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Introduction to the Four Gospels

Why are there Four Gospels?

By Fr. Luke Edward

To answer this question, we discuss two points:

- 1- Evidences to prove that there are four Gospels only.
- 2- The rationale behind having four Gospels only.

First: Evidences to prove that there four Gospels only:

From the very beginning the Church recognizes four Gospels only as canonical books that form the first part of the N. T. and relates these four Gospels to four main covenants between God and man which are:

- 1-Gods covenant with Noah after the flood, with the rainbow as its sign.
- 2-His covenant with Abraham, with circumcision as its sign.
- 3-The Law (Torah or Nomos), the blood of animals as its sign.
- 4 -The N. T. with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as its sign. (See Irenaus 2:8, 11)

Note: Canonical book means a book that is accepted & recognized by the Church as being inspired by the Holy Spirit, binding as a standard rule for the Christian style of life. See: (2 Corn.10: 13, 15, 15), (Gal. 6: 16) & (Phil.3:16).

To prove the Canonicity of a book from the Bible we use two kinds of evidences:

1. External evidence: Testimony of the Church tradition and of the Fathers of the Church.
2. Internal evidence: Evidence derived from the text itself.

The Church relates the four Gospels to the four living creatures that Ezekiel saw in his revelation (Ezekiel 1: 1, etc.) "The likeness of a man... each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle." See also (Ezekiel 10: 1-22). These living creatures with the four faces were symbols to the four Gospels.

The same may be depicted from the Revelation to Saint John the Divine, "And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." (Revelation 4: 6-9 and 5: 6. etc.) These incorporeal (body-less) four living creatures are also symbolic of the four Gospels.

The Church depicted from the opening of each Gospel its reason for selecting the appropriate symbol for it.

The first living creature that is like a lion symbolizes the Gospel according to Saint Mark. It starts with "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (1: 3). It refers to Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah

(Revelation 5: 5), to His effective ministry, and to His kingly might and authority. It might also refer to the lion that Saint Mark was able to tame in the name of the Lord.

The Venetians adopted Saint Mark as their patron Saint, and used the lion of Saint Mark as their mascot. They erected a huge monument with a winged lion in Saint Mark Plaza in Venice. Artists since then have been competing in visualizing the lion of Saint Mark, tamed and quiet, where Saint Mark eliminated the beast in him, but kept his courage!

The second living creature that is like a calf or an ox symbolizes the Gospel according to Saint Luke. Church tradition that we inherited portrays Saint Luke with an ox standing besides him. Saint Luke presented to us in the Gospel according to his name Christ as an offering and a sacrifice. More than any other evangelist, Saint Luke conveys to us the image of the redeemer Christ, who came to save sinners. He was both the sacrificial Lamb and the offering Priest who offer the sacrifice. As evidence to the above, Saint Luke opens the Gospel according to him with references to priesthood and sacrifices. This Gospel introduces for us the priesthood and sacrificial ministry of Christ, as well as Christ, the servant of mankind. The ox is both a domestic and sacrificial animal; he is a symbol of Christ's sacrifice that reconciles us to the Father.

The third living creature that has a face like a man symbolizes the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. This Gospel's opening lists the genealogy of the Lord Christ, and talks about the Son of Man who is a descendent of the Prophet David.

The fourth living creature that is like a flying eagle symbolizes the Gospel according to Saint John. Saint John in the opening of the Gospel takes us in a flight up high to the extreme heights of divinity. He talks about the elation and depth of the divinity of the Lord Christ, for the eagle cuts through the atmospheric layers and hides behind the clouds. The fourth living creature also symbolizes the gift of the Holy Spirit that spread its wings around the Church.

Living Creature Number	Its shape	Gospel it Refers to	Opening of Gospel	Christ in Gospel
1	Lion	Mark	Voice crying in The wilderness	Mighty, overcoming Evil and sin
2	Ox	Luke	Sacrifices	Priest, sacrificial Lamb, servant
3	Man	Matthew	Genealogy Of Christ	King
4	Eagle	John	In the beginning was the Word	Divine

Saint Irenaus wrote in detail about this subject in his book "Against Heresies" (3.11.8 & 3.11.11)

Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, in the opening of his book "Study of the Gospel according to Luke" writes, "Our Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed in the four Gospels by symbols of the four incorporeal (body-less) living creatures. He is the Man, He is the Lion, He is the Ox, and He is the Eagle... He is

Man, for He is born of Mary. He is Lion, for He is mighty. He is Ox, for He is the sacrificial Lamb. And He is Eagle, for He is the resurrection.

At this point, let us reflect on Genesis 2: 10, "Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four rivers." The same may be said of the Gospel of Christ, it is one Gospel in four glad tidings! Next we will address a main point: the external evidences of tradition and history to the existence of only four Gospels, and of their accuracy and legitimacy.

Heretics throughout history have tried to slip into the Scriptures fake books and gave them a Gospel title in order to deceive and mislead the believers and reap material and prestigious gains. The following are examples of such fake gospels:

1. The Gospel according to the Hebrews.
2. The Gospel according to the Twelve.
3. The Gospel according to the Egyptians.
4. The Gospel according to Peter.
5. The Gospel according to Matthias.
6. The Gospel according to Mary.
7. The Gospel according to Zechariahs, father of John the Baptist.
8. The Gospel according to Philip.
9. The Gospel according to James.
10. The Gospel according to Nicodemus.
11. The fake Gospel according to Matthew.
12. The Gospel of the birth of the Virgin Mary.
13. The Gospel of the infancy of the Savior.
14. The Gospel of the history of Joseph.
15. The Gospel according to Thomas.
16. The Gospel according to Basil.
17. The Gospel according to Bartholomew.
18. The Gospel according to Judah Iscariot.
19. The Gospel according to Andrew.
20. The Gospel according to James, the son of Zebedee.
21. The eternal Gospel.
22. In the middle ages a fake book appeared with the title, "The Gospel according to Barnabas".

The early Church never adopted these false books, but to the contrary, it exposed them, and only canonized the four Gospels that we are now using.

1. The apostolic fathers of the Church referred only to verses from the four Gospels in their writings. However, they did not refer to the author or verse of the Gospel. These referrals by the apostolic fathers (fathers who were disciples to the twelve Apostles) are indirect evidence to the authenticity of the four Gospels and to their numbers.
2. The Syrian Translation known as 'Bishtio': It included only these four Gospels, and is dated to the middle of the second century AD.

3. Affidavit of Muratori: This is an important affidavit asserting the canonry of the authoritative Scriptural Books. Let us examine in detail this affidavit:

It was called Muratori after the Italian antiquity scientist, who issued it in 1740. He translated it from a manuscript that was kept in Saint Ambrose Library in Milan. It was originally kept in the great Irish monastery of Bobbio. It is dated to 150-170 AD, or to the middle of the second century, which adds to its value. (The Church in the age of the Apostles, by Solomon, pages 42-43)

The affidavit has a New Testament hading and lists the four Gospels, the Book of Acts, thirteen Epistles to the Apostle Paul (does not include the Epistle to the Hebrews), three Catholic Epistles (the First and Second Epistle to John, and the Epistle to Jude), the Revelation to John, and the Revelation to Peter (the last book is one of those rejected and considered un-canonical).

The Affidavit of Muratori therefore did not list the two Epistles of Peter, the Epistle of James, and the third Epistle of John, which are among the Catholic Epistles. It is thought, however, that the First Epistle to Peter was listed in the first page with the Gospel according to Mark, and this page was lost from the affidavit.

4. Testimony of the scholar Tatian: Tatian lived in the third century AD and is a disciple of Justin the Martyr. He produced a composite book titled 'Diatessarton' or 'The Quartette'. It combines the four Gospels into one book and depicts the similarities among them. This book demonstrates two points:
 - a. There are four Gospels.
 - b. The four Gospels are tied up to each other in perfect unity.Eusebius of Caesarea, the renowned historian, mentioned this book in his writings (4- 29)

5. Testimony of Saint Irenaus: Irenaus was a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of John the Apostle. Irenaus pleaded with the Ghalians (tribes living in Europe), and in 178 AD succeeded Botheneus as Bishop of Leon. In his book 'Against Heresies, 3.11.8 & 3.11.11), Irenaus wrote a whole chapter titled "Evidence to the existence of no more or less than four Gospels". He looked at the four Gospels as a unity and called them 'the Gospel with the four faces.' He ties the number four to the cherub with the four faces, to the four spirits of the universe, and to the four faces of the earth, etc. Here is some of what he said, "The number of Gospels could not be more or less than what we have; for there are four corners to the world we live in, four main winds, and Christianity was spread in the whole world. Since the Gospel is the pillar and ground of the church (1 Timothy 3: 15), and the spirit of life, it was befit that the Church should have four pillars in order that it enjoys incorruption from all sides, and that it refreshes all humanity. From this fact, the Word who sits on the cherubim, the Pantocrator, when He revealed Himself to man, He presented us with a Gospel in four forms, tied together by one Spirit. The Prophet David in this regard says, "You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!" (Psalm 8: 1) And the cherub has four faces representing the economy of salvation exerted in the Son of God.

The Scripture says the following regarding the four living creatures: The first was like a lion, and is an indication of Christ's effective work, His magic, and His kingly authority. The second was like an ox, and is an indication of Christ's sacrificial and priestly role. The third had a face like a man, and is an indication of Christ's incarnation. The fourth was like a flying eagle, and is an

indication of the gift of the Holy Spirit that hovers with His two wings over the Church. (Revelation 4: 7) The four Gospels with Christ at its center are in agreement with the above analogies.

6. Testimony of the scholar Tertullian (160-220 AD): In his book 'Against Marcion the Heretic' that accepted only the Gospel according to Luke, Tertullian clearly indicated the existence of four, and only four, canonical Gospels. He fearlessly defended those four Gospels and their Apostle or Apostle closely related authors.
7. Testimony of the scholar Origen: Origen is the most knowledgeable of all Scriptures' scholars in the second century AD. In his first book about the Gospel according to Matthew, he writes about the Church dogma and testifies that he knows of only four Gospels, saying, "Among the four Gospels, and these are the four undisputable Gospels in the Church of God under heaven... I know from tradition that the first Gospel was written by Matthew. Matthew was a tax collector, but later on he became a disciple of Jesus Christ. He wrote the Gospel for the victorious among the Jews, and was published in the Hebrew language.

Mark wrote the second Gospel according to the instructions he received from Peter... Luke wrote the third Gospel and Paul edited it. It was written to the victorious among the Gentiles. John wrote the last Gospel (Eusebius 6: 25)."

8. Testimony of Eusebius of Caesarea, known as the father of the Church history. He lived in the fourth century AD.

Eusebius in his book 'History of the Church', when addressing the subject of the Gospels' order, he wrote in details about the number of Gospels and stressed that there are only four. Here is some of what he wrote: "Matthew had begun by preaching to Hebrews; and when he made up his mind to go to others too, he committed his own Gospel to writing in his native tongue (Aramaic), so that for those with whom he was no longer present, the gap left by his departure was filled by what he wrote. And after that Mark and Luke had published their Gospels, John, we are told, who hitherto had entirely relied in his preaching on the spoken word, finally took to writing for the following reason. The three Gospels already written were in general circulation and copies had come into John's hands. He accepted them, and confirmed their accuracy, but remarked that the narrative only lacked the description of what Christ had done first of all at the beginning of His mission... Therefore, for this reason the Apostle John was urged to record in his Gospel the period which the earlier evangelists had passed over in silence, and the things accomplished during that period by the Savior, i.e. all that happened before the Baptist's imprisonment... Thus John in his Gospel narrative records what Christ did when the Baptist had not yet been thrown into jail, while the other three Evangelists describe what happened after the Baptist's consignment to prison." (Eusebius 3: 24)

9. Saint Clements of Alexandria: Saint Clements often quoted from the Gospel according to the Egyptians, but specifically differentiated between this Gospel and the four canonical Gospels.
10. Saints Clements of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch used material from the Gospels, but they did not quote to the letter the exact verses.

11. The letter of Saint Polycarp contains comparable material to the Gospel.

**Internal Evidence to the truthfulness of the four Gospels:
Discussion of the material of the Gospels:**

A. Sources from which the four Evangelists obtained their material of the Gospels:

1. We must first stress that the holy Scriptures are all inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit worked through the Evangelists by directing, guiding, preventing them from making errors in writing, and showing them the facts that God wants to convey to man. All this was done without eliminating their personality in their writing. Each Evangelist kept his style that was influenced by his education and culture.

In 2 Timothy 3: 16-17 we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

And in 2 Peter 1: 20-21 we read, "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Compare the above with John 14: 26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring your remembrance all things that I said to you."

2. The other sources that the Evangelists utilized may be verified with absolute certainty as follows:
 - Matthew and John were two of the twelve Apostles of Christ. Therefore they had first hand knowledge of the events they recorded.
 - Mark, according to our Church's tradition, was one of the seventy Disciples. He was a relative of both Apostles Peter and Barnabas. He accompanied Paul and Peter in their evangelizing trips. Mark's house was the one chosen by Christ to celebrate the Passover in with His Apostles, institute the Sacrament of the Eucharist in it, and in it Christ washed the feet of His Disciples. In this house also was the Upper Room of Zion where the Holy Spirit descended on the Disciples, and is considered the first Church in the history of Christianity that was attended by Christ Himself and his Disciples.
 - Saint Luke asserts that he obtained his information from eye witnesses. He was thorough in his writing and never documented information before ascertaining its accuracy. In the opening of the Gospel according to him, he writes, "In as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having understanding of all things from the very first..." (Luke 1: 1-3a)

In addition, Saint Luke was in Judea during the incarceration of the Apostle Paul in Caesarea of Palestine (58-60 AD). The Virgin Mary also was in Palestine during these days, and may be that Saint Luke got in touch with her then and obtained many of the unique information that the Gospel which he wrote contains, such as the events of the birth of Christ (John, chapters 1, 2).

3. Accordingly, the Lady Virgin might have been a source of many of the facts contained in all Gospels regarding the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Visitation to Elizabeth.
4. The Lord Christ Himself after His Resurrection remained among the Disciples forty days and was explaining to them the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord Christ could have been also a source of information of many facts that the Disciples could not see on their own!
5. There is one more fact that testifies of the truthfulness of what the Evangelists wrote. The fact that the Disciples doubted first before believing, such as Saint Thomas who could not believe until he felt the wounds from the nails and spear. This indicates that the Disciples did not accept facts until they verified them. Even though we are used to blame Saint Thomas of doubting, his doubting became a reason for obtaining stronger evidence of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ from the dead.

Also, right after the Resurrection, when the Mary's went back to inform the rest, the Disciples did not believe off-hand until they saw for themselves the empty tomb! These events and many others testify that the Disciples did not believe the facts until they verified their truthfulness.

B. If we assume that the Disciples tried to deceive us by fabricating many stories, and attributed many miracles that did not occur to the Lord Christ, the following evidence will refute this theory.

Second: Why do we have four Gospels?

In order to answer this important question we ought to address two main points:

First: Evidence to the existence of no more or less than the four Gospels.

Second: Wisdom behind the existence of four Gospels.

First: Evidence the Gospels is four, sound and canonic

The Church since the beginning of Christianity recognized that the canonic Gospels are only four. The first Church accepted these four holy and legitimate Gospels as canonic Books complimenting the Books of the Old Testament, along with the rest of the Books of the New Testament. These New Testament Books have been ranked equal to the Books of the Old Testament and have been considered inseparable from the Holy Scriptures.

The Church ties the four Gospels that constitute a major part of the New Testament to four main covenants between God and man throughout the history of mankind. The promises the God made to mankind are as follows:

First covenant: The rainbow at the hand of Noah.

Second covenant: The sign of circumcision at the hand of Abraham.

Third covenant: The promise of the Law at the hand of Moses.

Forth covenant: The promise of the Gospel through our Lord Jesus Christ (see Iranius 2: 11.8)

Note: Canonical Book means a Scriptural Book that the Church recognizes and accepts as a Book inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Church uses canonical Scriptures as rules of behavior and law of spiritual life. The word 'canon' is from the Greek word 'κανον' and means rule, or base, or law, or origin. It was used in the New Testament to indicate the teaching proposed as the rule of faith and behavior. See 2 Corinthians 10: 13, 15 & 16, Galatians 6: 17, and Philippians 3: 16.

The following are evidence that the four Gospels are canonical:

1. The four Evangelists were writing from different places at different times. How would they then tell the same stories in order to deceive people?
2. The Evangelists mentioned names of personalities and towns. History confirms such personalities and the events that they are related to.
3. If the Evangelists were imposters and intended a kind of deceit, they would not have presented Christ as a weak Man that gets crucified, dies, and get buried! Christ was ridiculed a lot in His ministry, and was born in a poor manger intended for animals! He did not have a place to lean His head upon!
4. The Apostles recorded their own shameful behavior: They described Peter's denials, the escape of the Disciples, and Judas Iscariot's betrayal to the Lord Christ. If these events were not true, it would not suit them to fabricate such stories! In addition, they recorded their modest professions before being called to the Discipleship, such as tax collector, fishermen, etc.
5. When the Gospels were written and published, many of the personalities mentioned in them were still alive. That is, the Gospels presented living facts that could not be denied or used for deceiving.

We, therefore, have accounted many evidence to the truthfulness beyond doubt of the four Gospels and of all the Books of the New Testament, whether internal evidence (that are derived from the text itself), or external evidence (that are derived from tradition).

Finally, the Gospels present to the common reader simple facts: They tell the stories without illustrations, or eloquence of text, or exclamation, or notation and commentary. They honestly and plainly record the weakness of the Disciples and their fall, including the Evangelists themselves. They record the admonishing of the Lord Christ to the Disciples and lack of their understanding, their need to faith, their cowardly behavior and escape at time of arrest and tribulation, the denial of

Peter, treason of Judas, and their hopelessness after crucifixion. The Gospels did not hide any, alter or justify any. And did not exaggerate any event. The writers did not care for their own reputation, but refrained from mentioning their names. Their only mission was to tell the story of the Lord Jesus that by itself carries an undisputable weight, joy, and awe to the heart of all who read it, that love the truth.

Second: Wisdom behind the existence of four Gospels (Why four Gospels?)

Now that we proved that the validated canonical Gospels that the Church accepted from its inception are only four, no more and no less, let us discuss the wisdom behind the existence of four and not just one Gospel. We will consider in our discussion the following important points:

1. Meaning of the word 'Gospel'.
2. Was a written Gospel necessary?
3. True title of the Gospel.
4. Need for the existence of four Gospels (wisdom behind the existence of four Gospels).
5. Gospels are not historical books.
6. Each Gospel serves a particular purpose and complements the other Gospels.

1. Meaning of the word 'Gospel':

Gospel is a Greek word 'εὐαγγέλιον'. For its exact meaning, it may be divided into segments as follows: 'eu' is a singular pronoun. 'aggelion' is an adjective meaning 'well' or 'good'? 'euaggelizo' is a verb meaning 'telling', and was translated into Coptic by 'εὐαγγελιον'.

Thus Gospel means the good news or the good tidings. And the good tidings are that God sent His only begotten Son into the world to save the believers. The Arabic word equivalent to gospel is 'bishara', and means an Apostolic Book regarding the life of the Lord Christ on earth. The word 'Gospel' (εὐαγγέλιον) was transformed in its meaning throughout history in three stages:

1. The first stage was in the writings of the ancient Greek composers. Gospel used to mean, 'recompense for telling good news.' It meant also, 'thanksgiving offering for hearing good news.'
2. The second stage was in the writings of the later Greek composers. Gospel became to mean the good news themselves, as shown in the following from the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament:
 - In 2 Samuel 4: 10 we read, "When someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news." Good news here means gospel.
 - In 1 Samuel 31: 9 we read about the good news of the victory of the Israelites.
 - In Jeremiah 20: 15 we read, "Let the man be cursed who brought news to my father, saying, 'a male child was born to you!' making him very glad." Again, he talks about the good news or gospel.
3. The third stage was in (the New Testament era), and this word was to refer to four Holy Books (Gospels) that contain the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word 'Gospel' was also used in related meanings on different occasions as follows:

- a. Gospel was used in the plural tense to indicate thanksgiving offering to the gods for good news received.
- b. The word 'Gospel' was used in the Book of Isaiah in the Septuagint translation to indicate the specific news of the sending of the Anointed One by God to save His people. In Isaiah 40: 0 we read, "Get up into the high mountain (introduction to the Gospel); O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings." And in Isaiah 52: 7 we read, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace (of the Gospel), who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaim salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

The word 'Gospel' was used frequently in the New Testament to indicate the good tidings of God regarding the message of salvation. The word 'gospel' took also a larger meaning encompassing the whole Christian message. (See Mark 1: 1 and 1 Corinthians 15: 1) The Lord Christ declared the 'kingdom' or the 'gospel of the kingdom' as stated in Matthew 4: 23, 9: 35 and 24: 14. The word 'Gospel' was repeated 72 times in the New Testament, including 54 times in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, to indicate the good news of salvation that God bestowed upon us by offering His Son Jesus Christ to lead us to the bosom of His Father through the Holy Spirit.

