

## FOREWORD

All of the parallel gospel attempts this author has seen fall into the same pitfall: putting parallel passages together at the same time without regard for when the passage occurred in that gospel. Though this at first may seem like the right thing to do it is doomed to failure. No chronological record of Christ's ministry can be achieved this way. It will force the gospel writers to jump back and forth without reason or purpose. This is why there is such a misguided certainty that the gospels are not written in order. Many modern Bible scholars make this claim.<sup>1</sup> So do some of the ancients. Papias (70-155 AD), who was a pupil of John the apostle wrote in "Explanation of the Lord's Discourses,"

The elder also used to say this: Mark had been the interpreter (or translator) for Peter. And he wrote down as much as (Peter) told of the sayings & deeds of Christ --- accurately, but **not in order**. For he was not a hearer or follower of the Lord but, as I said, of Peter, who adapted his teaching as needed and **did not arrange the sayings of the Lord in an orderly manner**. And so, Mark made no mistake in writing some things down as he recalled them. For he had a single concern: to omit nothing of what he heard & to introduce no false statement (*Eccles. Hist.* 3.39.15).

Yet the scripture itself says the exact opposite. Luke states the other gospels were written before his, and that both theirs and his were set forth in order. "Forasmuch as **many** have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us" (Lk 1:1).

Luke's as we shall see was the last gospel written. Luke claims he had "set forth in order" his gospel. He also lets us know that so had those who had written before him: John, Matthew, and Mark. [We will definitely show later that John's gospel must have been written first and not last as men today suppose.]

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<sup>i</sup> One writer falsely claims that any timeline that keeps Matthew in time order will be misled because Matthew "always focuses around the temple". This is not true, and we will prove it. Matthew does write in order. Though Matthew writes for a Jewish audience and mentions Hebrew elements of life more than the other gospel writers, his focus is still clearly Jesus and the kingdom of heaven as it is for all the gospel writers.

## INTRODUCTION

All things are to be done decently and in order the Bible says (1Co 14:40) – how much more then when trying to understand the timeline of the Bible itself. The greatest problem with timelines is that they do not put things in their proper order by reasoning from the scriptures themselves first. All too often they are rather based on the views, opinions, and the traditions of men. The problem with the views and opinions of men is that everyone has one. God says our ways and our thoughts are NOT His ways and His thoughts (Isa 55:8-9)! So few today want to reason **from** the scriptures (Isa 1:18, 1Pe 3:15, Act 17:2, 18:4,19, 24:25), but would rather reason amongst themselves (Mt 16:8, Mk 2:8, Lk 5:21-22).

Even worse are the traditions of men, for these are what make the commandment of God and scripture itself of none effect, even as our Lord Jesus warned us! (Mt 15) This is why in all things the scripture **must** be our foundation, our guide, and our light of illumination. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; **as it is written**” (Rom 3:4). Remember, all truth and knowledge are in Christ and in his Word (Col 2:2-3, Rom 2:20). Therefore truth can never contradict scripture, for the scripture is truth (Jn 17:17).

All timelines which I have thus far seen, without exception, group similar teachings and events and lump them into the same event. This is impossible to do and get a true timeline. This method is certainly easy and is convenient for using the timeline as a kind of concordance to look up similar events, but it does not generate a true timeline. In fact, this method will continually have the gospels jumping back and forth and not set in their divine order. Many man-made theories have been written to show that the gospels do purposefully jump back and forth, yet the gospels themselves say otherwise. Luke unequivocally claims that he and the other gospel writers wrote in ORDER. Thus, any harmony of the gospels that makes Luke jump back and forth can clearly be discarded by Luke’s own testimony! Our job then will be to study to show ourselves approved unto God to be able to find that order.

The gospels can be put in distinct time order which exactly matches the order in which they were written. As with any narrative there will be a few forward and backward references, where, for example, having known what is coming a reference beforehand is made to it, and similarly where some event has already occurred it is referenced only after the fact. These are to be expected and yet when we count up the number of verses that fit these cases we find them to be surprisingly, almost amazingly few (only 7½ total verses in all four gospels out of a total 3779 verses, less than 0.2%). (Note: These are all marked in the timeline with braces in the references: [ ]. Those marked with parentheses are merely informational references.)

