man.

Mark's Gospel

- 1) Mark used broken sentence structures, colloquialisms (colorful language), and extra expressions that may reflect Peter's style of teaching.
- 2) Mark used the Greek connective word *kai*, meaning *and*, 1,094 times, emphasizing one action followed by another action in quick succession.

Mark's Gospel

- 3) Mark used the historic present tense 151 times to depict action in progress.
- 4) Mark's frequent use of the imperfect tense drew vivid pictures of the action.

Mark's Gospel

- e. Mark presented Messiah as the Servant of Yahweh in fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1.

Luke's Gospel

D. Luke

1. Luke, a good historian, provided a detailed account of the life of Christ, the most complete narrative of the four Gospels.
 - a. Luke was not a participant in these events, so, as a good historian, he relied on the testimony of eyewitnesses.
 - b. Luke also used written accounts available at the time. Luke 1:1

Luke's Gospel

2. Why did Luke want to create an accurate and complete account of the life of Christ?
 - a. Luke wanted to strengthen the faith of Gentile believers.
 - b. Luke wanted to stimulate unbelievers to believe and be saved.

Luke's Gospel

3. Characteristics of Luke's writing

- a. As with Matthew who wrote to Romans, Luke wrote his Gospel for a **Gentile** audience, Greek-speaking non-Jews.
 - 1) Luke frequently explained Jewish localities and the geography of the **area** since Theophilus would have not readily known that information.

Luke's Gospel

- 2) As with Mark, Luke also explained Jewish customs.
- 3) Luke used Greek terms to translate Aramaic terms.
- 4) Instead of tracing Christ's genealogy only to Abraham as did Matthew, Luke traced it all the way back to Adam, a Gentile.

Luke's Gospel

- 5) Luke referred to Roman emperors when designating the date of Jesus' birth.
- 6) Luke seldom quoted the Old Testament, mentioning only a few fulfilled prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7) In these few Old Testament quotes, Luke copied from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Luke's Gospel

- b. Luke used the best Greek grammar and style of any New Testament writer.
 - 1) Luke's obvious skill with the Greek language and his phrase *their own language* in Acts 1:19 imply that he was not Jewish.
 - 2) Luke was the only non-Jewish writer of the Scriptures.

Luke's Gospel

3) Luke, a medical doctor, used more medical terms in his writings than did Hippocrates, the famed Father of Medicine.

Luke's Gospel

- c. Luke emphasized the universal reach of the Gospel message, which was for everyone, not just the Jews.
- d. Luke presented Jesus as the perfect God-man, the Savior of the world.
- e. As a synoptic Gospel, Luke's book is similar to Matthew and Mark's, but the extensive passage of Luke 9:51-19:27 is unique information.

John's Gospel

E. John

1. John was part of the inner circle of disciples (James, Peter, and sometimes Andrew) and was closely associated with Peter.
2. After Christ's ascension, John along with James and Peter became pillars of the church in Jerusalem.
3. Characteristics of John's Gospel

John's Gospel

- a. While the other Gospels focused on Jesus' Galilean ministry, John concentrated on His Judean ministry.
- b. John's Gospel was evangelistic but also designed to build up believers in their faith through better understanding of essential spiritual principles.

John's Gospel

- c. Because John wrote toward the end of his life after many years of meditation on the events, his Gospel is the most selective, topical, and theological.
- d. Using a simple style and vocabulary, John captured the most profound theological concepts.
- e. John presented Messiah as the eternal Son of God.

Matthew

Christ the King



Mark

Christ the Servant



Luke

Christ the God-man



John

Christ the Son of God