The word 'gospel' is also related to some expressions, such as:

1. "The Gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1: 14), "the gospel of God" (1 Thessalonians 2: 2, 8, 9): In Romans 1: 1 Saint Paul says, "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated to the Gospel of God." Thus God Himself is the good tiding that declares His loving nature and offering for our salvation. Some Gnostics portrayed god as an angry and severe punisher of man! The Evangelists, however, portrayed the loving Christ, thus the glad tidings from the Father declared in His Son. Christ accordingly, asserted that He came to fulfill the will of the Father.
2. "The Gospel of the grace of God" as in Acts 20: 24: "Nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."
3. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ" as in Mark 1: 1, 2 Corinthians 4: 4, 9: 13 & 10: 14): If the Son came to declare to us the love of the Father, then He Himself carries the same love. The gospel of the Father is the same as the gospel of the Son, and leads us to union with the Father through His Son.
4. "The Gospel of the glory of Christ" as in 2 Corinthians 4: 3-4: "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."
5. Christ Himself evangelized this gospel, as stated in Mark 1: 14, "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.'"

6. "The Gospel or the good news of the kingdom" as in Matthew 4: 23: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom."
7. "The Gospel of peace" as in Ephesians 6: 15: "Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The gospel leads us to the inner peace of the soul and body by reconciling us to God, and reconciling us to man through God.
8. "The Gospel of salvation" as in Ephesians 1: 13: "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in which also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." In the gospel of salvation we receive the grace of forgiveness of our sins, and are freed from the bondage of sin to live with the spirit of victory.
9. The Apostle Paul sometimes used the expression 'my gospel', or 'our gospel' (2 Corinthians 4: 3, 1 Thessalonians 1: 5, and 2 Thessalonians 2: 14). Man is the object of the Gospel, for God wants us to enjoy the gospel and live by it. The gospel is a divine grace bestowed upon man to accept it and believe in it. (Mark 1: 15), to preach it to others (Romans 15: 19, 1 Corinthians 9: 14, 18, 2 Corinthians 10: 14 and 11: 7, and Galatians 2: 2), to serve it (Romans 1: 1 and 15: 16, Philippians 1: 12, 2: 22 and 4: 3, and 1 Thessalonians 3: 2), and to defend it (Philippians 1: 7, 17). We ought to defend the gospel with our private lives as well as with our words and behavior, and not become an obstacle to it (1 Corinthians 9: 12). Thus the gospel does not only represent the love of God towards man, but mutual love between God and man. Man ought not to be negative or neutral toward the gospel, but continually acting positively in order to become the image of his Creator.
10. The Gospel is for all people (Mark 13: 10 & 16: 15 and Acts 15: 7). It is not limited to Jews but includes all tongues, races, and nations. All get to know God, enjoy the union with Him, and be gratified in the eternal inheritance.
11. Saint Paul said in regard to this subject, "That the gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel." (Ephesians 3: 6) The promises of God through His Son are fulfilled in the gospel. In the gospel we meet the Lord Christ's resurrection from the dead, and this gives us hope for eternity and our inheritance; we not only enjoy divine gifts, but God Himself.

Therefore, we understand that the Gospel is not just a book to be read, or a philosophy to be embraced, but it is a life of a powerful divine love offered by the Father through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, that He may carry the human soul to the bosom of the Father. There, the human soul enjoys the Father, declaring its love to Him and it's believed in Him. Hence, it takes off to evangelize and witness to the Father in front of all without hindrance.

From the above, we also understand that by the word 'Gospel' it was not intended at the beginning of Christianity a written book. The clearest evidence to such fact is the saying of the Lord to His Disciples in Mark 16: 15 "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The first gospel written, however, was the one according to Matthew, written in Aramaic around 39-42 AD, that is ten years after the Ascension of the Lord Christ.

Saint John Chrysostom comments on the interpretation of the word 'Gospel' as 'good tidings' saying, "Yes, it is revoking the sentencing, forgiveness of sins, justification, sanctification, and salvation (1 Corinthians 1: 20). It is adoption, inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, and a relation with the Son of God who came to deliver this message to all: to the enemies, to the lost, and to the sitting in darkness. Is there anything that equals this good news? God came on earth; man went to heaven, and all mixed together: angels mixed with multitudes of the earthly, and men accompanied angels and hosts of heavens. Man saw the end of the long war, our nature was reconciled with God, the devil was ashamed, and demons ran away, death was defeated, paradise was opened, the curse was abolished, and the road was cleared from sin. Wrong was removed, justice was restored and the word of righteousness was seeded in all places and flourished. The way of the heavenly was established on earth and these hosts engaged us in honest dealings. Angels visited earth regularly, and hope in bright eternity increased abundantly."

The first use of the word 'Gospel' to mean written good news came in the book 'Teachings of the Twelve Apostles.' (15: 3)

The word 'Gospel' was used in the middle of the second century AD repeatedly and assertively to indicate the written story of the life of the Lord Christ. The plural word 'Gospels' or () was used to indicate the four gospels and was used for the first time by Justin the Martyr in around 152 AD, to refer to the Books that contain the Apostolic testimony to Jesus.

2. Was it necessary to have a written Gospel?

The question is as follows: If the Church survived for more than twenty years after the descending of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost without a written Gospel, and lived the Gospel and practiced its tenants in an abundant life in Jesus Christ, why then can't the Church through the ages live and practice the verbal gospel? Was it necessary to have a written Gospel?

- A. D. Guthrie says, "The verbal tradition had its important role in the Church, especially in the East. The written tradition was born not to replace the verbal one, but to supplement it and to complete it. The Gospel keeps the tradition intact without deviation, and tradition lists the canonical Gospels, keeps them from deviating, and interprets its meanings. The Church recognizes only one Gospel, not two, whether given to it by verbal tradition or in writing, and lives it in its thoughts, worship, and behavior. Thus the Church adopted the Gospel in order to confirm that the life it lives is according to its principles."
- b. The Gospels have their important rank among the Books of the Holy Bible because they inform us of the bibliography of the Lord Christ on earth. Christ is the longing of the Gentiles, the Savior and Bridegroom of the Church, and the object of its joy day and night. (Note: the Gospels are not just history book of the bibliography of Christ.)
- c. Since Christians of the first and second centuries AD were longing for the final coming of the Lord Christ, they embraced the Gospels with great joy as a prepared road to 'Maranatha', or the appearance of the Lord in His final or second coming (1 Corinthians 16: 22).

- d. Evangelism to Jews and Gentiles: In general, the evangelists depended on the verbal teachings. But when those being evangelized stated their interest in faith and start to inquire about the person of the Lord Christ, the Gospels, that are authentic apostolic documents, were to satisfy their inquiries.
- E. D. Guthrie says, "The Gospels not only played the evangelizing and teaching roles, but had a major role in the worship life of the Church. When the Church met to worship, they used portions of the Old Testament for readings and praising, especially the sections that prophesized of the Lord Christ. The believers, however, needed apostolic documents describing the bibliography of the Lord Christ, His teachings and miracles, His death and resurrection, in order to verify what prophesized in the Old Testament was, and to lead them to the Christian worship as a leading part in their worship.

We may conclude from the above that the first Church embraced the written Gospels with great delight and clung to them as evidence to the verbal Gospel. They used them as apostolic references revealing the life of the Lord Christ, His saving ministry that prepares them to His last coming, supporting them in their testimonies to the Lord among those being evangelized, and they played a major role in their liturgical worship.

3. Proper title to the Gospel:

There are many titles given to the Gospels. The shortest title is "According to Matthew" (), or "According to Mark" (). Some manuscripts, however, bear the title "The Gospel According to Matthew" () and some bear "Gospel According to Matthew" (). These titles go back to an old age and seem to be given by the scribes, and were not from the origin. The Church accepted these titles since they refer to the author who wrote the Gospel.

The expression, 'according to Matthew' or 'according to Mark', etc., has been misused in its meaning and its translation to other languages. It was wrongly and often translated to refer to the pronoun. For example, it reads, 'The Gospel of Matthew' or 'The Gospel of Mark'. This wrong translation leads to the impression that there is more than one Gospel, but in fact there is only one Gospel written by more than one person. The proper translation to the title of the Gospel should be as follows: "The Gospel written by Saint Matthew", or "The Gospel according to Matthew", or "The Gospel by Matthew".

These proper translations lead to the following meanings:

1. There is one Gospel or good news or good tidings, and more than one author wrote about it.
2. Many documented the events of the Gospel.
3. These translations clearly indicate the unity of the Gospel. Even though four Evangelists wrote it, each wrote a Book bearing his name; the Gospel is only one book with four faces. In other words, the Word of God was recorded in four texts, and the expression 'according to' () refers to the face or the form that its author gave it. The following Item explain those faces.

4. What is the wisdom behind the need of four Gospels? For clarity, let us elaborate as follows:

Divine inspiration offered us one Gospel, that is, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These evangelists reveal four sides of one Gospel; each one is portrayed from a different angle. It is like the one pearl that each author describes from his point of view.

The Gospels, though they may seem the same, especially the first three, in their content of the life, ministry, and sayings of the Lord Christ, in their essence each offer a face of the life and saving work of the Lord.

The Gospel of Christ according to Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or John is none but a foursome true picture of the person of Christ and His ministry.

A statue is better than a picture, for it can be viewed from all angles. The same is for the foursome picture of Christ, witnessed by four Evangelists, that enables the viewer to enjoy its beauty from all points of view. The viewer always gains new knowledge. Thus the Gospels express four angles or faces or pictures of one Gospel or good news.

The four Gospels are none but variations of the same story and subject, foursome details of the same object; this is how Irenaus, Bishop of Leon, describes the four Gospels in the second century.

The person of the Lord Christ is like a vast ocean, and the four Gospels are likened to floodlights shining over this unique Person.

5. The four Gospels are not mere historic Books:

The four Evangelists in reality are not historians sketching the bibliography of the Lord Christ according to the scientific definition of history. They are, however, truthful witnesses declaring the good news that affects our lives, making known the light of the resurrected Christ and the bestowing of the Spirit of God upon us. The historic bibliography from this point of view is ministering to our spiritual life and to our union with the Savior who is resurrected from the dead.

The four Gospels are not just historic Books meant to record all that is related to the life and teachings of the Lord Christ. They are not complete record of the bibliography of Christ in the flesh on earth. Many facts known to the Disciples are not recorded in their writings. Saint John clearly referred to this fact when saying, "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His Disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20: 30-31) He also says, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain in the books that would be written." (John 21: 25)

As evidence to this fact, let us ask the following questions:

1. What did the four Gospels tell us of the first thirty years of the life of the Lord Christ, except those relatively short segments about the birth of Jesus and His visit to Jerusalem with His parents at the age of twelve?

2. What did the four Gospels contain of the teachings of the Lord Christ after His resurrection when He was “being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God?” (Acts 1:3)
3. Why did not the four Gospels keep the chronological sequence of the events surrounding the Lord Christ? The only exceptions are the events of the nativity and the events of the passion of Christ during the Holy Week.

Therefore the Gospels are not a biography of the Lord Christ, but they are greater and deeper than history. They offer us the Person of Christ in order for us to accept Him, live by Him and in Him, and partake in His suffering and in His glory. This is why the Gospels concentrated on a short period of His life. The events of the Last week of the life of Christ, from entering Jerusalem to His resurrection, constitute around one third of the Gospel according to Mark, and slightly less than on third of the other three Gospels.

For the above reason, the early Church ignored the work of Titian who in the second century AD combined the four Gospels into one book that he called ‘Diatessarton’ or the ‘The Quartette’. The goal of the Gospel is not to collect and put in chronological order the events surrounding the life of Christ on earth, but to witness in many complementary and different ways to one truth, the infallible word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit Himself and designated as canonical Books. Thus the Church takes pride in the Gospel as the living and effective word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit for our instruction and edification in a superb method. Accordingly, the Church fathers did not care for combining and sorting chronologically the material of the Gospels, but instead concentrated on uncovering the depth of the content of each Gospel, in order to reveal the secrets of life hidden behind its words.

The Fathers, at the same time, cared and talked about the unity of the Evangelists in their description of the events, since some expressed some controversies. As an example, Saint Augustine wrote a book about the harmony among the Evangelists, titled “De Conesn Evangelitarum”. The scholar Origen in the second century AD wrote about the agreement among the four Evangelists and the harmony between their Gospels and the rest of the New Testament Books, even though each Book discusses the facts from a different point of view than the other Books. Origen compares the Holy Book to a harp with many different cords that deliver a beautiful and harmonious melody.

Origen says, “As every cord of a harp gives a particular sound that appears different from other cord’s sound, and the un-musical man that does not fathom the music harmony might think that the cords are not balanced, for they give different sounds, so are those who are not used to hearing and recognizing the harmony of God (the Word) in the Holy Books. He might think old does not agree with the new, or the Prophets with the Law, or the Gospels with each other and with the rest of the Disciples.

However, the connoisseur of music (the music of God) is like a wise man in words and in-deed, and is considered another David. By the skill of his interpretation he may bring the melody of the music of God. At the proper time, he may hit the cord of the Law, at another time the cord of the Gospels that is in harmony with the first cord, then the cord of the Prophets. When wisdom dictates, he may hit the apostolic cords such as the Gospels that are in harmony with the prophetic cords.

Therefore, the Holy Book is a tool of God, one, complete, and harmonious. It gives through the distinctive sounds, the sound of the only salvation to those willing to learn. This harp resists and eliminates the work of all evil spirits, as it happened with David the musician, when he used it to quiet the evil spirit that used to torture Saul (1 Samuel 16: 14).”

6. Each Gospel serves a particular purpose and complements the other Gospels:

We conclude from the above that the four Gospels were not mere recording of the biography of Christ, but each of the four Evangelists intended to portray a particular view and show a side of the Lord Christ and His ministry as it affected him, and to serve the purpose that he wrote for and whom he addressed the Gospel to. The end product of the four Gospels is a complete picture of the Lord Christ and His ministry that sticks in our mind.

Regardless of the purpose of each Evangelist in writing, it is clear that the Holy Spirit inspired the Gospels. They altogether include enough biography and teachings of our Savior to lead His Church in faith and ministering throughout all generations.

Four Gospels

The Gospel according to our teacher the Evangelist Matthew:

It was originally written, in general, to the Jews, and in particular, to the victorious Jews who recently embraced Christianity. Since Jews were expecting Christ, the Son of David, Saint Matthew demonstrated to them through the many prophecies in the Old Testament that Jesus is the expected King.

In other words, Saint Matthew presents to us Christ as the Anointed One, the King in whom all prophecies were fulfilled and the Law was completed. He came to reign over us, and we reign with Him in the heavens. Saint Matthew also presents to us Christ, Jesus the Nazarene, as the Anointed One that offers us the Law of the kingdom of heaven, and demands in return our obedience.

Accordingly, the Gospel according to Matthew presents the Person of the Lord Christ in a Jewish-Christian point of view, but its core is educational and apologetic. It offers Christ the rejected by Jewish leaders, the fulfillment of the Law, and the subject of Old Testament prophecies. In Him the kingdom of heaven is accomplished (the heavenly kingdom of God on earth), correcting the Jewish conception of the Messiah as an earthly King. The Gospel reflects typical tradition of the Jewish-Christian church in Palestine before the fall of Jerusalem.

The Gospel according to our teacher the Evangelist Mark:

Even though it is the basis of both the Gospel according to Matthew and the Gospel according to Luke, the Gospel according to Mark has its own special character.

It was originally written to the Roman world. The Romans were men of power and proud of human might. Having authority, the Romans believed in power and violence, as an indication of life and

maturity. Accordingly, the Gospel according to Saint Mark offers to us the strong Christ that helps the humanity in need. It accentuates the Person of Christ the Savior that conquers the power of evil and sin, the miracle wonder maker, and the spiritual conqueror that amazes us. Christ defeated the devil by His Cross and love, and not through warfare and violence. Above all, it offers us the power of Christ for Salvation as demonstrated in His miracles.

If the Romans were occupied by their empire in the known world of that time, the Gospel according to Mark attracted them to a different kind of kingdom that depends on the power of the Spirit and Divine work, and not on arrogant human hand.

The Gospel according to our teacher the Evangelist Luke:

The Gospel according to Luke was originally written to the cultured Greek, the scholars of Greek philosophy and literature. Accordingly, it has a brilliant and eloquent text, and probably is the finest and elegant of all Gospels with respect to literature.

It does not offer us the biography of Christ in a classical format, but in a divine style. It declares Christ the Savior of all humanity: the educated and the illiterate, the philosopher and the simple, the rich and the poor, and the idolatrous and the sinner. Christ does not save by human wisdom and philosophies, but by the offering of love.

Greek used to dwell on human ideals and perfections. Therefore, our teacher Luke offers them Christ in an image of perfection and mercy. He explains to them that the Lord Christ who was born of a woman, as a Son of Man, is also true God of the true God, the only Savior of man. He offers us Jesus Christ the Nazarene as friend and Savior of men, who demands our trust in Him.

The Gospel according to Luke starts and ends in Jerusalem as the Holy City, and salvation occurs in it. The message, however, is addressed to the entire Gentile world, as he clarifies later on in his other scripture. (See Acts of the Apostles)

The Gospel according to our teacher the Evangelist John:

The Gospel according to John was, in general, written to believers in the whole world. It declares to them the Lord Christ, the Divine Incarnated Word, who came among us to elevate us to Him in His heavens.

The Gospel has its own Divine style, for it was written to believers that know Christ, but needed a deeper knowledge that demonstrates the Divinity of Christ, especially that some heresies and fallacies had surfaced, trying to diminish from His Divinity and deny His incarnation. For example, some had claimed that the body of Christ was imaginary. Others claimed that the Virgin gave birth only to Christ's humanity and that an upper Spirit came down upon Him on His baptism, and then departed from Him at the Cross. And so many other false philosophies had surfaced.

Therefore, our teacher John the Beloved, the last surviving of the twelve Apostles, the beloved Disciple that used to lean on the Lord's chest, had the task of demonstrating the Divinity of the Lord Christ and the reality of His blessed incarnation. Saint John presents to us Jesus the Nazarene, Son of

the eternal and everlasting God, the Word of God, who appeared in the flesh for our salvation, and declares the Father to all those who accepts Him. (John 20: 30-31) He demands of us to kneel and worship, so that if we believe in Christ we obtain everlasting life.

Thus each Gospel was written for a certain purpose and for a particular group of people, in order for every person to understand that Christ came for him and to redeem him. The Spirit of God moved the Evangelist and they wrote about the need of all men, without prior agreement or conspiracy on what they should write. This explains some of the discrepancies among the four Gospels.

Discrepancies may be explained by having an Evangelist document what the other Evangelist had left, and each one of them was documenting the events mostly suiting the purpose of why he was writing. This proves the truthfulness of their witnessing and demonstrates to all of us that the Evangelists were independent and never consulted one another as we previously stated.

The four Gospels have much material in common, each Gospel affirming what the others is saying, and differs from each other so that they are complementing each other. It is most fitting to restate here what we mentioned in the beginning about Genesis 2: 10, "Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads." It is one Gospel written in four good-news.

Gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Comparison				
Date when written	Aramaic 39-42AD. Greek 60-67AD	60 or 61AD	58-63AD	After 70AD (90-100AD)
Place where written	Judea - Palestine	Rome	Rome?	Ephesus (Asia Minor)
Whom it was written for	Jews (Messiah)	Roman (Power)	Greek (Philosophy)	Whole world (Incarnation)
Opening	Genealogy of Christ	Voice crying in the wilderness	Offerings	In the beginning was the Word
Portraying of Christ	King	Servant of mankind. Mighty. Conqueror of the devil. Miracle maker	Merciful. Son of Man. Friend of mankind. The sacrifice and the Priest offering the sacrifice.	The Incarnated Word.
Christ came to	Fulfill the Law	Perform miracles	Save humanity	Dwell among us
Christ cared for	Prophecies	Performing miracles	History	Divinity
Its Symbol	Face of a man (the third animal) for Christ is born of Mary	Face of a lion (the first animal) for Christ is strong	Face of an ox (the second animal) for Christ is the offering	Face of an eagle (the fourth animal) for Christ is the Resurrection

Christ in the four Gospels – Life of Christ on earth

The righteous son rose upon us and in its wings came healing. In the Old Testament, we men were watching for the dawn of that day that Abraham saw and rejoiced. They were watching for the appearance and advance of the star that was prophesized by Balaam, and for the rising of the light that was predicted by Isaiah. We were like people gazing at the clouds passing from the horizon, hoping to catch the light of that future glory. But now our hope has been fulfilled and the visions were correct, for the King of Glory Himself came, “For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” “We saw the Anointed of the Lord”, and, “For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people.”

When the light of Christ shone, man understood better and fully the mystery of life and his values for eternity were elated above what they used to be, for the Gospel of Christ is the truth that emits rays of hope to the lost and to sinners. It is a gospel to the transgressor, vindication to the oppressed, shelter to the poor, support to women, and an embrace to little children; what a gospel!

Christ, who twenty centuries ago secured complete victory over sin and darkness, is the Anointed One of the New Testament. All what we learn about Christ is from the Holy Book; history only tells us that He existed. Accordingly, one should not dismiss the Scriptures and relies only on history. To evangelize about Christ according to Scriptures is to declare that He was incarnated, Son of Man, Savior through the Cross, and Lord by His resurrection. This is the evangelizing that changes hearts, renews life of men, and offers them everlasting life in Jesus Christ.

The following table is a comparison between the Books of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament:

<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
The Law:	Christ:
The Law (Proclamation of the Law)	The Gospels (Announcement of the New Testament)
Historical Books (their practical execution)	Acts (application of the Gospel)
The Prophets:	The Apostles:
Poetic Books (part of the experience)	Epistles (part of the experience)
Prophetic Books (what is behind the experience)	Book of Revelation (oracle of experience)

References of the above study:

- ‘Our Holy Book and our Holy Christ’ by HG the late Bishop Youanis
- ‘The Church at the time of the Apostles’ by HG the late Bishop Youanis
- ‘Opening of the new Testament by Dr. Morris Tadros
- ‘The Gospel according to Matthew’ by Fr. Tadros Jacob
- ‘Introduction to the Gospels and Acts’ by HG Bishop Moses
- ‘Dictionary of the Bible’
- ‘Christ in all books’ by A.M. Horicon

General comments on the Holy Book

- The Holy Book consists of all Books inspired by God, related to the creation of the world and its salvation, the history of the dealings of God with His people, prophecies of the end time, and didactic (doctrinal and moral) commandments that suit mankind over the different period of times.
- The Holy Book or Bible is also called 'the Scriptures' as in "search the Scriptures" (John 5: 39), and 'the word of God' as in "But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect." (Roman 9: 6)
- The number of authors of the Books of the Bible is forty (40) and they came from all kind of classes of people, from shepherd to fisherman to leader to tax collector to prophet, to the king and to the politician. It was written over a period of 1,600 years. All authors were Jews, except for Luke who was a Gentile from Antioch.
- The number of Books in the Bible is sixty-six (66). Thirty-nine (39) of them are in the Old Testament. These do not include the deuterocanonical Books that were omitted by the Protestants. Twenty-seven (27) Books are in the New Testament. The number of chapters is 1,189 (929 OT & 260 NT). The number of verses is 31,302 (23,248 OT & 8,054 NT). The number of words is 430,938 (322,597 OT & 108,341 NT).
- The Apostle Paul wrote the largest number of Books, which is 14 Epistles. The longest Books are the Book of Psalms in the OT, which consists of 151 chapters, and the Book of Acts in the NT, which consist of 28 chapters. The shortest Books are the Book of Adbiah in the OT and consist of one chapter and 21 verses, and the Second Epistle of John in the NT and consist of one chapter and 13 verses. Accordingly, it is the shortest Book in the Bible.
- Divergent literary styles are in the Scriptures, from prose, to poetry, to history, to story, to wisdom, to literature, to prophecy, to education, to warning, to philosophy, and to proverbs.
- Even though the Books of the Bible were written in different time periods and with different text styles, they have in common the same composition based on one divine inspiration. This is in spite of the diversity necessitated by the circumstances occurring at the time of writing.
- In spite of the old ages where the Books were written in, they are still relevant for past, present, and future times. The more civilization advances, the more the Holy Book importance increases.
- The Holy Book is the source of Christian faith. Consequent to the divine inspiration of the Holy Book is its inerrancy (without errors) and its inclusion of all that is required for faith and spiritual life. It is the heavenly bread for all true Christians, and his guide in life and in death.
- Day after day the Bible keeps on spreading and being studied. Presently, more than 25 millions volumes are published annually. Great countries based their constitutions on the Bible's virtuous principles, and they flourished and advanced in civilization and greatness because of the elated principles of the Bible.
- The Holy Book is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

What is the meaning of the word 'Testament'?

The word 'Testament' in Greek is (), and in Coptic is (). The word 'Testament' is used in two forms:

- a. Covenant or agreement, as in we secured an agreement or treaty.
- b. Trust, as in I trusted this person with such assignment.

First: The word 'Testament' used as Covenant:

A covenant or a treaty is a document binding two parties that agreed on its content. Testament was frequently used in the Bible within this meaning. Examples: "But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter..." , and "I have set my rainbow in the clouds and it will be a sign of a covenant between me and the earth."

1. Covenant of God with Noah:

Before the Flood: "I myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth to destroy from under heaven all flesh... But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark." (Genesis 6: 17-18)

After the Flood: "I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you...And God said: This is the sign of the covenant that I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with joy for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh." (Genesis 9: 9-15)

2. The circumcision covenant of God with Abraham and the old Jewish nation:

"And God said to Abraham: As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you." (Genesis 17: 9-11)

3. Isaiah says regarding the covenants of God with His nation:

"As for me, says the Lord. This is my covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, says the Lord, from this time and forever more." (Isaiah 59: 21)

Second: the word 'Testament' used as in Trust:

"And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people." (Exodus 24: 6-7)

God said to Moses after breaking the first two tablets of stone, "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all you people I will do marvels such as not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation." (Exodus 34: 10) And Moses said, "The Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenants." (Deuteronomy 9: 11) Moses also said to the Hebrews across the Jordan River, "And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone." (Deuteronomy 4: 12-14)

Joshua says regarding the ark where these tablets are to be put in, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and cross over before the people." (Joshua 3: 6)

- **Also called the execution or cutting of a covenant:** In the old ages, those entering into an agreement or a covenant, when cutting the agreement they used to slaughter an animal and cut it into pieces, and the parties entering the agreement used to walk in between the pieces. The Lord Himself did a similar act when He announced His covenant with Abraham: "Then He said to him, I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it? So He said to him, bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two... Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram (repeated promise of blessing)... And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. The same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." (Genesis 15: 7-10, 12, 17, 18)

In that same meaning, God said through the Prophet Jeremiah about those who have transgressed His covenant, "And I will give men who have transgressed my covenant which they made before me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it... I will give them to the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life." (Jeremiah 34: 18-20)

- **There are two covenants in the Holy Book between God and men: the Old Testament, and the New Testament.** The Apostle Paul referred to the Old Testament in (Romans 9: 3-5) saying, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."

Accordingly, the Holy Book contains the Old Testament, or the preparatory Law, and the New Testament, or the Law of Salvation.

- **The Old Testament prophesized about the New Testament:**

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31: 31-34)

The Apostle Paul borrowed almost the same phraseology in Hebrews (10: 16-17 and 8: 8-13.)

- The Prophet Ezekiel also prophesized of the New Testament, for he says about God in Ezekiel 37: 26, "Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them."
- The Old Testament, that is the covenant of God with Abraham, was cut or executed by the shedding of blood of animals and the rituals of washing, fasting, and feasts.
- As for the New Testament, it was cut by the shedding of the blood of the Lord Christ, glory be to Him. (Hebrews 9: 12) and (1 Peter 1: 18-20) The Lord of glory, Jesus, when establishing the Sacrament of Eucharist on Holy Thursday said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26: 28) And in Mark 14: 24 He says, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many." Also in Luke 22: 20, "Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.'"

Our teacher Saint Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 11: 25, "In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, and 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This does, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"

- **According to the above verse, the blood of Christ is called the blood of the covenant:** Hebrews 10: 29 reads, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" Also in Hebrews 13: 20, "How may the God of peace who brought upon our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will."
- **Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament:** Hebrews (12: 18, 22, and 24) reads: "For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."
- The Apostles and the Disciples are called ministers of the New Testament: "But our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant." (2 Corinthians 3: 5-6)

What is meant by 'Introduction'?

By 'introduction' we mean a systematic study with the goal of researching all Books of the New Testament in order to determine the following: its author, its authenticity, whether it is canonical, its characteristics, the purpose and the goal of writing each Gospel or Epistle, race of the believers it was written to, assessing the date and place of composition of each Book, the major themes of each Gospel

or Epistle and its Christological significance. In order to prove that a Gospel or Epistle is canonical we seek two types of evidence:

- a. Exterior evidence that relies on Church tradition.
- b. Interior evidence that relies on the Scriptural text itself.

Some extreme scholars use that the purpose of the introduction to the Gospel, to determine the canonical sections in the Bible using a historical critique study; in order to conclude that some sections are canonical, while refuting others as being doubtful. This is absolutely not the aim of our study.

Our study is based on a theological theorem that states that the Bible is the word of God that He inspired to men and that the whole Bible is truthful and inerrant, complete and complementary and may not be added to or deducted from. Therefore, the reliance on the truthfulness and inerrancy of the Bible constitutes the very beginning basis of the study, and not its conclusion. The aim of our study is to ascertain that the Books of the New Testament are canonical and genuine; it is our testimony to the word of God and to the Book of God. It is used to solidify the faith of believers and to ground them in the truth.

Essential Principles in the Study of the Bible

1. The complete Holy Book, with all its sections and verses, is the word of God (2 Peter 20: 21). This means that it is not a human Book containing a particular sect nor a human belief nor an emotional expression of a personal religion; but it is the Book of God that He inspired by His Holy Spirit. Galatians 1: 11-12 reads, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."
2. We attribute a great deal too Church tradition in testifying to the inerrancy of the Bible and to its Book being canonical.
3. The Scripture itself testifies that its Books are canonical and truthful, for the Bible testifies to its authors, to those whom it is written to, to its literary style, to the similarity among its Books, and to other documents manifested in the text.

What is meant by a Book being Canonical?

The word 'canon' is from the Greek word (), and means rule or authoritative law.

- Canon was used in the New Testament to indicate a rule or a law to measure up our behavior. This is clear from the following verses: "We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us – a sphere which especially includes you... Not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere." (2 Corinthians 10: 13, 15-16) And, "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them." (Galatians 6: 16) "...Let us walk by the same rule." (Philippians 3:16)

- The word 'canon' evolved with time to designate the authoritative collection of Books that the Church accepts. When we say that this Book is canonical, it means that the Church accepts it as inspired by God and commits to it as the rule of faith and spiritual growth.
- Accordingly, Irenaeus called the Holy Books the 'Law of the Truth', Clements of Alexandria called them the 'True Gospel Law', and Eusebius called them the 'Church Canon.'
- The New Testament is divided into three sections: Historical Books consisting of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, educational Books consisting of the Pauline Epistles and the Catholic Epistles, and a prophetic Book that is the Book of Revelation.

Meaning of the word 'Gospel'

- Gospel in Greek is () and is derived from the verb 'to inform' (). It is composed of two parts, 'good' and 'the one who informs'.

In Coptic it is () and means good news or good tidings. These good tidings are that God sent His only begotten Son to the world to save the believers. The equivalent Arabic word () means an Apostolic letter concerning the life of Christ on earth.

The word 'Gospel' or () in Greek evolved in its historical use over three time periods:

1. 'Gospel' was used in the writings of ancient Greek composers to indicate the reward of conveying good tidings, or thanksgiving for receiving good tidings.
 2. 'Gospel' was used in the writings of later Greek composers to indicate the good tidings themselves.
 3. Finally, 'Gospel' was used to indicate the Books that contain the biography of the Lord Christ.
- The word Gospel is used abundantly in the New Testament, in its second meaning stated above. It is used to convey the good news of God or the message of salvation.
 - The first use of the word 'Gospel' to indicate a written good tidings was in the book 'Teachings of the Twelve Apostles' (15: 3). In the middle of the second century AD, the word 'Gospel' was extensively used to refer to the biography of the Lord Christ.
 - The plural word 'Gospels' or () in Greek was used for the first time to indicate all four Gospels by Justin the Martyr around 152AD. Justin used it to indicate the Books that contain apostolic testimony to Christ. The equivalent Arabic word also has the connotation of Apostolic Book that contains the biography of Christ on earth.

In the book 'The Precious Treasure' page 1 we read: A gospel usually entails an event or a work done that is joyful to the one who tells it as well as those to whom it is told. And what joyful event is greater than that of the almighty God who wants to redeem His people from their sins, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

A gospel is usually named after the one who spells its tale, and even though the Holy Spirit inspired it, the human factor still exists.

The use of the word ‘Gospel’ in the New Testament

Saint Paul mentions the word ‘Gospel’ in his Epistles 60 times, and it is mentioned 16 times in the rest of the New Testament. As an example, Saint John used the noun once and the verb twice in the Book of Revelation. Saint Luke used the verb often, but never used the noun except in the sayings of Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts (Acts 15: 7). This was in the Council of Jerusalem that discussed the issue of Judaism, where Saint Paul said, “God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the words of the Gospel and believe.” And in Acts 20: 24 Saint Paul says, “Nor do I count my life dear to myself, so I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of grace of God.”

The word ‘Gospel’ as used by three Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, & Luke

Item	Mark		Matthew		Luke	
	Verse	Content	Verse	Content	Verse	Content
1	1: 1	The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.				
2	1: 14	Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God.				
3	1: 15	And saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.”				
4			4: 23	And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom.	4: 15	And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.
			9: 35	Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom.		

Item	Mark		Matthew		Luke	
	Verse	Content	Verse	Content	Verse	Content
5	8: 35	But whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it	16: 25	But whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.	9: 24	For whoever desires to save his life will lose it.
6	10: 29	Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left ..., for My sake and the Gospel's, who shall not receive...	19: 29	And everyone who has left houses or brothers or... for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.	18: 29	Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left... for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive...
7	13: 10	And the Gospel must first be preached to all the nations.	24: 14	And the Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the entire world as a witness to all nations.		
8	14: 9	Assuredly, I say to you, whenever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.	26: 13	Assuredly, I say to you, whenever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.		
9	16: 15	Go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to every creature.				
The word 'Gospel' was used eight times. Six of them (Items 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9) the word 'Gospel' alone was used as if it were a known fact. Once the expression 'Gospel of Jesus Christ' was used (Item 1), and once the expression 'Gospel of God' was used (Item 2).			The word 'Gospel' was used four times, three of them it was used in salvation term (the Gospel of the kingdom).		Saint Luke avoided the word 'Gospel' in Items 4, 5 & 6 as it was used in the Gospel according to Mark and Matthew.	

Does the scope of the Gospel points only to drawing near to the kingdom of God?

Some scholars concluded that the aim of the Gospel is to bring man near to the kingdom of God. They base their conclusion on the first time Saint Mark used the word 'Gospel' after using it in his opening. As he says in (Mark 1: 14-15): "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.'" The truth, however, is not just we ought to draw near to the kingdom of God, but that the kingdom itself became closer. At this point we make the following remarks:

1. Christ says in the Gospel according to Saint Mark (8: 35 & 10: 29), "But whosoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it." Could this statement by all means indicate the approach to the kingdom of God!
2. Saint Matthew in the corresponding verses (16: 25 & 19: 29) eliminates the word 'Gospel'. Saint Matthew considered the Gospel part of the mission of Christ, for Christ's ministry is the Gospel.
3. Saint Luke eliminated the word 'Gospel' in 9: 24 that corresponds to Mark 8: 35. In another verse, Luke 18: 29, Saint Luke replaces 'for Gospel's sake' that was written in the Gospel according to Saint Mark 10: 29 with 'for the sake of the kingdom of God.' Saint Luke, therefore, equates the depth and width of the Gospel to the kingdom itself.

The word 'Gospel' in the Apostle Paul's Epistles

Saint Paul used the verb 'preach' once in its general terms in (1 Timothy 3: 16), "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, **preached** among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

In all the other verses, it was used in its religious meaning that is familiar in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament:

- "O Zion, you who bring **good tidings**, gets up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring **good tidings**, lift up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God."" (Isaiah 40: 9)
- "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings **good news**, who brings **good tidings** of good things, who proclaims peace, who brings salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52: 7)
- "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to **preach good tidings** to the poor..." (Isaiah 61:1)

And many more verses...

- The Apostle Paul many times used the verb 'preach' in its literal meaning, that is, to preach the Gospel. He used it in this meaning nine times out of nineteen times.
- The verb 'preach' may be followed or be preceded by the noun 'Gospel' as in (Romans 1: 15): "I am ready to **preach the Gospel** to you who are in Rome also." And in (1 Corinthians 15: 2): "By which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain." And in (Galatians 1: 8): "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, **preach** any other **Gospel** to you, let it be accursed." And in (Galatians 1: 11-12): "But I make known to you, brethren that the **Gospel** which was **preached** by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." And in (Galatians 4: 13): "You know that because of physical infirmity I **preached the Gospel** to you at first."

- The verb 'preach' may be used in conjunction with the Greek suffix () as in (2 Corinthians 10: 16): "To preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you."

The subject of preaching may refer to:

1. The Gospel itself: "I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you" (1 Corinthians 1:15). "Did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you free of charge?" (2 Corinthians 11: 7)
 2. A synonym to the Gospel: "preach any other gospel." (Galatians 1: 8-9)
 3. The Blessings: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who brings glad tidings of good things." (Romans 10: 15), which is taken from (Isaiah 52: 7)
 4. The Faith: "He who formally persecuted us now preaches the faith." (Galatians 1: 23)
 5. Peace: "And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who where near." (Ephesians 2: 17)
 6. Christ Himself: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood." (Galatians 1: 15-16)
- Saint Paul also uses the word 'Gospel' with the meaning of the verb 'to preach' 28 times out of 60 times. The general meaning in this use is the glad tidings that Christ declared to the world. Gospel in such use does not limit itself to the complete ministry of Christ and his sayings, or the Book that contains such biography, but it includes the divine power of salvation to all those who believe. "For I am not nor ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." (Romans 1: 16)
 - We notice that the Apostle Paul does not claim that there is contradiction between faith and Law. Probably Marcion started that controversy between the Gospel and the Law.

Gospel is always tied to the covenant or the promise, for the Gospel is the fulfillment of the covenant, and the covenant is the promise of the Gospel. Saint Paul in this regard says: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated to the **Gospel of God, which He promised** before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures." (Romans 1: 1-2) And in (Ephesians 3: 6) he says, "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of His **promise in Christ through the Gospel.**" And in (Acts 13: 32) he says, "And we declare to you **glad tidings - that promise** which was made to the fathers."

- The use of the word 'mystery' or 'mysteries' as a synonym to the Gospel: The Apostle Paul says in (1 Corinthians 4: 1), "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and steward of the **mysteries** of God."
- When the Apostle Paul uses the word 'Gospel' in a specific meaning, it refers to one of the following:
 - And adjective: "For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it!" (2 Corinthians 11: 4) And, "I marvel

that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different Gospel.” (Galatians 1: 6)

- A phrase: “But I make known to you, brethren that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.”(Galatians 1:11) And, “And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.” (Galatians 2: 2) And, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand.” (1 Corinthians 15: 1)
 - Added to an adjective: “The Gospel of the glory of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4: 4). And, “The Gospel for the uncircumcised” (Galatians 2: 7) and, “The Gospel of your salvation.” (Ephesians 1: 13) And, “The Gospel of peace.” (Ephesians 6: 15) And, “The glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” (1 Timothy 1: 11)
 - Added to a person: Six times ‘Gospel’ was added to God, ten times it was added to Christ, and six times it was added to the Apostle Paul.
- When the Apostle Paul talks about his Gospel, it is the same as the Gospel he preaches or to his preaching of the Gospel. The meaning does not differ much.
 - The expression ‘Gospel of Christ’ that the Apostle Paul used too often in his Epistles means that Christ is the subject of the Gospel. This is made clear in (2 Corinthians 4: 4), “Lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

When Saint Paul says in (Romans 15: 19), “From Jerusalem and round about Illyricum I have fully preached the **Gospel of Christ**,” he is identifying the Gospel that talks about Christ. He further explains this meaning in verse 20 of the same chapter, “And so I have made it my aim to preach the Gospel, not were Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation.” This explanation is also applicable to Saint Paul’s discourse about the Gospel that talks about **salvation** or about **peace**:

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy spirit of Promise.” (Ephesians 1: 13)
“And having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.” (Ephesians 6: 15)

The Gospel According To St. Mathew

The Author:

St. Mathew the apostle was moved & inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the 1st. Gospel. His original name was Levi which in Hebrew means: joined .His other Hebrew name: Mathew was most probably, adopted as his new apostolic name. Mathew means gift of Jehovah, & it is a contraction, as is also Matthias, of Mattathias. He was the son of Alphaeus (other person than James' father).

