

# NEW TESTAMENT BIBLICAL LITERACY

## THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM PART ONE

### Lesson 9

*Biblical-Literacy.com*

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# What Are The Synoptic Gospels?

- 4 Gospels -- 3 Synoptics
- Greek *sunoptikos*
- “To See Together”

# Synoptics - Commonality

- John the Baptist
  - Jesus' Baptism
  - Temptations
- John the Baptist
  - Jesus' Baptism
  - Temptations

# What is the Synoptic Problem?

- Common Events, Arrangement, Phrases
- But Also Differences
- So How Do We Understand?

# Resurrection

*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week  
Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the  
tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of  
the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the  
tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.... The guards  
were so afraid of him that they shook and became like  
dead men. The angel said to the women, “Do not be  
afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who  
was crucified...”*

Matthew 28

*When the Sabbath was over, **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome** bought spices so they might go anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. **As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man** dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said, "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!"*

Mark 16

*On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women [“**Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them.**”] (vs. 10) took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when **they entered** they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, **suddenly two men** in clothes that gleamed like lightening **stood beside them**. In their fright **the women bowed down with their faces to the ground**, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has **risen!**”*

Luke 24

# Commonality

- Mary Magdalene and a second Mary
- First Day of the Week
- Stone Rolled Away
- Jesus Gone
- God's Messenger Declares Truth
- Jesus is Risen!



# Differences - Angel(s)

- Matthew - One Angel Sitting Outside Tomb
- Mark - Young Man Seems Inside Tomb
- Luke - Two Men Suddenly Appear Inside

# Differences - People

- Matthew - Mary Magdalene & “Other Mary”
- Mark - Mary Magdalene, Mary Mother of James & Salome
- Luke - “the Women” or Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the Mother of James, and the Others

# The Synoptic Problem

- What Happened?
- When?
- Where?
- What Was Truly Said?

What is Our View of Scripture and its  
Accuracy?

How Do The Gospels Interrelate?

# View Of Scripture

Accumulation  
of Ideas w/  
Errors and  
Bias

Accept as  
True (Wink  
Wink)

Accurate on  
Theology  
and  
Salvation.  
NOT  
History

God  
Translated  
the King  
James

# View Of Scripture

Inerrancy - Scripture is Perfect and Without Error in What it Claims to be and In What it Sets Forward for Itself

Accumulation  
of Ideas w/  
Errors and  
Bias

Accept as  
True (Wink  
Wink)

Accurate on  
Theology  
and  
Salvation.  
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James

# Relation of the Gospels

## 1. Oral Tradition

- Plus: Differences from Different Oral Traditions
- Minus:
  - Non-Eye Witnesses
  - Inconsistent With Inerrancy
  - Inadequate on Phraseology

# Relation of the Gospels

## 2. Successive Writers

- Orderly Writing With Access
- Plus:
  - Consistent w/ Inerrancy
  - Explains Differences as Supplements
- Minus:
  - Not as Popular Today
  - Phraseology Issues

# Relation of the Gospels

## 3. Unknown Primitive Gospel

- Usage of Missing Primitive
  - “Q” German *Quelle* - “Source”
- Plus: Fills in Gaps
- Minus: Where in the 7,000 is One?



# Relation of the Gospels

## 4. Multiple Gospelets (Tract Theory)

- Plus: An Answer to Divergency and Phrasing
- Minus: Lots of Missing Documents!

# Successive Writers

# Order Issue

## Why the Gospel Order?

- Traditionally the Order of Authorship
- 19th Century Changes

# Who Wrote Matthew?

- Papias (c. 60 - 130) “An ancient man who was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp” -- Iraneus c.185

“Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able.”

# Who Wrote Matthew?

- Ignatius / Polycarp (pre-110) Knew Matthew

“Be in all things wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove Ignatius ”

*Epistle to Polycarp 2:2*

“Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves”

Matthew 10:16

# Who Wrote Mark?

- Papias:

Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ...So that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote.

# What is the Order?

- Origen (185-254)

“Concerning the four Gospels which alone are uncontroverted in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the Gospel according to Matthew, who was at one time a publican and afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was written first; and that he composed it in the Hebrew tongue and published it for the converts from Judaism.”

The second written was that according to Mark, who wrote it according to the instruction of Peter, who, in his General Epistle, acknowledged him as a son, saying, "The church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son." And third, was that according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, which he composed for the converts from the Gentiles. Last of all, that according to John.



# Who Wrote Matthew?

- Epistle of Barnabas (c 130) 4:40

“holy Scripture”

“Many are called but few are chosen”

(Mt 22:14)

# Order

- Muratorian Canon (170)
- Matthew, Mark, Luke & John

# Resurrection - Synoptic Problem

# Resurrection

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**Luke 24**

# Points For Home

- Christ is Risen
- The Resurrection Accounts are Reliable
- Study the Bible
- Read Carefully
- Read Without Worry - We Should Never Fear a Close Examination of Scripture