If we truly reason from the scriptures, along with some historical dates to bind certain well-known events, there is a tremendous amount of detail that we can come to glean from the Gospels. If we first study the scriptures and reason from them as absolute truth, then when we line them up with history we find the answers to many questions we might have concerning the timeline of the Gospels. Such as the following:

- Why Jesus wasn’t born in December and the clue scripture gives us as to when he was born.
- Why only a Thursday crucifixion agrees with all of the scripture.
- Jesus appeared to several people after his ascension according to the scripture.
- There are 3 distinct anointings of Jesus
- There are 2 cursings of the fig tree by Jesus, not one
- There were 4 different blind men healed during Jesus’ journey through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem.
- Peter denied the Lord three times twice for a total of 6 times!
- There were 6 distinct visits to the sepulcher on the day of Jesus’ resurrection.
- There are 7 sayings of Jesus on the cross.
- See the differences between the gospels showing each unique emphasis. You will see the teaching in Mt 5-7 (referred to as the sermon on the mount) is NOT the same as Lk 6:17-49 (the sermon in the plain).
- See the 13 synchronizing events that allow us to order the events of the gospels overall.
- See an overview of the 3 year ministry of Christ that shows us the change in his ministry focus.
- When the 12 were chosen was not the time that they were sent out.
- Luke devotes 43% of his gospel (Ch 9:51-19:28) to Jesus’ steadfast purpose to go to the cross.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ : the BeginningJOHN

<sup>1:1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>The same was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life; and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

MATT.

<sup>1:1</sup>The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

MARK

<sup>1:1</sup>The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

LUKE

<sup>1:1</sup>Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, <sup>2</sup>Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; <sup>3</sup>It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Gabriel's Announcement: Pentecost, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6 BC <sup>1</sup>

Jerusalem

LUKE

<sup>1:5</sup>There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia<sup>2</sup>: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. <sup>6</sup>And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. <sup>7</sup>And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years. <sup>8</sup>And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, <sup>9</sup>According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup>And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. <sup>11</sup>And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. <sup>14</sup>And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup>For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup>And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup>And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. <sup>18</sup>And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. <sup>19</sup>And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. <sup>20</sup>And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. <sup>21</sup>And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. <sup>22</sup>And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. <sup>23</sup>And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. <sup>24</sup>And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, <sup>25</sup>Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

<sup>1</sup> Please see the appendix "Order of the Gospels" for the historical and biblical justification for these dates.

<sup>2</sup> Lk 1:5,8: The course of Abia (or Abijah) was the 8<sup>th</sup> course (1Ch 24:1-19). Since the year started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Abib/Nisan (our Mar-Apr) and because the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, & Tabernacles all priests had to serve then [i.e. they were not counted as part of the normal courses] the 8<sup>th</sup> course would fall Iyyar 27-Sivan 4 (May 15-21), the week before Pentecost. Hence, John's conception takes place shortly after this or in the month of June.

Jesus' Conception: Feast of Dedication, Dec., 6 BC <sup>3</sup>

Nazareth (75 mi.)

**LUKE**

<sup>1:26</sup> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.<sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.<sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art highly favoured*, the Lord is with thee: *blessed art thou among women*.<sup>29</sup> And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.<sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.<sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.<sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.<sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.<sup>34</sup> Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.<sup>36</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.<sup>37</sup> For with God nothing shall be impossible.<sup>38</sup> And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Mary visits ElizabethJudean Hill Country (90-120 mi.)**LUKE**

<sup>1:39</sup> And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;<sup>40</sup> And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.<sup>41</sup> And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:<sup>42</sup> And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb*.<sup>43</sup> And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?<sup>44</sup> For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.<sup>45</sup> And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,<sup>47</sup> And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.<sup>48</sup> For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.<sup>49</sup> For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.<sup>51</sup> He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.<sup>52</sup> He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.<sup>53</sup> He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.<sup>54</sup> He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;<sup>55</sup> As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.<sup>56</sup> And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

John's Birth: Passover, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 5 BC <sup>5</sup>Judean Hill Country**LUKE**

<sup>1:57</sup> Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.<sup>58</sup> And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.<sup>59</sup> And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.<sup>60</sup> And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.<sup>61</sup> And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.<sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.<sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.<sup>64</sup> And his mouth was

<sup>3</sup> Jesus' conception takes place 6 months after John's conception per Lk 1:26 and would thus be in Dec. The Feast of Dedication (mentioned in Jn 10:22) is a New Testament only feast and is also known as the Feast of Lights.

<sup>4</sup> Lk 1:41: It is implied at this time that this is when "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee" or shortly before (Lk 1:34) and that Mary conceived, for she is already referred to as "the mother my Lord" (Lk 1:43).

<sup>5</sup> John's birth on Passover fulfils the prophecy of the Elijah that was to come (Mal 3:1, 4:5-6, Mt 11:14).

Unto the present date the Jews still expect Elijah the prophet to come on Passover and they leave an empty seat for him.

**LUKE**

opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God. <sup>65</sup>And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. <sup>66</sup>And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.