His Call: He was a Jewish from Galilee, & he was the chief tax collector at Capernaum , collecting taxes for Herod & the Romans , that why they were greatly hated by the Jewish who considered them as traitors. As Jesus passed by Mathew's office He said to him, "Follow Me." So he left everything & followed Him. See: Mat. 9: 9, Mark 2:14 & Luke 5: 27, 28. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house & invited his fellow tax collectors to get acquainted with Jesus. This banquet aroused the anger of the Jewish Leaders (see details in Luke 5: 27- 32). From that time on Mathew followed Jesus & became one of the 12 apostles (see: Mat. 10: 3, Mark 3: 18, Luke 3: 15 & Acts 1: 13.). St. Matthew was very humble, he mentioned his name always related to his previous title – tax collector- admitting his past sinful life, he also used to put his name after St. Thomas not before him as the other Gospels did (see the list of the 12 apostles in the previous references.), & he also did mentioned the details of the banquet he made for Jesus.

St. Matthew preached in Ethiopia, Persia & some other places & was martyred for the sake of Christ. (Synaxarium, Babah the 12th.).

Date & Province, (Place of Origin):

From the Church history & traditions we know that the Gospel of St. Matthew was found in 2 manuscripts: the Aramaic one (was lost) & the Greek one.

The Aramaic Manuscript:

There is a consensus among the church fathers that St. Matthew wrote his gospel first in the Aramaic Language (the colloquial or common Hebrew that Christ & His disciples used). Among these fathers are : Papias , bishop of Hirapolis (60 – 130 AD - Irenaus, bishop of Lyons in the 2nd century- Pantaenus, dean of the Theological Seminary of Alexandria in the 2nd century – Origen, the most popular Bible Scholar in history who lived in the 3rd century- Jerome , 4th century- St. Athanasius the 20th pope of Alexandria- Epiphany , archbishop of Cyprus – Cyril of Jerusalem- John Chrysostom- , & St. Clement of Alexandria, end of 2nd century who said : "For St. Matthew who preached 1st to the Hebrews, wrote his gospel 1st in their native language as he was about to leave them to preach to other nations." See Eusebius 3: 6, 24.

This manuscript was written between 39 & 45 AD. We do not have this manuscript now because: 1- Desolation of Jerusalem & dispersion of the Jews. 2- It was tampered by the Judaizers who sponsored one of the non canonical gospels, the gospel of the Hebrews.

The Greek Manuscript:

This the one we have right now, it is not different from the Hebrew one except in the language of course, well accepted by the church fathers as a genuine canonical gospels at the same level of the other 3 gospels, translated or rewritten by St. Matthew himself or under his close supervision, was quoted a lot by the church fathers. The question now is, is it translated or rewritten? In a book named (Harmony of the Gospels), we read "the early fathers set to dates for the writing of the gospel of St.

Matthew: one is 39-45 AD, & the other is 60-65 AD. So this proves that it was written twice, the reason for that is very clear, after the desolation of Jerusalem, the Jews were dispersed everywhere & they gradually lost their native language to the Greek one which was prevailing at that time, St. Matthew –expecting this through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit- prepared for them his gospel in Greek while the Hebrew one disappeared gradually. Regarding the time of the Greek Manuscript, it is possible that it was written between 60 & 65.

The Translation Presumption:

That the Greek Manuscript is just a translated copy of the Aramaic one done by St. Matthew himself or by somebody else-whom we do not know- under his close supervision.

The Original Manuscript Presumption:

Is that, the Greek Manuscript that we have was originally written in Greek & was not just a translation of the Hebrew one for the following reasons:

- 1- The translation presumption cannot explain the similarities & sometimes the congruities between this gospel & the other three gospels in certain parts.
- 2- In the narrative parts of his gospel St. Matthew quoted from & alluded to the Hebrew Manuscript of the O.T. while in the discourses & sermons he quotes from & alludes to the Septuagint one .This was the same in his Aramaic Gospel as well as the Greek one. This explains the similarities between Matthew, Mark & Luke in the discourses & their differences in the narrations.
- 3- The Greek Manuscript includes some translations of some Hebrew words like: Emanuel, which is translated “God with us.” Mat.1: 23, & Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull. It also includes explanation of some Jews costumes & expressions like: “Sadducees who say there is no resurrection.” Mat.22: 23, “That field has been called the field of blood to this day.” Mat. 27: 8, “Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished.” Mat. 27: 15, and “So they took the money & did as they were instructed; & this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” Mat.28: 15. So explaining the Hebrew terms & costumes, which of course were well known for the Jewish people does not go with idea of a gospel written originally in Hebrew for the Jews who lived in Philistines & was translated later to Greek.

Accordingly it is well accepted now that, after writing his gospel in Hebrew, & leaving Philistines he rewrote it again to the benefits of the Jews in the Diaspora, & this Greek one replaced the Hebrew one.

Note: There is another presumption based on misunderstanding of a saying of Papias who said “Matthew wrote the Divine Sayings in Hebrew.” So they wrongfully concluded that Matthew did not actually wrote a gospel(Hebrew or Greek) but just some sayings of Jesus, & these sayings were passed on through generations, & formed one of the sources of the gospel of St. Matthew that we have now. They refer to these sayings by the letter “Q” which is a contraction of the word Quelle in German & means: source. This Presumption is of course write or accepted

Proposed time& place for the Greek Manuscript:

It was written before the desolation of Jerusalem of course because it did not mention anything about (<70 AD) the sixties are the best possibility for writing this gospel, St. Irenaus said “St. Matthew wrote his gospel while St. Paul & St. Peter were preaching in Rome. (62- 67 AD), & (The Harmony of

The Gospels) set time between 60 & 67 for writing this gospel. It was written in somewhere out of Philistines.

Addressees (to whom it was written):

St. Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews in general, especially those who were recently converted to Christianity.

External evidence (witness of the Holy Tradition): Many of the early church fathers like: Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, & others bore witness to this fact.

Internal Evidence (from the text itself):

1. The genealogy of Christ in the 1st chapter of this gospel starts from Abraham the father of the Hebrews. In this genealogy, St. Matthew is proving that Christ is the legitimate heir of the Davidic Kingdom, & of Abraham through whom God gave the promises to the Hebrews.
2. St. Matthew refers to the flight of Christ to Egypt as a continuation of the traditional history of the Israelites (them going to & exiting from Egypt under Moses leadership.).
3. The gospel is written in a way that fits perfectly the needs of the Jews, by quoting, referring & alluding a lot from the O.T. Also talking about the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Jerusalem, Jewish Priesthood, & Jewish Traditions, more than the other gospels. (See Mat.5:35/ 23:20, 21/ & 24:15.
4. He put emphasis on the situations that involves the traditions, rites, rituals of the Jews & Christ reaction to them, he is the only one who recorded : the appearance of the star to the Magi, the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, the slaughter of Bethlehem children by King Herod , the woes that Christ poured on the Scribes & the Pharisees, the parable of the ten virgins which portrays the traditions of a Jewish wedding, Pilate's wife dream regarding the crucifixion of Christ, the resurrection of some of the deceased holy men of God , when Christ commended his spirit into the hands of His Father, & their appearance to many after Christ's Resurrection, the bribe given by the Jewish leaders to the keepers of Christ's sepulcher so that they will lie & claim that the disciples stole Christ's body by night while they were asleep, & many other similar incidents that get the attention of the Jews to whom he wrote his gospel.
5. St. Matthew did explain the Jewish traditions & customs, like the other evangelists did, because he wrote to people who are very familiar of these things (Jews.).

Note:

Talking about the Passover, St. Matthew says in(26:17) "Now on the first day of the feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?." While St. Mark explains more & says in(14:12), "Now on the first day of the Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover Lamb, His disciples said to Him, where do you want us to go & prepare, that you may eat the Passover?."

6. He described Jerusalem as The Holy City, while recording the Temptation of Christ on the Mountain (Mat.5:4), "Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple."

7. He did not explain the meaning of the Aramaic words he wrote, because he is writing to people who use this same language ex. "Raca" in (5:22), which is a word of strong abuse meaning empty headed or fool, & "Korban" in (5:23) i.e. (gift.)
8. He was keen to portray the N.T. as a fulfillment & completion of the O.T. he stands alone in mentioning what Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mountain: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." In (5:17). The Sermon on the Mountain in his gospel is the antitype of the Sinai Law, & is founded in the concept that Christ came to fulfill the law & the prophets, so Christianity is superior to Judaism.
9. He is the only evangelist who recorded the statement made by Christ when He said to the Canaanite women, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
10. He mentioned the 3 main corner stones of the Jewish worship: charitable deeds, prayer & fasting, in (5:1, 5, 16), the Temple Tax in (17:24-27), the Tithes in (23:7) & washing of hands as action of purification from blood in (27:24).

Purpose of the Gospel:

1-Dogmatic Purpose: Introducing Christ to the addressees as the Anticipated Messiah foretold by the prophets to reign over David's Kingdom, & in Whom all the prophecies & promises of the O.T. are fulfilled, putting in mind that if he succeeded in pursuing this goal, the Jews would accept Christ as their savior. This gospel could be as a last call for the Jews, "Either you accept Christ as the Anticipated Messiah, or be ready for His judgment, & condemnation.

2-Apologistic Purpose: Defending Christ & Christianity against the Jewish claims & plots, so he detailed Christ's virginal birth from virgin Mary, how the angel defended her against her fiancé's doubts, Christ's triumphal Resurrection & the bribe given to the guards by the Jewish leaders to deny the Resurrection. That why this gospel is considered to be the "the early Christian Apology." By a scholar named R.V.G. Stasher.

3-Liturgical Purpose: Another scholar(G.D. Kilpatrick) sees that the gospel was written for a liturgical purpose, to be read during the early Christian Liturgical Worship, proving that by the clarity, concision, consistency, & balanced style. Other scholars see it in different way, believing that because of these characteristics the gospel was used for a liturgical purpose.

The Gospel According to St. Matthew.

The Characteristics of the Gospel

1- Doctrinal:

The substance of the gospel is composed on doctrinal basis, St. Matthew brought together Christ's doctrines that deal with the same subject in one setting(objective way), regardless of the chronological order, while St. Luke for example records Christ's doctrines dealing with the same doctrines separately while drafting his narration about Christ's deeds. That why we find the narration in Mark & Luke continuous, while in Matthew it is interrupted by 5 main discourses:

- 1- Sermon on the Mountain (Chs.5-8), as a contrast between the righteousness of the O.T. & that of the N.T.
- 2- Instructions to the apostles. Ch10.
- 3- Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, in ch.13.
- 4- Qualifications required being a disciple of Christ. Ch.18.
- 5- Eschatological discourses & prophetic teachings about the Latter Day, end of the world,& the desolation of Jerusalem Chs.23-25.

At the end of each big discourse we read the conclusion: “when Jesus has ended these (sayings). Mat.7:28& 19:1, & 26:1 or (commanding) Mat.11:1.

It is obvious then that St. Matthew put special emphasis on Christ’s Teachings, formulating them as thorough as possible.

2- Semitism:

This gospel has more Semitic features than that according to St. Mark -who has more of Latina features- & that according to St. Luke tends more towards the Hellenistic side. That is will understood because St. Matthew mainly wrote Christians of Jewish backgrounds, & its main concern is the Messiah & His Kingdom. He introduces Christ as the anticipated Messiah, the king of Israel, & the sole savior of the human race, who was refused by the Jews who resisted Him, & crucified Him.

He also portrays Him as the King who will restore the fallen Davidic Kingdom, through many ways:

- A. Genealogy of Christ (Ch.1).
- B. Mat.2:2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?”
- C. Mat.10:5, 6 “...but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
- D. Mat.15:24 “...I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
- E. Mat.19:28 “...you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
- F. He indicates in depth the relationship between Christianity & the O.T. showing how much the early church was taken up with searching the fulfillment of the O.T. prophecies in Christ, who came not to destroy the O.T. law, to fulfill its promises of salvation & to institute God’s kingdom, that why the term “ Kingdom of God.” Is repeated about 46 times in this gospel, the thing which makes many scholars to view this gospel as Jewish Christian study revealing the person of Christ hidden in the Scriptures.

Note:

The repetition of statements like, “thus it was written.” & “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying.” Giving the impression that St. Matthew sees history as a tool to fulfill the divine will & plan for saving mankind, (The Divine Destiny of History).

3- Confronting the Jews with their mistakes & short comings:

While leading them to believe in Christ, he did not neglect to show their faithlessness & shortcomings. Here are some examples:

- 1- (Mat.8:10,11), “Assuredly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel, & I say to you that many will come from east & west, & sit down with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob in

the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness.”
Stressing the faith of the gentile centurion compared to that of the Israelites.

- 2- (20:18), “...The Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests & to the scribes; & they will condemn Him to death.”
- 3- (12:1-13), Christ reproaching them for their misunderstanding of keeping the
- 4- (21:43) “The Kingdom of God will be taken from you & given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”
- 5- (6:2, 5, &16), Christ condemning their care only about the formalities of worship, not about its spiritualities.
- 6- (15:3-9), also condemning them for pursuing some rites, which are actually against the commandments.
- 7- In Ch.23 Christ is pouring His woes against the Scribes & Pharisees, while commanding people to heed to the commandments they are teachings.

4- St. Matthew did not forget to consider the Gentiles & their salvation:

- a- He translated (or rewrote) his gospel into the Greek language.
- b- (Mat.8:10) see above.
- c- (2:1-13) The Magi recognizing Jesus & worshiping Him.
- d- (15:28) Christ commending the great faith of the Canaanite woman & healing her daughter.
- e- (21:34) see above.
- f- (22:1-14) in the parable of the wedding of the king’s son, the servants were ordered: “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy, therefore go into the highways, & as many as you find, invite to the wedding.” (Vs.8, 9).
- g- He looked at the O.T. law & commandments in more depth, spirituality, & universality, declaring the manifestation of the “New Israel.” who is not confined by the tight, closed minded Jewish perceptions of exclusiveness, prejudice & racism. That why he recorded Jesus flight to Egypt (which symbolizes evil & slavery in the O.T.), signaling the embracement of His Kingdom by the gentiles. He also included some gentile, & sinful women in Christ’s genealogy, stressed Christ’s praise to some faithful gentiles, talked about Christ handing His vineyard to other vinedressers & concluded his gospel by declaring Christ’s great call to all nations “Go therefore & make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & the Son & the Holy Spirit...” (Mat.28:19).

5- Regarding the contents also:

St. Matthew looks at things in general not giving much attention to the tiny details, (as St. Mark did for example.). St. Matthew also stands alone in recording many miracles, incidents & parables (could be discussed later.)

5. Adoption of the Gospel into the Canon (Canonicity of the Gospel.)

External Evidence:

A-This gospel was will known to the author of the Didachia (a book that contain the teachings of the 12 apostles), that was written between 80 & 100 AD, & quoted much from the gospel especially from the Sermon on the Mountain.

B- Included in the "Muratorian Canon.", an important document that was written in the middle of the 2nd century (150-170 AD), & was named after an archeological scientist who discovered it & published it in 1740 AD out of a manuscript found in Ambrosias Library in Milan & was originally in the Great Irish Monastery in Bobbie.

This document includes the canonical books of the N.T.

C-The great majority of the early church fathers bore witness & accepted this gospel as a canonical book inspired the Holy Spirit, either in its Aramaic form or Greek one. (Mentioned before.).

Internal Evidence:

- A- The Semitic style of the gospel testifies clearly that the author is a Christian convert of a Jewish background, for he always quotes from the Hebrew manuscript not the Septuagint one.
- B- It is stated in the gospel that St Matthew is the author but could be easily concluded from the text itself: a- The author, out of humbleness , mentioned a very brief account if the big feat St. Matthew(Levi) made for Christ right after his conversion(Mat.9:10-13), while St. Luke for example elaborated more about it. b- He refers to himself by the title "publican" which is greatly despised in the Jewish community (for the same reason), while the other evangelists did not. (Compare: Mat.10:2-4, with Mark3:16-19, & Luke 6:14-16). c- He puts his name after St Thomas, while the other evangelists put before.

Other reasonable evidences:

- A- It makes sense that a very important gospel like this which comes the 1st among the N.T. books should be written by one of the 12 apostles & not by an anonymous figure.
- B- It is an axiom that publican usually keeps records of his documents & information to report to his superiors, that why St. Matthew kept a very meticulous account of Christ's oracles.

Remark:

There are two Apocrypha books which are falsely claimed to be canonical & related to St. Matthew, while the church do not accept or consider in the N.T. canon. These 2 books are named:
1 (The gospel!) of St. Matthew.
2-The gospel of the Hebrews.

1-The Gospel of the kingdom of God:

The theme of the gospel is the Kingdom of Heaven, which is very clear in all the oracles, discourses, parables & miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ. Tough it is future kingdom, Ch, 25:34, 7:21, 8:11, & 16:28, yet it starts now as a present fact in our day to day Life, Ch. 12:28, 4:17, 5:3, & 11:3. The kingdom of heaven started already by the incarnation of Christ & His dwelling in our hearts, & will perfectly manifested in His latter coming.

The Master & the King of this kingdom is The Messiah, the Savior whose royal authority is obviously declared in this gospel, in Him was fulfilled: all that was written in the scriptures, all the divine promises, & all the desires of the nations. He is the new Moses, in a very unique & superior level: fasts for 40 days, get tempted on the mountain to overcome the devil on our behalf, served by angels,

fulfill the law of Moses, not receiving commandments written on stony tablets but speaking of His own authority, Feeding the multitudes in the wilderness, transfiguring before His disciples summoning Moses & Elijah & talking with them. He is the son of God, & also- at the same time- the Son of Man who dwells in us to take us to His glory, that why St. Matthew used call Him the Son of Man in the incidents where His superior glory was manifested.

2- Ecclesiastical Aspect:

Since it is the gospel of the kingdom, it also considered the gospel of the church as the church is considered to the mystery of His Kingdom on earth. He is the only evangelist who recorded to us Christ teachings about the church, using the word "Ecclesia." Twice in two very strong statements:

- A- Talking to St. Peter about founding His church on the rock of faith He said: "On this rock I will build **my** church & the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Ch.16:18. 2)- He said also, about the authority of the church: "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen & tax collector. Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, & whatever you loose on earth will loosed in heaven. (Ch.18:17, 18.).
- B- Through out his gospel St. Matthew perceives & portrays the mystery of the church as being the dwelling of God amongst His people, & he emphasizes that in different ways:
- C- 1-In the 1st chapter, he reported what the angel declared to Josef about Jesus being named "Emanuel, which is translated -God (is) with (in), us."
- D- 2-He gives a very simple idea about the church in Ch.18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them."
- E- He explains how the church is represented in those servants who bear witness to the truth when he says "He who receives you receive Me." (Ch.10:40), & "Whoever receives one little child like this in my name receives Me." (Ch. 18:5). Also he portrays the presence of Christ with His suffering people in the Latter Day, when Christ says: "Assuredly I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Ch.25:40).
- F- Tertullian , the 1st great Latin theologian , sees the presence of Christ in the boat that was hit & tortured by the tumultuous see, as a vivid picture of the church enjoying her peace through the presence of the transfigured Christ in her midst, in spite of the wars & troubles made by Satan against her,(Ch.8:33-27).
- G- Lastly St. Matthew concludes his gospel by the very comforting assurance given by Christ to His disciples saying: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Ch.28:20). Therefore the church in St. Matthew concept, extends to everywhere "Make disciples of all the nations" (Ch.28:19), & through out all ages, till Christ's 2nd coming when we will be with Him forever.

3-Eschatological Aspect:

It is clear in the gospel that Christ was incarnate in His 1st coming to prepare His church for His 2nd coming. This Eschatological side is very obvious in Ch. 24, about the signs of the end ages as a message for the church to get ready to His 2nd coming by taking heed watching & praying, & in Ch.25 which gives us a great parables about the Kingdom of Heaven, & us meeting Him on clouds & being with Him for ever.

4- Christ in the Gospel is Christ (the Heavenly King):

To start with: It is important to note that the word (king) & its derivatives are repeated more than 50 times in the gospel of St. Matthew, compared -ex-to 5 times only in the gospel according to St. John, making it very clear that it the gospel of Christ the King.

St. Matthew introduces Christ- to his addressees- as The Heavenly King. He wrote his gospel to people of Jewish origin who were very familiar with the scriptures, about whom St. Paul said in (Rom.9:4, 5) "To whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, & the promises, of whom are the fathers & from whom, according the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen." Proving to them that all the promises of God in the scriptures are fulfilled in Christ, who is the King to come & to restore the fallen Davidic Kingdom in a spiritual concept. That why he starts his gospel with the genealogy of Christ saying: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham..." (Mat.1-1), declaring that He is Anticipated Messiah as a son of Abraham, the patriarch of the Hebrews & the Son of "David the king" (Ch.1:6), something that was very crucial to the Jews who knew from the propesies that Christ should be the Son of David & the King of Israel, but they failed to recognize Him because they perceive wrongly in very literal & materialistic way.

He stands alone in recording the visit of the Magi to the born Christ asking "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East & have come to worship Him." (Ch.1:2).They worshiped Him because He is God, & presented to Him gold because He is the King.

He is the only evangelist to record the Slaughter of Bethlehem Children.

King Herod-who illegally took over David's Kingdom supported by Romans- tried to kill the legitimate heir of the kingdom, Jesus Christ.

He introduces John the Baptist, the forerunner, preaching the upcoming Kingdom saying: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Ch.3:2). Also showing Christ as a mighty king & judge, "His winnowing fan is in His hand, & He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, & gather wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Ch.3:12).

In his version of the Christ's temptation on the mountain: he, against the chronological order, put off the (worship temptation) to the 3rd & last place- contrary to St. Luke who put it on the 2nd one- in order to put special emphasis on its importance. Christ is the True King while Satan-the prince of this world- is trying to take over, but Christ crushed him, defeated him, & started to preach & establish His kingdom saying: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Ch.4:17).

He recorded- in 3 detailed- Christ's Sermon on the Mountain (5, 6, & 7): because it is the law of the kingdom of heaven compared to & fulfilling the law of Mosses in O.T.

In Ch. 13, he mentioned 7 parables which are all about the kingdom: 1- The sewer. 2- The wheat & the tares. 3- The mustard seed. 4- The leaven. 5- The hidden treasure. 6- The merchant seeking beautiful pearls. 7- The dragnet that was cast into the see.

All these parables starting with statement: "The kingdom of heaven is like." With the exception of the 1st one, but Christ said in its interpretation to the disciples: "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Not only in Ch.13 but also in all his parables he starts with same statement: "The kingdom of heaven is like." Or something very close to it, compared to St. Luke who starts his 10 parables by "A man." More than that, in the parable of the heavenly banquet, St. Matthew starts with. "A king." while St. Luke starts with "A man." In another parable about the judgment day, Ch.25, we see a clear manifestation of Christ sovereign authority as a judge & king.

Regarding the incident of Christ's transfiguration:

St. Matthew stands alone in adding some explanations like: "His face shone like the sun." & "in whom I am well pleased." (Ch.17:2, & 5).

In his version of Christ's resurrection:

It was only him who mentioned the great earthquake, the angel whose countenance was like lightning & his clothing as white as snow & the guards shook for fear of him. (Ch.28:2-4).

St. Matthew concluded his gospel by a very peculiar statement about the Risen Christ saying to His disciples: "All authority has been given to me in heaven & on earth, go therefore & make disciples of all the nations. (Mat.28:18, 19). Who is this one who has every authority in heaven & on earth? He is Christ the King of kings & the Lord of lords. Amen.

The Gospel According To St. Mark

The Author of the Gospel

It is unanimously accepted –according to the church tradition, & among the scriptures scholars- that it was St. Mark who wrote the 2nd gospel.

- His Name:

He carried 2 names:

John: Or (Johanna), a contraction of (Jehohanan) which is a Hebrew name that means: Jehovah's gift. He was called by this name in 2 locations in the book of Acts: (Ch.13:5), (13:13).

Mark: which was his Latin surname (Marcus) meaning: hammer. He was known by this name among the Christians of a Gentile origin, & in all the epistles: (Col.4-10), (Phil.24), (2 Tim.4:11), (1 Pet.5:13), & in (Acts 15:39)

He was called by the 2 names together in 2 verses in Acts: (John whose surname Mark) in Ch.12:12, 25. And (John called Mark) in Ch. 15:37.

- His upbringing:

His mother: was Mary, one of the Marys, who went to the sepulcher on the day of the resurrection. She was a highly respected woman among the early Christians, & her house was the 1st meeting place & the 1st church in the era of the Apostles. In this same house many important events took place: (1) Christ ate his last Passover with his disciples, washed their feet & instituted the Mystery of the Eucharist: (Mat.26:17-19), (Mark 14:13-15), & (Luke 22:10-12). Most properly that, he was the man whom Jesus meant in his words while talking to his 2 disciples in the last 2 references. (2) It was the meeting place of the disciples after the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 1-13, 14). (3) The Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in this same house on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4). (4) St. Peter resorted to this house when he was miraculously delivered from the prison by the angel (Acts 12:12).

His father: Aristobulus (the best counselor) was the cousin of St. Peter's wife.

St. Mark also was the nephew or the cousin of Barnabas (one of the 72 apostles).

He was of a rich family, well educated religiously & secularly, fluent in Hebrew, Latin & Greek...

His family emigrated from Cyrene in N. Africa to Philistine at the same time when Christ started His public ministry, & St. Mark followed Him.

- His discipleship to Christ:

St. Mark was one of the 72 apostles according to the Holy Apostolic Tradition. Our Church calls him: "the beholder of God, the evangelist, the apostle & martyr." Most of the Biblical Scholars agree that St. Mark was the young man who fled during the arrest of Christ, & him alone recorded this incident in his gospel (Ch.14: 51,52).

- His evangelical Ministries:

With St. Peter. He started his ministry, according to the holy tradition, with St. Peter in Jerusalem & Judea for 10 years following the descent of the Holy Spirit.

With St. Paul & St. Barnabas: He joined them in St. Paul's 1st missionary trip (45-50 AD), preaching in: Syria, Antioch, Cyprus (Salamis & Paphos), & then to Perga in Pamphylia, where St. Mark departed from them & returned to Jerusalem, thing which angered St. Paul & so that he refused to take him again in the 2nd trip. (Acts 15:36-40).

With St. Barnabas after the Council of Jerusalem (50 or 50 AD):

They went together & preached again in Cyprus, (Acts 15:39).

In the Pentapolis (5 western cities in North Africa), & Egypt:

After his trip with Barnabas around 52 AD & before rejoining St. Paul in his 1st imprisonment in Rome (61-63 AD) St. Mark went to preach in birth place, Pentapolis, & then went to Egypt in 61 AD where he instituted the church of Alexandria,

With St. Paul once more: Later on- after almost 10 years- St. Paul came back to recognize who beneficial is St. Mark to the evangelism mission & summoned him to serve with him again, so St. Mark accompanied St. Paul to Rome & was with him in his 1st imprisonment there (61-63 AD). St. Mark served also in Colossi (Col.4:10), (Philem.23, 34). St. Mark apparently went from Rome to Asia minor that why St. Paul- during his 2nd imprisonment in Rome 66-69 AD- wrote to Timothy in Ephesus: "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark & bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry." (2 Tim.4:11).

With St. Peter once more: He was with St. Peter when he wrote his 2nd epistle (1 Peter 5:13).

After the martyrdom of St. Paul & St. Peter on 67 AD: He went back to serve in Egypt where he was martyred on April 68 AD.

To whom the Gospel was written? (Addressees.)

Unlike the gospel of St. Matthew, St. Mark wrote his gospel basically to the Roman Gentiles for he shared with St. Paul in the foundation of the church in Rome. To prove this fact we say:

- He used to translate the Aramaic words in his gospel:
 - " Boanerges, that is , sons of thunder." (Ch.3:17), while ex he did not translate the Latin names he used like Peter.
 - "Tabitha, cumi, which is translated, little girl, I say to you, arise." (5:41)
 - "But you say, if a man says to his father or mother, whatever profit you might have received from me is Korban, that is, a gift to God." (7:11).
 - " Ephphatha, that is, be opened." (7:34).
 - "...to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched." (9:43).
 - "Abba, Father." (14:36).
 - "Golgotha, which is translated, place of a skull"(15:22)
 - "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? Which is translated, My God My God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34)

- He did not translate the Latin words he used, like:

Denarii (6:37),(12:15), (14:55), centurion (15:39, 44. 45). He usually used Latin terms in its Greek forms.

- He explained the Jewish traditions, places, denominations, & currency:
 - Jewish traditions of purifications & washings. (7:2-4)
 - Teachings of the Sadducees about resurrection. (12:18)
 - About the Passover & the feast of the unleavened bread. (14:12), (15:24)
 - “Two mites, which make a quadrans” (12:42).
 - “The woman was a Greek, a Syro-phoenician by birth.” (7:26)
 - Places like: The Jordan River (1:5), “The Mount of Olives opposite the temple.” (13:3), & “Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethpage & Bethany, at the Mount of Olives” (11:1).
 - Because he was talking to the Romans, he elaborated on (Simon the Cyrenian) saying that he was the father of Alexander & Rufus (15:21), for Rufus was in Rome (Rom.16:14).
 - Releasing a prisoner at the feast, (15:6).
- Quoted- much less than St. Matthew & St. Luke- from the O.T.

Date of Writing the Gospel

- Some church fathers (like Jerome), believes that this gospel was written after St. Peter's martyrdom, i.e. after 76AD.
- There is a consensus among the Biblical scholars that the gospel of St. Mark is the oldest among the 4 gospels, only preceded by the Greek version of that of St. Matthew. That makes the early 60s as a suggested date. They believe also that, St. Matthew & St. Luke were acquainted with the gospel of St. Mark & used it as a source (Q) & a reference to their gospels. They suggest that it was written while St. Peter was still alive (60-64 AD), but was delivered to the believers in Rome after his martyrdom. If it was written in Egypt, as some believe, so a date between 55 & 61 AD, could be a good guess.

Place of Origin (Province)

In his book, The History of the Church, Eusebius of Caesarea recorded that the early church fathers, among them Clement of Alexandria & Papias bishop of Herpolis, believed that it was written in Rome to the Romans. Late bishop Youanis of Tanta confirms this in his book (The Christian Church in the Era of the Apostles). This opinion is supported by many internal evidences from the gospel itself (see Addressees).

St. John Chrysostom, believes that St. Mark wrote his gospel in Egypt, but not that much scholars confirm this.

Purpose of the Gospel

(First):

St. Mark wrote the gospel to introduce Christ to the gentiles as being the Son of God who became the Son of Man, the Mighty Savior, the Conqueror who overcame the evil powers of the world, here are some references about that:

- “Then a voice came from heaven, You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (1:11)
- “And cried out with a loud voice & said, what have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore you by God that you do not torment me.” (5:7)
- “And a voice came out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.” (7:9)
- “Again the high priest asked Him saying to him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. Jesus said, I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power, & coming with the clouds of heaven.”(14:61, 62)
- “For whoever is ashamed of Me & My words in this adulterous & sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (8:83).
- “Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, they will respect my son, but those vinedressers said among themselves, this is the heir, come let us kill him, & the inheritance will be ours.” (12:6, 7).

(Second):

St. Mark focused in his gospel on the miraculous deeds of Christ as a proof of His Divinity that is why he did not elaborate that much on oracles & teachings of Christ:

He mentioned 5 parables only, 3 of them in Ch. 4 (the sewer, growing seeds & the mustard seed.) & the other 2 are: Master returning to his servants & the wicked vinedressers. He recorded also only 3 similes: Lamp under a Basket, New Cloth on an Old Garment & New Wine in Old Wineskins. The only discourse he mentioned is the one in Ch. 13 about the desolation of Jerusalem & the end of the world.

(Third):

- He referred to other teachings & oracles of Christ without recording them: 1-“Then He went to Capernaum....& taught, & they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority & not as the scribes.” (1:21, 22).
- “And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee.” (1:39).
- “And He preached the word to them” (2:2).
- “Then He went out again by the sea, & all the multitudes came to Him, & He taught them.” (2:13).
- “And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude & was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.”
- “Then He arose from there & came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, & as He was accustomed, He taught them again.” (10:1).
- “Then Jesus answered & said, while He taught in the temple,..” (12:35).

(Fourth):

St. Mark lets Christ’s acts to speak about the power of His Divinity:

- He mentioned twice the heavenly declaration of Christ’s unique Sonship to His Father: during His Baptism (1:11), & transfiguration (9:7)
- People did not recognize Christ’s Divinity in the beginning, but Satan did (1:34), (5:7).
- Again His Divinity was revealed by St. Peter in Caesarea of Philistine, but Christ asked His disciples not to tell anybody (9:3).

- Christ did not clearly talk about His Divinity, except during His trial before the high priest when he asked Christ saying: “ Are you the Son of the Blessed?, Jesus said, I am, & you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, & coming with the clouds of heaven.” (14:61, 62).

Characteristics of the Gospel

Substance::

St. Mark narrates his gospel in 2 parts:

- 1- Christ’s ministry in Galilee (Ch.1- Ch.9)
- 2- The Passion Week in Jerusalem (Ch.11- Ch.16).

In Ch. 10 he connects the 2 parts by recording some incidents that happened in between.

Though the gospel of St. Mark is the shortest among the 4 gospels, he narrates the substance of his gospel in more details.

- He offers his version of Christ’s life, acts, crucifixion, & resurrection in a graphic, swift, consequent, chronological, & wonderful way.
- Though he did not mention 5 of the miracles recorded by St. Matthew, { healing a centurion’s servant (Mat.8:2), healing two blind men (Mat.9:27), curing a demon- possessed, mute man (Mat.9:32), curing a demon-possessed, blind & mute man (12:22), & extracting the Temple Tax from the fish’s mouth (17:24)}, he added 3 miracles not recorded by St. Matthew: {casting out an unclean spirit (1:23), healing a deaf mute (7:31), & healing a blind man at Bethesda (8:22)}. St. Mark recorded 12 of the 22 miracles written in the gospel of St. Luke, & added 6 others not mentioned by him {walking on the sea (6:48), healing the gentile woman’s daughter (7:24), feeding the four thousand (8:1), withering the fig tree (11:12), healing a deaf mute (7:31), & healing a blind man at Bethesda (8:22)}.
- He is the only evangelist who recorded these 2 miracles: a- Healing the deaf & mute, 7:31, & b- Healing a blind man in 2 steps, 8:22-24.
- He stands alone in writing the parable of the growing seed in 4:26-29, which symbolizes the spreading the word of the gospel through out the whole world.
- He opened his gospel by declaring that the savior (Jesus) is the Son of God & concluded by saying: “He who believes & is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.” 16:16, making it clear that God did His part, & it is our turn to do ours in order to get the merits of His salvation.
- Because of that all , & more, this gospel is considered to be the most: concise, clear, wonderful, & persuading in the world history.

(B) Style:

(1) Graphic:

St. Mark always intended to portray the events in a very colorful, graphic, meticulous, & alive way.

(2) Vivid:

though appears to be simple & spontaneous, his style is very vivid & bright.

He sometimes uses repetitions to collaborate the details of his narration like

- “Teacher, see what manner of stones & what buildings are here.” (13:1).
- “In the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning.” (13:53), compared to (Mat.24:44)&(Luke:21)
- “At evening when the sun had set.” See: (Mat.8:16) & (Luke4:40).
- “Today, even this night.”(1:23). See: (Mat.26:34) & (Luke22:34).
- “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.”(14:68). See (Mat.36:70), (Luke22:56-61) & (John18:17).
- “However, went out & began to proclaim it freely, & to spread the matter.” (1:54). See (Mat. 8:2, 3).

(3) Keen to elaborate on details: regarding: names, place, numbers, colors, thoughts, feelings, & emotions:

a- Names: see: 2:14/ 10:46/ 15:21/ 29:1/ 13:3/ 3:6/ 15:40/ 10:46.

b- Place: see: 7:31/ 4:1/ 4:38.

c- Numbers: see: 5:13/ 6:7/ 6:39, 40.

d- Colors: 9:3/ 6:39/

e- Thoughts: 2:3-11.

d- Feelings & Emotions: + The disciples being astonished, 10:24, 32.

Christ:

- “moved with compassion.” 1:24.
- “strictly warned him” 1:43.
- “And when He had looked around at them with anger by the hardness of their hearts” 2:5.
- “But He sighed deeply in His spirit” 8:12.
- “When He saw it, He was greatly displeased” 10:14.
- “Perceived in His spirit” 2:8.
- “Then looking up to heaven, He sighed.” 7:34.
- “I have compassion on the multitudes” 8:2.
- “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him.” 10:21.
- “He began to be to be troubled & deeply distressed, then He said to them: My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.” 14:33, 34.
- “And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, & blessed them.” 10:16.

(C) Language (wording):

- He tends to use certain Greek words, like the one which means: much or many,& immediately (at once or then).
- He prefers to use the present & the past continuous tense more than the past tense.
- He uses some words which are not mentioned anywhere in the other books of the N.T. some of them are still being used in the common (colloquial) Greek Language.

Canonicity of the Gospel (Adopting the Gospel in the N.T. Canon)

(A) Sources:

It is a well accepted fact, supported by external & internal testimony that St. Mark is the author of the 2nd Gospel, but there were some doubts & disputes about his sources due to some misunderstanding or misinterpreting of some of the sayings of the early church fathers (like: Papias, Eusebius, Irenaus, Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, & Origen.).

These sayings might imply that, St. Mark was just a follower, disciple, & translator of St. Peter, he did not see or followed Jesus, & his gospel is just a recording of the teachings of St. Peter at the request of the Romans & by the approval of St. Peter. But are not relevant & should be compared with other sayings of the same fathers, & other church fathers & analyzed in the right context, besides some of these sayings are clearly contradicting each other. There also some other claims- mainly by the Catholics who do not like the fact that St. Peter did not wrote a gospel & claim that he preached in Rome & founded the church there- that St. Mark gives special care & attention to St. Peter in his gospel, focuses on his short comings, & ignores things which glorifies him, for humbleness sake. All these claims which are fable, irrelevant & personally motivated are discussed & refuted in details in H.H. Pope Shenouda book about (St. Mark) also in H.G. late bishop Youanis of Tanta about (The Christian Church in the Apostolic Era.), please refer to these 2 books.

(B) Text:

There are 2 textual problems in St. Mark's gospel concern its beginning & its end.

Regarding the beginning: The words "Son of God" are omitted in a few important early manuscripts, but could have been accidentally omitted because they are found in the majority of early & significant manuscripts, besides the fact that: the inclusion of the phrase fits well with St. Marks Christology.

Regarding the end: It is noticed that the last part of the gospel (16:9-20) is found in some of the early manuscripts & not in some others like Codex Sinaiticus, & Codex Vaticanus, which raised some concerns, among few scholars, about the unity of the gospel & the authenticity of this part which these scholars thought it was added to the gospel later on, some scholars noticed that St. Mard used some special words in this part which he did not used elsewhere in the gospel.

In rebutting this doubt we say:

- This part is found in many of the early & important manuscripts.
- It was well known & quoted from by the great majority of the early church fathers.
- The appearances & sayings of the Risen Christ in this part are actual facts reported by the other evangelists.
- It is unusual, & illogical at all the gospel (joyful news preached) ends with phrase: "And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid !!!!."
- Utilizing some special peculiar words & phrases in this special part which talks about Resurrection- a completely new fact for the human race- make all the sense.

The Gospel according to Saint Luke

Author:

Name: Luke, a Greek name (Latin) and is written in Greek as Lukas which is probably the short form of Loukanos or Loukios. It was written as Loukanos in the title of the third Gospel in the old Greek manuscript, and on some caskets that go back to the fifth century and were found in Arles. We should differentiate between Luke and both Lucius in (Acts 13:1) and Lucius in (Romans 16:21). The name means: The carrier of light or the glaring light.

Origin: Saint Luke is of non-Jewish origins, he is the only among the authors of the New Testament who was of the Gentiles, and directly converted into Christianity without becoming a Jew. In the epistle to the Colossians our teacher St. Paul mentions Aristarchus, Mark the cousin of Barnabas and Jesus who is called Justus (are of the circumcision) (Col. 4:10, 11). Another opinion supported that he was a Gentile and converted to Judaism, the reason for this is confusing him with Lucius in (Acts 13:1). St. Luke wasn't mentioned among those of the Circumcision but was mentioned separately among the Gentiles in (Col. 4:14)

St. Yacoub Elrahawy suggested that St. Luke was from Alexandria, but the most supported opinion that he was from Antioch in Syria, according to the following:

- The book of Acts, which was written by St. Luke, gives much credit to the city of Antioch being one of the cities that early accepted Christianity. St. Paul took it as a starting point for his evangelical trips.
- And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26)
- St. Luke writes about the seven servants chosen by the Apostles, among them Nicholas whom he wrote about saying "*a proselyte of Antioch*" (Acts 6:5). St. Luke wouldn't have added this clause unless he was Antiochian himself.

Was St. Luke one of the Seventy Apostles?

There is no complete agreement among scholars which supports that St. Luke was one of the Seventy apostles.

The first opinion:

1. According to the church tradition St. Luke is among the seventy apostles. It is worth mentioning that St. Luke is the only evangelist reporting about Jesus Christ appointing the seventy apostles (Luke 10). The early Church fathers supported, some of those are [Origen, Epiphanius (315-402 A.D.) in his book "Answering the Heresies", Jerome, Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.)]. Also the Coptic Synaxarium recorded this on 22nd of Paopi (Babah) and the 1st of Hathor (Hatour).
2. Some supported the opinion that St. Luke was one of the two disciples met the Lord after Resurrection on their way to the village called Emmaus. Jesus Christ ate with them and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Again St. Luke was the only evangelist to report about this (Luke 24:13-35)

3. It was said about the reason made him to follow Christ that he heard about Christ (The Messiah) preaching in Palestine, healing all diseases with no medicine. In the Beginning he thought of it as if deception or illusion, so he decided to check for Himself, consequently met with Christ and believed and became a disciple, one of the Seventy.

The Second Opinion: A contradiction opinion:

- 1) He himself confessed that he didn't meet with Christ and he depended in writing his Gospel on what he received from people who preceded him in faith. [*Just as those Who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them To us*] (Luke 1:2)]
- 2) This means that St. Luke was neither of the twelve disciples nor of the seventy Apostles, he doesn't claim being an eyewitness of the news he reported in his gospel, On the contrary he states that he collected all what he wrote with effort and care from those who eye witnessed and served the Word of God. This never denies his gospel Its value as all what he wrote was done with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) As for the matter concerning him becoming Christian it is believed that he was a Gentile and accepted the Christian faith from one of the disciples who left Jerusalem to preach the word in Antioch early on around the year 36 A.D. following the Dispersion after stoning St. Stephen. Also some believe that he accepted Christianity As a disciple of St. Paul (according to Tertullian).

Between St. Luke and St. Paul:

- St. Luke met with St. Paul during his 2nd evangelical trip in the city of Troas after St. Paul having The vision of the man of Macedonia standing and pleading with him, saying, *"Come over to Macedonia and help us"* (Acts 16:9). Then he escorted St. Paul to Samothrace, and Neapolis, and then to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony (Acts 16:10-17). This becomes clear when holding a comparison between (Acts 16:6-8) in which St. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, narrates as being absent *"they"* and (Acts 16:10, ...) where he narrates saying *"we"*.
- St. Luke remained with St. Paul in Philippi during the year 51 A.D., and remained there to teach, Preach and take care of its Church for seven or eight years while St. Paul left. An evidence of Such a conclusion that he returned to use *"they"* while narrating (Acts 17:1) *"Now when they had Passed through Amphibolies and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica ..."* After seven years had Passed he reunited with St. Paul one more time, coming back from his third evangelical trip, When St. Paul stopped by Philippi on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. During this trip they stayed a week in Troas (Acts 20:5-6) then escorted St. Paul to Assos, Mitylene, Samos, Trogyllium and Miletus (Acts 20:13-15) also to Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais and Caesarea in Jerusalem where he remained with him during the two years of prison there (Acts 21: 1-18) in which we see him returning to use *"we"* in his narrative (Acts 20:5, 6)
- *"These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days"*. It is also known that St. Luke escorted St. Paul to Rome taken as a captive and remained with him or close to him during his first imprisonment where the shared sending their greetings to the

Colossians(Col. 4:14) *“Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you”*. It is known that the epistle to the Colossians wrote by St. Paul while his first imprisonment in Rome also the epistle to Philemon.

- In this epistle, to Philemon, St. Paul wrote (Phil. 23, 24) *“... greets you, as and Luke my fellow laborers”*. It appears that he was with St. Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome too, as St. Paul says to Timothy in the second epistle, which is the last epistle of St. Paul, (2 Tim:4:11) *“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry”*. St. Luke remained the faithful servant and friend to St. Paul all the way to the end.
- St. Paul mentioned him in many occasions in his epistles *“18 And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, 19 and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind”* (2 Corinth. 8:18-19), and another time *“our brother”* (2 Corinth. 12:18). The teacher Origen says that *“our brother”* refers to Luke, which is supported by the appendix of the second epistle to the Corinthians in Greek and in Coptic that (It was written in Philippe in Macedonia and sent with Titus and Luke). St. Paul mentioned him to be his only companion in saying *“Only Luke is with me”*, and referred to him and others in the epistle to Philemon *“... my fellow laborers”* (Philemon 24)
- As for the rest of the life of St. Luke nothing much is known about, which is a sign of his humbleness. Although he authored the third Gospel and the Book of Acts writing in details about the news of St. Paul during his evangelical trips, he overlooked mentioning himself or his deeds, to the limit of allowing doubts about his identity and his message. Where the last time he was mentioned was by St. Luke in his last epistle, to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:11) *“Only Luke is with me”*.
- According to the Church tradition and the news reported by the early Church Fathers, after the martyrdom of the apostles Paul and Peter in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero, St. Luke preached near Rome some fathers says that he preached in Dalmatia, Gallia, Italy, Macedonia, Acacia and Egypt. After the martyrdom of these two Apostles, he went through Rome preaching. Those who worshipped idols and the Jews in Rome agreed among themselves and went to Nero the Emperor accusing St. Luke of attracting many men to his teaching with his sorcery. Nero commanded that St. Luke be brought before him. When St. Luke knew that, he gave all the books he had to a fisherman and told him, *“Take these and keep them for they will be useful to you and will show you God's way”*. When St. Luke came before Nero the Emperor, the Emperor asked him, *“How long will you lead the people astray?”* St. Luke replied, *“I am not a magician, but I am an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.”*
- Emperor commanded his men to cut off his right hand saying, *“Cut off this hand which wrote the books”*. The saint replied to him, *“We do not fear death, or the departure from this world, and to realize the power of my Master”*. He took up his severed hand and made it reattach to its proper place, then he separated it. Those who were present marveled and the head of the Emperor's cabinet and his wife believed as well as many others and it was said that they numbered 276. The Emperor wrote their decree and ordered that their heads be cut off

together with that of the Apostle St. Luke; thus their martyrdom was completed. They placed the body of the saint in a hair sack and cast it in the sea. By God's providence, the waves of the sea brought it to an island. A believer found it, took it and buried it with great honor. The Coptic Orthodox Church commemorate his memory on the 22nd of Babah (Paopi) which is November the 1st or 2nd, while the western Church commemorates him on October the 18th. (Coptic Synaxarium).

- It is also mentioned in history that the Emperor Constantine II ordered the body of St. Luke to be moved from Thepes in Poetia to Constantinople and be kept in the Church of the Apostle that was built right after. Also from the tradition we know that St. Luke led a life of celibacy and was 84 years old when he martyred. While we read in "The Christian Church during the time of the Apostles" Bishop Youanis, [Some of the old traditions mention that he lived till he became 84 years old and died crucified on an olive tree in Eleea in Greece ... Jerome mentions that his remains together with the remains of Andrew the Apostle was moved from Petra in Acacia to the Church of the Apostles in Constantinople] this adds to that the time of his martyrdom was uncertain, and there is another tradition that mention his death at old age in Poetia.

St. Luke the physician:

It was known about Luke that he was a physician: Before he becomes a disciple of Christ he was a disciple of the greatest physicians of this age. During that time no one was allowed to practice medicine unless he has passed a number of difficult exams. Then after becoming a disciple of Christ and a companion for St. Paul in his service and trips, St. Paul kept on calling him "*the physician*" as it can be seen in St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians "*Luke the beloved physician*" (Col. 4:14). Moreover we can see St.

Luke the physician behind some of the medical advices that St. Paul gave in some of his epistles, as example his saying to Timothy "*No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities*" (1Tim. 5:23) and "*For bodily exercise profits a little*" (1Tim. 4:8). His profession influenced his writings both his Gospel and the Book of Acts: In his gospel he portrays Jesus Christ the physician for the entire humanity, the world savior using many medical terms and taking accurately about many of the diseases that Jesus Christ healed people from.

The British writer W.K. Hobbart cared much about this and addressed it in his book "The medical language of St. Luke". Hobbart highlighted terms showed in the Gospel of St. Luke and cross referenced them with the writings of many of the Greek physicians such as Hippocrates, Galen and Dioscorides, concluding that if the author of the gospel wasn't a physician he wouldn't have used (known) any of these terms.

In the following we'll be able to see some of these terms used by St. Luke while writing his gospel; these were not mentioned by any of the other evangelists when narrating the same events.

- 1) (Luke 4:35) "... And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him" "rupsan ... myden blopsan"
- 2) (Luke 4:38) "... sick with a high fever ..." "Puretw megalw" also a similar phrase in the Book of Acts about the father of Publius "sick of a fever and dysentery" (Acts 28:8) Dysenteries
- 3) (Luke 5:18, 24 & Acts 8:7, 9:23) the word "paralyzed" "Paraleumenos"

4) And between the writings of St. Luke and the above mentioned physicians

a) The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35)

- i. half dead (Yumithany)
- ii. his wounds (Ta Traumata)
- iii. bandaged (Katedysen)
- iv. pouring on oil and wine (Elaion ... onion)

b) The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:20-25)

- i. full of sores (Ylkwmenos)
- ii. tormented (Odumwmoi)
- iii. cool my tongue (Luke 16:24) (Katapsuxy)

c) Maimed (Luke 14:13) (Anapyrous)

d) perfect soundness (health) (Acts 3:16) healing the lame man (Oloklyrian)

e) faint (from terror) (Luke 21:26) (Apopsychothwn)

f) refreshing (times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord) (Acts 3:19) (Anapsuxews)

g) Insane (Much learning is driving you insane) (Acts 26:24) (Mania)

- 5) Him describing the illness of Peter's mother in law (Luke 4:38-39), the demon-possessed man (Luke 8:27), the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:43-49), the boy seized with the spirit used to bruise him (Luke 9:38-43), and the woman who had a spirit of infirmity who was bent over and could in no way raise herself up (Luke 13:11-17), all of these witness that their writer is a physician.
- 6) St. Luke is the only evangelist who pointed out that Jesus Christ's own people assimilated him to physicians "...Physician, heal yourself! ..." (Luke 4:23)
- 7) Luke as a physician gives more respect when talking about physicians as one of them, this can be seen when we compare what he said with what St. Mark said. As St. Luke says, "*Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any*" (Luke 8:43) While St. Mark says "*25 Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse*" (Mark 5:25-26)
- 8) St. Luke as a physician was impressed by all the miracles of healing that Jesus Christ performed, and hence these became a good part of his evangelism. We can see when St. John the Baptist (by sending his disciples) asked Jesus if He is the Messiah, Jesus answered them saying "... *Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them*" (Luke 7:22)

Luke the painter:

St. Luke was not a physician only he was a painter as well according to many of the Christian historians, Nicophorus¹ are one of them. Hence St. Luke is always portrayed with an ox on one side and painting tools on the other. Theodore the Reader mentioned that around the year 400 A.D. Queen Eudokia sent from Jerusalem to Bulgaria of Constantinople a painting of The Virgin Mary, this painting was made by St. Luke. Also St. Thomas of Equinas says, "according to the tradition we know that St. Luke made a painting of Jesus Christ that's currently placed in Rome in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore". In the book (Students' light to solve the problems of the Book) by Abba Esidorous we read "St. Luke portrayed the Virgin Mary holding the Baby Jesus, and the word spreading around tells us that three copies are available of this painting, one in Jerusalem, the second in Rome, while the third is in Egypt.

Luke the historian:

Adding to this St. Luke was a precise historian who presented accurate narrations of events in his writings (Today's researchers confirm the previous statement and commend on Luke as a precise historian). His resources, as he addressed them, were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, no doubt that he meant St. Mary to be among them as he says "*Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus*" (Luke 1:1-3).

His punctuality in narrating events shows clearly in

(a) "*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zachariah, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth*" (Luke 1:5)

(b) "*And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the entire world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.*" (Luke 2:1-2)

(c) "*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Patriarch of Constantinople*

Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zachariah in the wilderness." (Luke 3:1-2)

St. Luke is the author of the Book of Acts, and he's the one who translated the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews from Hebrew to Greek, this is being witnessed for by St. Clement of Alexandria in his book "Outlines" and supported by Eusebius of Caesarea testimony in his book "Church History".

The resources that St. Luke used to get his information:

It is clear from the prologue of his gospel (Luke 1:1-3) that he was guided by the Holy Spirit what he narrated according to eyewitnesses. As he spent a long time in Palestine, during St. Paul being

imprisoned, many believed that he received many of what he narrated from St. Mary herself, especially about the birth of Christ and His visit to the temple when He was twelve.

His character showed in his writings, his Gospel and the Book of Acts, being meek and humble person. Consequently he denied himself and completely focused on the topics narrated. It was also clear through the writings that he was Greek and well educated. The canonicity of the Gospel, and its authorship by St. Luke

Who is the author of the third gospel?

a) External evidences:

The Church tradition testifies that the third gospel was written by Luke, this tradition is rooted back to the second half of the second century.

- 1) **The testimony of Irenaeus:** (martyred in the year 202 A.D.) “and Luke, the fellow of Paul, wrote his gospel declared by Paul)
- 2) **The testimony of Origen:** (158-253 A.D.) “The third was written by Luke and canonize by Paul, wrote for those of the Gentiles who believed in Christ”
- 3) **The testimony of Eusebius:** (362-339 A.D.) “... as for Luke, his parents were Antiochian and he became a physician, then after becoming a Christian he became a close fellow of Paul and known to all of the apostles. He left us two canonical books that presenting evidence concerning the spiritual healing he learned from the apostles. One of these books is his gospel about which he testifies to deliver exactly as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered the narratives to him. The other is the book of Acts that he wrote based on his own testimony of what he eye witnessed him. (It is believed that when Paul said “*as my gospel declares*” (Romans 2:16 + 2 Timothy 2:8) was pointing to the gospel according to St. Luke as if it was his own”
- 4) **The testimony of Tertullian (Tertullian):** (160-220 A.D.) “Church acknowledges only four gospels, two written by the disciples Matthew and John, while the others two were written by the disciples Luke and Mark, all of which are being used by the Church since the age of the apostles”, “The authority that proves the authenticity of the gospel of Luke is the same one proves the authenticity of the others related to John, Matthew and Mark, and associating the last book to Peter because Mark was a translator for him, which is similar to associating the gospel of Luke to Paul.
- 5) **The testimony of Clement of Alexandria:** “... and after Mark and Luke preached their gospels, it is said that John who spend all his time spreading the good news verbally, finally he started writing his gospel”, “Luke before starting his narrative concerning the deeds of Jesus Christ, he showed the timeline when he said (*...for all the evils which Herod had done, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison...*) (As for the genealogy of our savior according to the flesh, it was normal for John to overlook as Matthew and Luke have already discussed), (But Luke himself in the prologue of his gospel declared the reason invited him to write this gospel, he declared that if others have started to narrate events that he is sure of then he is obliged to help them with anything they are not sure of. He narrated such events in accurate details, which he sought to get enough information about helped by his friendship to Paul and being close to the rest of the disciples)

Remark: Concerning associating this gospel to St. Paul:

Some said: It is not true that when Paul said according to my gospel that he meant to point out to the gospel of St. Luke. Rather he wanted to point to his own preaching, besides that the gospel of Luke was not yet written. On the other hand, the gospel of St. Luke is expressing the spirit and ideas of St. Paul and agrees with his teachings, which would allow the saying that the gospel of St. Luke can be considered as a gospel of St. Paul.

Others said: Luke wrote his gospel directed by the Holy Spirit same as any of the other evangelists and St. Paul never dictate anything to him. Hence, the opinions, presented by Origen, the Historian Eusebius and Jerome are not accurate. Also when Paul pointed in his epistles saying “my gospel” he didn’t mean the gospel of Luke, as the word gospel in the New Testament doesn’t mean a written book, rather verbal teachings by evangelist”

- 6) **Muratorian Canon Fragment:** “This is the fragment includes the canonical books, it was called so because the first to publish was the Italian L.A. Muratori (1672-1750), it is a part of a manuscript that was kept in the Ambrosian Library in Milan. Originally it was kept in Bobbio, and it is dated back to at least the year 170 A.D.
- 7) **The testimony of Justinus the martyr:** (110-163 A.D) He borrowed from and referred to this gospel.
- 8) **The testimony of Jerome:** (337-419 or 420 A.D.)

b) **Internal evidences:**

It is an accepted fact, as early as of the second century, that the author of the third gospel is the same who wrote the Book of Acts, supported by:

- 1) The similarity in style, language and ideas and concepts.
- 2) They are both addressed to the same person “*most excellent Theophilus*”.
- 3) In the prologue of the Book of Acts the author refer to the gospel of St. Luke as the “*former account*” (Acts 1:1) as the second account for this author is the Book of Acts The author of the Book of Acts must be one of those who escorted St. Paul, as he narrated some of the events saying “*we*”, and since the only one who escorted Paul in such events was Luke, then there is no doubt that this person is Luke (It can't be Barnabas, Mark, or any one else. Then if Luke is the author of the Book of Acts, he must be the author of the third gospel.

Examples of the similarities in both language and style (Acts and Gospel of Luke)

- 1) Many have undertaken ... Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated... (1:1-3)
Since we have heard ... We have therefore sent (Acts 15:24-27)
- 2) And not many days after ... (15:13) ... not many days from now (1:5)
- 3) beginning from Galilee ... (23:5) ... began from Galilee ... (10:37)
- 4) his lot fell ... (1:9) ... he was numbered ... (1:17)
- 5) and on the earth distress of nations ... (21:25) all the face of the earth ... (17:26)
- 6) until the day ... (1:20, 80) ... until the day ... (1:2, 22)
- 7) Savior (swtyr) and salvation (swtria) (1:27, 79), (6:11, 30), (3:6), (16:9) (4:12, 31), (7:25) There is no account for the two words (Savior, Salvation) in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, and were mentioned once in the Gospel of St. John (4:34), (4:22)

- 8) Evangel (1:19, 2:10, 3:18, 4:18) (5:42, 8:4) No account for it in the Gospels of Mark and John and Matthew mentioned it once (11:5)
- 9) His name (onomati), was called (kalonmenoe) (1:5, 36), (5:27), (6:15), (7:11), (8:20), (10:38) (4:7), (5:1), (9:10), (1:12), (3:11)
- 10) as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative (1:1) (9:29), 19:13)
- 11) Perplexed (9:7), (24:41) (2:12), (5:24), (10:17)
- 12) Tormented (16:24), (20:38) (5:16)
- 13) 13 Talked (24:14-15) (20:38)
- 14) 14 Pondered, consider (2:19), (14:31) (4:15), (17:18), (18:27), (20:14)
- 15) Suddenly (2:13), (9:39) (1:3), (22:6), (2:2)
- 16) Continually “diapantos” (24:53) (10:2), (24:16)
- 17) Devout (2:25) (2:5), (8:25)
- 18) Immediately (1:64), (4:39) (3:7), (5:10), (9:18)
- 19) Promise “epanglia” (24:49) (1:4), (2:23), (7:17), 13:23)
- 20) Before “enwpion” (12:9), (1:6, 15, 17, 75), (4:7), (5:18), (8:47)(2:28), (4:10), (6:5), (9:15), (19:9), (27:35)
- 21) be merry (12:19), (15:23, 24, 29), (16:19) (2:26), (7:41)
- 22) Instructed (1:4) (18:25), (21:21, 24)
- 23) Vision (1:21), (24:23), (1:4) (26:19)
- 24) Granted (8:21) (3:14), (25:11), (27:24)

And adding to these the medical terms used in both books, showing that the author was a physician. The previous examples shows the unity of style in writing both books, hence the author for both should be the same person, Luke the physician.

Between the Gospel according to St. Luke and the epistles of St. Paul

It was normal for St. Luke to be influenced by St. Paul (becoming a disciple of St. Paul and an escort in his trips) by the teachings of St. Paul, his style his ideas, concepts and mainly his spirit. Tertullian points out in his writings, that Luke was enlightened by Paul. We can augment similarities due to this in the following

1- Language and style

2- Words

3- Ideas and concepts

(a) Similarities in core meanings and language

- 1) Teaching with authority 4:32 They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority 1 Cor 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
- 2) God’s mercy 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful 2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.
- 3) Advancing in spiritual life 5:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men Gal 1:14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

- 4) Faith and being saved 8:12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved 1 Cor 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.
- 5) Receiving the word 8:13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy 1 Thes 1:6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.
- 6) Rejecting God 10:16 He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me 1Thes 4:8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.
- 7) Disliking being troubled 11:7 and he will answer from within and say, Do not trouble me Gal 6:17 Finally, let no one cause me trouble
- 8) Faithful steward 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward 1 Cor 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful
- 9) Israel and their return 21:24 And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled Rom 11:25 that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in
- 10) Eat what are set before you 10:8 Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you 1 Cor 10:27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience sake

(b) Common words used:

Word St. Luke St. Paul

Savior 1:47 Eph 5:23, Phil 3:20, 1 Tim 1:1, 2:3, 4:10, 2 Tim 1:10

Salvation 1:69 Rom 1:16, 10:10, 2 Cor 1:6, 6:2

Preach the gospel 1:19 1 Cor 1:17, 9:16, Gal 1:16

Grace 1:30 Rom 1:5, 1 Cor 1:3, 4, 2

Instruct 1:4 Rom 2:18, 1 Cor 14:9, Gal 6:6

The number words in common between Luke's and Paul's writings is 103 words, 32 in common between Matthew's and Paul's, 32 common between Mark's and Paul's and 21 words in common between John's and Paul's. This would clarify the extent at which Luke was affected by Paul by listening to his teachings, and as many believes, read his epistles.

(c) Similarities in ideas and concepts

Each one of them cared to discuss:

1. Holy Spirit and its action with believers –
2. God's grace.
3. Faith
4. Generality of salvation.
5. Repentance
6. Loving the poor.

1) Holy Spirit:

St. Luke: Is represented in the Book of Acts as a major reason for founding the Church, its spiritual life and success of service. Apostles didn't start preaching unless they received the Holy Spirit - A Christian may not become one unless he received the Holy Spirit and got baptized into. [1 *And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him ... 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them ...*]

St. Paul: *"Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit"* (1 Cor. 12:3)

2) Generality of salvation:

- St. Luke: He cared more, than Matthew and Mark, in his gospel to elaborate on the generality of salvation. In this he agrees with Paul who was an apostle of the gentiles. Examples: from the Gospel of St. Luke When he was discussing the genealogy of Jesus Christ, he didn't stop at Abraham, as Matthew did, rather he continued all the way to Adam considering him the father of all Jews and gentiles. (Luke 3:38), (Mat. 1:1). With the Shepherds *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests"* (Luke 2:14)
- In Simeon' prophecy *"For my eyes have seen Your salvation - Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples"* (Luke 2:30, 31)
- According to Christ after his resurrection *"and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:47).

3) Richness and poorness:

- St. Luke: More than the other evangelists, St. Luke cares to address the evils resulting from richness and the happiness the poor may find. Only him narrates the Parable of the rich fool (12:16-21), and the parable of rich man and Lazarus (16:10-31). Addressed hosting the poor (14:13-24) - When discussing the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ says *"20 Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh ... 24 But woe to you who are rich, For you have received your consolation. 25 Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger ..."* (Luke 6:20, 21, 24, and 25), while Matthew quoted saying *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect"* (Matthew 5:48).
- St. Luke quoted also saying *"Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful"* (Luke 6:36), hence Luke clarified that Christian perfection is based on our love to the poor and our mercy towards heavily burdened.
- One more may made Luke address shortcomings of richness is that he was addressing Theophilus who was rich. St. Paul: Agreeing with Luke he said *"For the love of money is a root of*

all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Ti 6:10). Of course all these teachings stem out of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ who said “And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24).

- Finally the common style in the writings of Paul and Luke is clearly showing. The addressees of the Gospel St. Luke addressed Christians from the gentiles (not Jews) and specially the Greeks But who’s Theophilus, that Luke mentioned in the in the prologue of his gospel? *“3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed” (Luke 1:3-4),* Theophilus is the same person to whom the Book of Acts is addressed *“The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1)* and the former account is the Gospel of St. Luke. Theophilus is a Greek name and means “loved by God”, “God’s friend”, or “Beloved one of God”. Noticing that Luke was addressing him we conclude that he is one of those who received the new faith.
- St. Luke repeating the word “us” twice (Luke 1:1-2), *“fulfilled among us”, “the word delivered them to us”,* lead some to conclude that Luke and Theophilus had earlier acquaintance even before they accept the Christian faith, most probably in Antioch, and then Luke is leading his friend into the faith. Theophilus wasn’t an imaginary person, as some may assume, rather he was real and hence Luke addressed him saying *“most excellent Theophilus”*. It was said about Theophilus that he is a gentile who believed in Christianity, an Egyptian, a man of great status, a noble man; this is supported by the fact that Luke addressed him saying *“most excellent” (1:3)*. This same title was used to address noble men (Acts 23:26, 24:2, 26:25).
- Another opinion supports [he maybe a Roman of great influence, hence it is required to address him in such a way, which was not the usual way Christians would address each others. The same title wasn’t used to address him in the Book of Acts (Acts 1:1), hence some believe that he believed in Christianity between the events of Luke writing his gospel and writing the Book of Acts].
- A third opinion would go [It seems that Theophilus is a man of high honor, maybe a government official, as shows in Luke calling him “most excellent” ... He was claimed to be from Antioch but most probably he is from Alexandria. It is sure that the good news was preached already to Theophilus, who was getting ready to get baptized, hence Luke told him *“that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed”* This doesn’t mean that the gospel according to St. Luke was written for the benefit of Theophilus, rather Theophilus represented all the gentiles whom were all called to believe. A supporting opinion goes [Although Luke addressed his gospel to Theophilus, there is no doubt that he meant to address all Christians, and the Church to benefit from. Consequently if Theophilus is truly a gentile who dwelled outside Palestine, we can believe that Luke was considering the needs of the gentiles whom accepted Christianity. Evidence supporting that Luke was addressing the Gentiles (Greeks) in his gospel.

A. External evidences

The testimony of Origen supported and documented by Eusebius.

B. Internal evidences

First:

St. Luke cared to narrate the sayings and encounters of Jesus Christ at which it shows that He came to save "all people" including the gentiles, not only the Jews. (2:32), (3:6), (4:26, 27)

- 1) *"5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God"* (3:5, 6)
- 2) *"25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian"* (4:25-27)
- 3) John one of the twelve disciples said to the Savior *"49 Now John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.' 50 But Jesus said to him, 'Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side'."* (9:49, 50)
- 4) *"52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village"* (9:52-56).
- 5) In the parable of the *"Good Samaritan"*, which leads to the understanding that a man's relative is the one who do good to, regardless of his color or race and this would be the foundation of the teaching that all humans are brothers. (10:29-37)
- 6) Also in the parable of the *"Great Supper"*, the master of the house made a general invitation to everyone to attend the wedding of his son. The master of the house is God who wants everyone to be saved. (14:15-24)
- 7) In the miracle of the *"Ten Lepers Cleansed"* the Lord commended the leper who returned to give glory to God, although he was a foreigner, a Samaritan. Which proves that God presented salvation to all people of all nations (17:15-19).
- 8) In his documentation to the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ he continued all the way up to Adam (3:23-38) not as Matthew when he stopped at Abraham (1:1-17)
- 9) In the Lord's meeting with Zacchaeus, Luke documented His saying *"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (19:10)
- 10) In one of the appearances after resurrection the Lord said to His disciples *"and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (24:47).
- 11) He is the sole evangelist who mentioned sending out the seventy apostles, representing the service to the gentiles, in contrast to sending out the twelve disciples representing only the twelve tribes of Israel. (10:11)

Second:

St. Luke avoided narrating in his gospel any thing that would hurt the feeling of non- Jewish:

- 1) Matthew wrote *"Do not even the gentiles do so?"* (5:47) while Luke wrote *"For even inners love those who love them"* (6:32)
- 2) As Matthew address the evangelism of Jesus Christ and accepting to be despised of all nations saying *"...and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake"* (24:9), Luke quotes the Lord differently saying *"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake"* (21:17)

- 3) To avoid misunderstanding what Jesus Christ addressing the gentiles, St. Luke did not narrate any of what Matthew narrated about sending out the apostles first to the house of Israel. Hence Luke overlooked what Matthew documented according to Christ *“These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans”* (Matthew 10:5)
- 4) Luke didn’t mention the story of the Phoenician, Canaanite, Syrian, Greek woman whom the disciples urged the Lord to send her away, and Him answering them *“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* and when she pleaded Him saying *“Lord, help me!”* and Him answering her *“It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs”* (Matthew 15:24-26)

Third:

St. Luke narrated events commending the faith of gentiles:

- 1) When Jesus healed a *“Centurion’s servant”*, mentioning about the Centurion *“for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue”* (7:5)
- 2) The soldiers who talked to John the Baptist saying *“... And what shall we do?”* (3:14)
- 3) Talking about the goodness of Samaritans who were despised from the Jews: The parable of the Good Samaritan (10:23), and the healing of the Samaritan leper who returned to give glory to God in contrast with the nine Jews who didn’t return. (17:18)

Fourth:

St. Luke overlooked some of Jesus Christ’s teaching that don’t concern the gentiles or don’t have a correlation to them.

- 1) Jesus’ speech about the scribes and Pharisees and them, and their disciples following the tradition of the elders (Matthew 15:1-10), (Mark 7:1-23)
- 2) When Jesus discussed marriage and divorce (Matthew 19:1-9), (Mark 10:1-10)
- 3) Some of the teachings from the Sermon on the Mount that related to the fulfillment of the Law.

Fifth: St. Luke cared in his gospel to translate Hebrew words to Greek

Sixth:

Luke in his gospel explained and located certain places in Palestine, something that the Jews will not benefit from:

- 1) *“Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee ...”* (4:31)
- 2) *“Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee”* (8:26)
- 3) *“And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet”* (21:37)
- 4) And his saying about Joseph, *“He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews ...”* (23:51)
- 5) And about the disciples of Emmaus *“Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles (sixty stadia) from Jerusalem”* (24:13). In other words he was explaining detailed locations of Palestinian cities and their respective distances to the gentiles. (Luke 1:26, 4:31, 23:15, 24:13)

Seventh:

Didn't refer to the prophecies and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ as Matthew did, rather he looked at Christ in a more general way as a Savior of all people, and a Fulfiller to the needs of all. Luke also presented the idea of salvation clearly in both his gospel and the Book of Acts (Luke 1:47, 69, 77, Luke 2:11, 30, Luke 3:6, and Luke 19:9).

Note: All the above can't be interpreted as if Luke had any motivation against the Jews as claimed by Marcianos the heretic who believed in the authenticity of the Gospel according to Luke because it was anti-Jews and denied the other three gospels.

But clearly the gospel of St. Luke presented the salvation of God to be general to all people including his own (The Jews), supporting evidence to this is:

- 1) Luke quoted Christ saying "... and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (22:30).
- 2) St. Luke comes to be the only evangel who during his narration about the childhood of Jesus presented devout Jewish men and women such as Zachariah, Elizabeth, Simeon the Elder, and Anna the prophetess whom all prophesized about the salvation of God and knew that our Lord Jesus Christ is the expected Messiah.
- 3) Also only Luke documented the prayer of Jesus Christ on the cross asking the Father to forgive the Jews (who crucified Him) "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*" (23:34).

Generally speaking Matthew addressed the Jews and Luke addressed the gentiles, but both of them presented his gospel to all people, exactly as Christ generalized His mission and both evangelists documented so. Hence we can see Matthew quoting "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ...*" (28:19), and Luke quoting "*and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*" (24:47)

The objective of writing the Gospel:

Luke clearly shows the objective of his gospel in the prologue presenting it to the most excellent Theophilus saying "*that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed*" (1:4), i.e. it was written to Theophilus and all nations to help them to become steadfast in the faith. As Matthew presented Christ to the Jews being the Messiah mentioned in all prophecies, Luke narrated the miracles of Christ with the objective of proving His supreme power to the nations. Luke also wanted to teach the gentiles that Christ is the savior from all tribulations of life, as can be seen when narrating the angel telling the shepherds "*For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:11)

The time when the Gospel was written:

The gospel according to St. Luke is the third according to the chronological order of writing the gospels, i.e. it was written after Matthew and Mark wrote theirs. It is obvious that the Book of Acts was written shortly after this gospel, we read "*The former account I made, O Theophilus ...*" (Acts 1:1). Hence determining the time of writing of this gospel is bound by the time of writing of the Book of Acts.

It is most accounted that the Book of Acts was written around 62 or 63 A.D. as it ends by the two years Paul spent in his first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30, 31). Hence it was written before the martyrdom of Paul (i.e. before 67 A.D.)

The book of Acts was written before 70 A.D. as it never mentions the fall of Jerusalem. The book of Acts too doesn't refer to the Pauline epistles proving it was written independently off it. According to all of the above, the Gospel according to St. Luke was written between (58 and 63 A.D.)

Answering other opinions:

- 1) St. Irenaus thought that the gospels of Mark and Luke were written after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (between 65 and 67 A.D.). If this was correct so how can we explain the Book of Acts to overlook such this martyrdom.
- 2) Others thought that this gospel was written after the fall of Jerusalem, 70 A.D., basing this on verses from the gospel itself (19:43, 44), (21:20, 24), but the same sayings were quoted in the gospels of Matthew and Mark. All the three gospels point out Christ's prophecy about the fall of Jerusalem, simply informing about something that's intended to happen.
- 3) Others went further claiming that this gospel was written much later, after Josephus book "Jewish Antiquities", i.e. after the year 94 A.D. They justified this by pointing to similar writing style and common narrated events. Similarity in style can be due to the Septuagint, and common events can be due to common sources.

Place of origin of the Gospel:

No common agreements about this, opinions are supporting Acacia, Greece, Alexandria, Ephesus, Caesarea, or Rome. The most sounding opinion identifies Rome to be where the gospel was written, supported by the fact that the gospel was written before the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, around this time Luke was with Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome. (Col 4:14), (Phil 24).

One consideration is that the whole gospel was written in stages at which Luke visited many places as he was collecting and asking about the details of events "*just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us*" (Luke 1:2) Some would believe, according to the Syrian Church tradition that Luke wrote his gospel in Alexandria while Paul was in prison in Caesarea between 58 and 60 A.D.

The language in which the Gospel was written:

It can be seen in the gospel itself that it was written in the classic Greek language, using an elegant style. Ernest Ronan (1823-1892), anti-Christian, commented about the gospel saying "It is the best book in the record of all languages, one of the proofs for this can be seen in the skill of St. Luke in translating the canticles of St. Mary, *Magnificat*, Zachariah the priest, *Benedicts*, Simeon the Elder, *Nunc Dimittis*, the angels at the birth of Christ, *Gloria In Excelsis* into sound Greek without losing any of its Hebrew or Aramaic spirit".

The use of Greek language in this gospel is elegant as it appears in its first two chapters although they are full of Hebrew words. As for the rest of the gospel some of the sentences have classic Greek flavor while other have Hebrew flavor. Plummer commented on this saying "the author of the third evangel and the Book of Acts is the most talented writer among all the writers of the New Testament books. His abilities qualified him to become a Hebrew as the translators of the Septuagint or to become completely free of Hebrew style". His style allows him to draw a picture identical to which seen by an eyewitness. Moreover his gospel has 312 words that are uniquely used, some of which was used for the first time.

There is also five Greek words:

- 1- denarii (7:41) Dunarion
- 2- penny (12:6) Assarion
- 3- bowl or basket (11:33) Modios
- 4- Legion (8:31) Legewn
- 5- Handkerchief (19:20) Soudarion

Characteristics of the Gospel

St. Luke provides in his evangel a comprehensive range of the life of Christ, more than other evangelist. He started as early as the prologue of his gospel expressing that he accurately investigated all things and was guided by the Holy Spirit in writing about. Whoever studies this evangel will appreciate both punctuality and organization in the way Luke wrote it.

He cares more than other evangelists to draw a parallel between the life of Christ and historical events. He points out to the names of governors at Christ's birth, and he identifies the times as in (1:26), (1:36), (1:56), (2:1-7). On the other hand it can't be generalized to say that the timeline of the life of Christ can be determined using this gospel, as Luke didn't specify the time of everything as in (5:12, 17), (6:6).

It is the gospel that traces the life of Christ starting from His birth and ending by His resurrection. It included many of what was mentioned by Matthew and Mark but was able to provide an exclusive testimony about:

A. Related to the birth of Christ and His Childhood:-

- 1- The annunciation of Gabriel to St. Mary concerning the birth of Christ (1:26-38)
- 2- The visit of St. Mary to Elizabeth the wife of Zachariah (1:39-45)
- 3- The annunciation of Gabriel to Zachariah concerning his wife conceiving and giving birth to John the Baptist (1:5-25)
- 4- The canticle of St. Mary (1:46-56)
- 5- The birth of John the Baptist (1:57-66)
- 6- The canticle of Zachariah (1:67-79)
- 7- The birth of Christ, and parallel events (2:1-7)
- 8- The appearance of the angel to the shepherds (2:8-20)
- 9- The circumcision of Jesus (2:21), Jesus presented in the temple and St. Mary being poor ... (2:22-27), The meeting with Simeon the elder and Anna the daughter of Phanuel (2:25-38)
- 10- The early years of Jesus and Him growing up in Nazareth (2:39), His obedience to His mother and Joseph (2:51), Him amazing the scholars when He was twelve years old (2:41-50)
- 11- His custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and Him standing up to read from the prophet Isaiah and then explaining (4:16-30)

B. St. Luke cared to narrate about Jesus Christ commending Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who sat at His feet to listen to Him, while Martha, her sister, was distracted with much serving. Martha complained to Jesus about Mary letting her serve alone, and He replied her "...*Martha, Martha, you*

are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (10:38-42).

C. Luke cared to include the conversation occurred during the Transfiguration on the Mount between Jesus and both of Moses and Elijah. Matthew and Mark mentioned only "*Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus*" (Mark 9:4, Matthew 17:3), but Luke added "*and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem*" (9:30, 31)

D. The gospel of Luke presented an exclusive account of the Last Week of Jesus' life "The Passion Week":

- 1) Jesus saying to Simon Peter "*31 ... Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren*" (22:31, 32)
- 2) St. Luke mentioned the sweat flowing on the Savior's face while praying in the garden "*And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground*" (22:44)
- 3) And mentioned the angel appearing to Jesus while praying "*Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him*" (22:43)
- 4) Also narrated sending the Savior to Herod and how Herod treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, and sent Him back to Pilate. Luke showed this to be a direct reason for Pilate and Herod became friends from that day on. (23:6-12)
- 5) And Jesus Christ talking to the women of Jerusalem who were mourning and lamenting Him "*28 ... Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' 31 For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"* (23:28-31)
- 6) And His prayers on the cross, asking for forgiveness to those who crucified Him, the left criminal blaspheming Him then the right criminal rebuking the left one. Finalizing the scene by the right criminal confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and King saying "*Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom'.*" And Jesus replying "*Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise*" (23:42, 43).

E. Only this gospel contains the story of the disciples of Emmaus in their meeting with the Lord Jesus after resurrection, and eating with Him, with Him explaining the prophecies of the books about Him (24:13-35). And His appearance to the eleven in Jerusalem.

F. In this gospel we can find details concerning the ascension of our Lord into Heavens, together with preceding and following events "*50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen*" (24:50-53).

G. Solely presents the Promise of the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon the believers (24:49).

H. Presents details about the journey to Jerusalem *"Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem"* (9:51)

St. Luke made a special emphasis of the human side of Christ As this gospel is addressing the Greeks in the first place, and for them the human character is of a great importance, Luke presented Christ from the perspective of God being incarnate into a full human. In this Luke showed the perfect humanity of Christ, sharing humans in everything except for the sin, being conceived then born, circumcised on the eighth day and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (2:52). as formerly mentioned, Luke trace up the genealogy of Christ to Adam (father of all humans) passing by David and Abraham.

Hence presenting Christ the Son of Man allows this evangel to fit sinners showing them Christ with His love and mercy to become a man to save everyone. Since prayer is a human act, the bond between God and man, Luke mentioned the times when Jesus prayed

1. When being baptized by John *"... and while He prayed, the heaven was opened"* (3:21)
2. *"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed"* (5:16)
3. Before the call of the twelve disciples *"Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God"* (6:12)
4. Before asking the disciples about their belief in Him *"And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, who do the crowds say that I am?"* (9:18)
5. - The Transfiguration on the mount *"28 Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening"* (9:28, 29)
6. When He taught the disciples the Godly prayers *"1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.' 2 So He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Our Father ..."* (11:1-2)
7. His prayers on the cross for the sake of those who crucified Him *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"* (23, 34)
8. *"The Unfair Judge"* (18:1-8) St. Luke cared to show the inner feelings of Christ toward humanity, hence presented Christ in his gospel as a man full of emotion also as the merciful friend to sinners, healer of the sick, comforter of the sad, shepherd of the lost sheep. Luke emphasized Jesus sharing the pain with men: He had *compassion* on the widow of Nain who lost her only son (7:13), *wept* over Jerusalem (19:41-44), shared the poor their poorness so He was born to a poor virgin during very hard times (2:7, 12, 16, 24) Luke narrated the parable of the rich and Lazarus who was full of sores, who was laid at the gate of the rich, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. (16:19-22)
9. Luke presented the miracles of healing the sick in a way that shows the strong compassion that Jesus had towards humanity: *"But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever"* (4:38), *"And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy"* (5:12), *"And a man was there whose right hand was withered"* (6:6), *"And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die"* (7:1), *"a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow"* (7:12)
10. St. Luke showed the special emphasis of the women, in his gospel we see the Lord honoring the woman as the act of redemption by Christ honored her. Luke pointed out the Lord's

compassion and mercy towards women contrasted to the aggression towards them by the Jews or the nations. Solely Luke mentioned many women overlooked in the other evangels, such as: Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (1:5-66), Anna the prophetess (1:36-38), St. Mary (1:26-56, 2:4-51), the widow of Nain (7:11-17) the sinful woman who wept at His feet (7:37-50), the woman who raised her voice requesting blessings to the Virgin Mary who bore Him (11:27), Martha and Mary the sisters of Lazarus (10:38-42), and some of the women who healed from sickness or cast away demons that possessed them as Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

The gospel presented an exclusive account of (Parables) narrated a number of them which non of the other evangelists reported about:

- 1) The parable of debtors (in the house of Simon the Pharisee) (7:41-43)
- 2) The parable of the Good Samaritan (A man's relative is the one who do good to him, irrespective of race or color) (10:30-37)
- 3) The parable of the Persistent Midnight Fiend (to show the importance of persistent prayer) (11:5-8)
- 4) The parable of the Rich Fool (12:16-21)
- 5) The parable of the Master Sudden Return (12:35-38)
- 6) The parable of the Barren Fig Tree, showing God's mercy in giving men chance to repent (13:6-9)
- 7) The Parable of the Lost Coin, explaining the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents (15:8-10)
- 8) The Parable of the Lost Son (15:11-32)
- 9) The Parable of the Unjust Steward (16:1-13)
- 10) The parable of the Rich and Lazarus (16:19-31)
- 11) The parable of the Obedient Servant (14:7-11)
- 12) The parable of the Unjust Judge (18:1-8)
- 13) The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:9-14)
- 14) The parable of Catching a Great Number of Fish (5:4-11)

The gospel presented number of Miracles narrated a number of them which non of the other evangelists reported about:

- 1) The miracle of escaping the crowd (4:30).
- 2) The miracle of Raising the Son of the Widow of Nain (7:11-17).
- 3) The miracle of healing the woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years (13:11-17).
- 4) The miracle of healing the Man with Dropsy (14:1-6).
- 5) The miracle of healing the ten lepers (17:12-19).
- 6) The miracle of healing the cut off ear of the servant of the high priest (22:50-51).

The gospel presented number of Events as well only Luke reported about:

- 1) Sending out the seventy apostles (10:1-24)

- 2) Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha (10:38-42)
- 3) Jesus' visit to Zacchaeus' house (19:1-10)
- 4) Jesus' discussion about the count of cost (14:28-34)
- 5) Jesus' discussion about the best places (14:7-11)

One of the advantages is emphasizing the generality of salvation Luke ascertained the fact that Christ is the God the Savior for the human kind. Jesus presents forgiveness and redemption free for all people irrespective of their race, gender, color, nationality or even their worthiness of salvation.

Presenting salvation:

To the Samaritans: (9:52-56) when he sent prophets before Him to Samaria, (10:30-37) the parable of the Good Samaritan, and (17:11-17) healing the Samaritan Leper. And to the gentiles: A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles (2:32), (3:6, 8) *"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God ... do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'."*, (4:25-27) in the synagogue in Nazareth when Christ pointed out that God can deal again with the Gentiles as He did in the days of Elijah and Elisha the prophet, (7:9) when Luke commended the faith of the Centurion being stronger than the faith found in the people of Israel, (10:1) sending out the seventy apostles, (24:47) *"and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"*

- **To the Jews:** (1:33) *"And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end"*, (2:10) *"I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people"*

- **To women as well as men.**

- **To the despised,** hated tax collectors and sinners (3:12) *"Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him ..."* (5:27-32) the calling of Levi, (7:37-50) the sinful woman in the Simon's house, (19:2-10) Zacchaeus, (23:43) the right criminal.

- **To people of high stature in society:** (7:36) in the house of Simon the Pharisee, (11-37) in certain Pharisee's house ... washing before eating, (14:1) *"Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath ..."*

- **To the poor:** (1-53) *"He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty"*, (6:20) *"Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God"*, (7:22) the miracles took place and witnessed by the disciples of John the Baptist.

- **To the rich:** (19-2) Zacchaeus, (23:50) Joseph of Arimathea
 Jesus Christ said these deep words *"... blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"* (11:28). Hence in doing this Luke became closer, more than the other gospels, to the teachings of St. Paul about salvation considering it to be a gift of God presented to humanity and not according to the Law. Luke also pressed forth and presented certain evidence that Christ is the savior who Has the Godly power to heal the spirit and body altogether, an eternal healing power.

Contents of the Gospel

Can be divided into six parts

- 1- Prologue (1:1-4)
- 2- Early years of Christ (1:5-2:52)
- 3- Preparation for service (3:1-4:13)
- 4- Preaching in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
- 5- Leaving to Jerusalem (9:51-19:44)
- 6- Crucifixion and Resurrection (19:45-24:53)

Christ in the Gospel:

Christ in the gospel according to St. Luke (the gospel of mercy), the Son of Man, a savior of humanity. The gospel of Luke focuses on the human sides in either.

a- The person of Christ: It is the gospel of Christ the Son of Man showing His humanity and His mission to save the all humans.

b- The service of Christ: It is the gospel of mercy, discussing the forgiveness of sinners and Christ's compassion towards the weak, poor and the suffering.

According to Church tradition, St. Luke is portrayed with an Ox next to him, as he presented Christ in his gospel as an offering. More than other evangelists emphasized Christ the redeemer who came to save the sinners. He is the priest presented the offering, and of significance Luke started his gospel talking about priesthood and burning incense.

It is the only gospel clearly presented the Humanity of Christ, as full human, in this He became our partner in everything except for sin. As the gospel was addressing the Greeks in the first place, and Greeks admired human favor, Christ was presented from this perspective. As a partner in all except for sin (i.e. prayers, hence Luke mentioned the prayers of Jesus) This evangel suits the sinner as it declares the kindness of Christ, His love and mercy, that made him accept to become a man to save us.

In writing to the Greeks he traced up the genealogy of Christ to Adam, showing that He's the son of Man and the Son of God, the Savior of the entire humanity. He's the Son of God according to His divinity and the son of the Virgin Mary (the maidservant of the Lord) according to His humanity. Following this objective Luke cared to record:

a) The angel's annunciation to the shepherds concerning the birth of the Savior "*For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*" (2:11). In the manger and animals surrounding them, sat the first guests of the Lord, with Luke only recording this event.

b) What Simeon the elder said when he carried the infant Jesus "*29 Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel*" (2:29-32)

c) The character of Anna the prophetess the daughter of Phanuel who for eighty-four years, did not depart from the temple, saying *"And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem"* (2:38) Also recorded that Christ when He went to John the Baptist to be baptized, He went as one of the crowd. Unlike Matthew who quoted John saying about Christ *"His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor"* (Matthew 3:12), neither John's call *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* (Matthew 3:2) but *went* ahead to report about Christ's service and His rejection in the synagogue in Nazareth. Luke presented Him reading a prophecy about Himself in book of the prophet Isaiah, one which is full of mercy, hope and grace to the brokenhearted, one that applies to His Humanity? *"18 The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD"* (4:18, 19)

Hence the mercy is a main factor of this gospel.

The gospel of Luke recorded events at which Jesus shared humanity their burdens, narrating Jesus Christ having compassion on the widow of Nain, and raising her son from the dead (7:11-17), His great mercy to the sinful woman and defending her in the house of Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50), His encounter with Zacchaeus and the Pharisees complaining and saying, *"He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner"* (Luke 19:1-10)

Most of the parables in these evangels give evidence of Jesus' mercy towards sinners and his mighty healing hands, most of which started with the word *"man"* and had an obvious compassionate side. Given are ten parables that started with the word *"Man"*

- 1- The Good Samaritan (10:30-37) *"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho..."*
- 2- The Rich Fool (12:16-21) *"... The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully"*
- 3- The Great Supper (14:16-24) *"...A certain man gave a great supper and invited many"*
- 4- The Lost Sheep (15:3-7) *"What man of you, having a hundred sheep ..."*
- 5- The Lost Son (15:11-32) *"...A certain man had two sons"*
- 6- The Unjust Steward (16:1-8) *"...There was a certain rich man who had a steward ..."*
- 7- The Rich and Lazarus (16:19-31) *"There was a certain rich man ..."*
- 8- The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:10-14) *"Two men went up to the temple to pray"*
- 9- The Parable of the Minas (19:12-17) *"A certain nobleman ..."*
- 10- The Parable of the Vinedressers and the Vineyard (20:9-19) *"A certain man planted a vineyard ..."*

This point becomes clearer if we contrast these parables with what narrated in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, where most of the parable starts by *"The kingdom of heaven is ..."* as Matthew wrote about Christ the King.

Coming to chapter 15 of the gospel of Luke, entitled by many as the *"Chapter of grace"*, we find Luke narrating three wonderful parables showing God's mercy towards sinners to the point he documented saying *"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"*, these parables are The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son, These parables are to be counted the most elegant parables of the New Testament, showing the great grace of God towards sinners and

His love to them. Luke also presented the parable of the Great Supper in which the master tells his servant *“Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind”* (Luke 14:21) and according to Matthew’s documentation *“Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding”* (Matthew 22:9), including inviting the inners to the supper.

Clarifying in the same parable the availability of many vacant seats *“and still there is room”* (Luke 14:22), and the must of bringing more people to fill from streets and lanes of the city. These vacant seating is the best clue given to us about the necessity of preaching the word in every country and all times. More verses presented the compassionate human side of Christ, either in His character or in His service.

- Only Luke reported about Christ weeping over Jerusalem because you did not know the time of your visitation (Luke 19:41-44)
- Luke mentioned that our Lord Jesus Christ prayed fervently in the Garden of Gethsemane His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- On the cross Luke presented Christ approaching death and yet accepting the prayer of the right criminal and healed his distressed soul by presenting His divine grace gaining a harvest on the cross as a firstborn of His Holy passion.
- On the cross too, Luke pointed out the words of great mercy when Jesus asked forgiveness for who crucified Him *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”* (23:34)
- After resurrection, Luke presented a sole testimonial concerning the appearance of Christ to His disciples mentioning the encounter with the disciples of Emmaus (probably Luke is one of them). Luke mentioned that the Lord humbled Himself and dined with them, broiled fish, to show that He kept His human nature after Resurrection, and His great Victory over death, also Him leading them to Bethany and raising His hands to bless them while departing them to heavens.
- On top of all the previous accounts, there would still be more to show that this gospel is truly a gospel of “mercy” that portrays Christ’s compassion towards humanity and sharing their feeling of pain.
- Luke cared of social teachings of Christ proving His care about humanity in relieving its pains and taking care of it and presenting all help and compassion to.
- In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) the concept of mercy expands and all obstacles are removed in such a way that mercy becomes a main factor in telling the degree of relation among people as it shows in the following sentence *“36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He who showed mercy on him. Then Jesus said to him, Go and do likewise.”* (Luke 10:36-37), hence my neighbor is anyone and everyone who needs or shows an act of mercy towards me. Based on this concept all people are relatives.
- Luke also referred to Christ saying *“12 ... When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just”* (Luke 14:12-14)
- Luke announced mercy to be a major requirement for becoming a disciple in quoting Christ’s saying *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple”* (Luke 14:33)

It didn't occur in any of the writings except of St. Luke's a detailed explanation to the life of unity among the believers of the early Church. Related to this Luke wrote in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:44-46, 4:22), as if he wanted to prove that mercy which was the center of Christ's message has prospered with the intervention of the Holy Spirit into a fact that's being practiced by believers. Finally, as St. Luke discussed God's mercy towards sinners and His compassion towards weak, poor and suffering, he earned to be called "The Socialist Evangel"

The Gospel according to Saint John

The position of the Gospel:

(From "The Christian Church during the time of the Apostles" by Bishop Youanis)

The fourth Gospel – the Gospel according to St. John is the *Gospel of all Gospels*, the Holy of Holies of the New Testament, St. Clement of Alexandria liken this Gospel by the spirit while the three other ones represent the body. While Saint Origen calls this Gospel "*The crown of all Gospels*", adding that the Gospels are considered crowns of the Holy Scriptures.

The disciple whom Jesus loved who used to be reclining on Jesus' bosom, the one to whom He entrusted His mother. The one who lived the longest among all the disciples, the grace prepared him to present the God of glory to the church. In the days of his early youth he absorbed the words of his master to the depth, he saved these words in his heart as a valuable treasure. In his older days he restored this treasure guided by the Holy Spirit dwelled in him to see all the truth.

When we study any of the other three earlier Gospels we will find the same theme, but once we switch from any of them to the Gospel of St. John we feel a different theme. It is the Gospel which revealed the Holy of Holies introducing the glory of the only Son full of grace and truth. St. Augustine mentioned this saying "The authors of the other three Gospel walked with God on the ground, as with humans, explaining few about His divinity. But for St. John, it is as if he refrained from walking on the ground. We see him through the prologue to his Gospel "Not only above the ground, not only in the air or in the highest skies, but also above all the angels and all the ranks of the unseen reaching to the One with Whom all things were made ..."

There is no other Gospel among the other Gospels reaches to the same depth, totally understood but still full of mysteries. Simple as a child, exalted as a Seraphim, peaceful as a lamb, brave as an eagle, deep as a sea and high as the skies. It was written at the end of the first century as if it was the golden Sun at the dusk of the apostolic revelation, which spread its light over the following generations.

Author:

1. The meaning of his name "John" is "God is Gracious".
2. He is the son of Zebedee and the brother of James the Greater who martyred during the reign of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1, 2) in the year 44 A.D.
3. He is from Bethsaida the city of Galilee, according to St. Luke John and James were Simon's partners (Luke 5:10) and St. John mentioned that Philip, Andrew and Simon (Peter), were from the town of Bethsaida (John 1:44).
4. His father was a fisherman and as it seems he was rich as he had hired servants (Mark 1:20). In spite of being from a rich family St. John was a fisherman to guard himself against the "evil days" of Talmudic admonitions.
5. His mother is Salome the mother of sons of Zebedee, James and John. She was a pious woman who feared God. She was also one of the women whom followed Christ and served Him from also spending from her own money. As well she followed Jesus Christ to the cross and, with the

other women, prepared spices and perfumes so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. (Mark 15:40-41, 16:1), (Luke 18:3 23:55) and (Matthew 27:56).

Her life as a devout woman was the clearest sign showing how such virtuous saint is filled with religious zeal that had a positive effect on her own sons.

Also her request from Jesus to grant one of her two sons may sit at His right and the other at His left in His kingdom shows that she had in her heart the hope of the Jews in Jesus the savior. From another perspective it shows how keen she was to guarantee both spiritual life and happiness to her sons.

6. His brother the apostle James the Greater is obviously older than him as all the gospels used to mention James before John.

Jesus Christ and Saint John, were they relatives?

† (John 19:25) "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene".

† It has been mistakenly thought that the above verse refers to four names not three women whom were standing by the cross. The four are the mother of Jesus, her sister (claimed to be the mother of James and John), the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene ... Which in turn claim that John is a cousin of Jesus! On the other hand the correct reading of this verse shows that the women were only three and "his mother's sister" is "the wife of Clopas" the mother of James son of Alphaeus.

† Adding to that Saint John himself, in the first chapter of his Gospel when writing the circumstances in which he met Jesus Christ, never refer to any connection by blood or affinity. Hence it is only jumping to the wrong conclusion when any connection is assumed as this contradicts with the first chapter in the Gospel of Saint John.

† In the house of John Saint Mary lived

† It seems that John was a disciple of John the Baptist and used to follow him too (John 1:35-42) "³⁵ Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi", which is to say, when translated, Teacher, "where are You staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day, now it was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah", which is translated, the Christ. ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas"."

John's call and discipleship:

† Saint John wrote about this himself in the first chapter of his gospel (John 1:35-40).

† Hence John was one of the first disciples of Jesus Christ.

(Mark 1:19-20) "¹⁹ When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. ²⁰ And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him".

(Matthew 4:21, 22) "²¹ Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee,

and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him”

† John and James were partners with Simon

(Luke 5:10) “¹⁰ and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon ...”

† Hence it can be seen that Jesus Christ called him and his brother James so they followed Him, and based on Saint Jerome writings, Saint John was 25 years old at that time.

Saint John’s life following being chosen as disciple As mentioned in the New Testament:

† In the list of the twelve disciples, John always comes among the first four (Matthew 10:3), (Mark 3:14-17), (Luke 6:13, 14) and (Acts 1:13)

† He was one out of three disciples whom Jesus chose to be his companions, namely Peter, James and John. Only them He allowed to witness:

- 1) Raising of Jairus' Daughter (Mark 5:37), (Luke 8:51)
- 2) The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1), (Mark 5:37) and (Luke 9:28)
- 3) In the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37), (Mark 14:33)

† He was one out of four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, privately asked Jesus about the signs of the times and the end of the age. (Mark 13:3, 4)

† John and his brother James were short-tempered and easy to irritate or anger

Jesus Christ gave them the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). We also read in:

- 1) (Mark 9:38) “Now John answered Him, saying, Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.”
- 2) (Luke 9:54) we read in this chapter about a Samaritan village rejects Christ as a savior, consequently James and John spoke to the Lord saying Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did? ⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. ⁵⁶ For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.” (Luke 9:54-56)

It can be seen that their inclination to such attitude disappeared later on and they became ready to face martyrdom for the sake of Christ and the sake of delivering His message. (Mark 10:35-40), (Matthew 20:20-23) [See a note about the character of John near the end of this chapter]

† In (Matthew 20-23), (Mark 10:35-40)

Their mother asked Jesus to grant that one of her two sons may sit at His right and the other at His left in His kingdom.

† In (Luke 22-8) Jesus Christ asked John and Peter to prepare the Passover.

† John was at the table of the last supper (John 13:23-25) and he is the one who was leaning back on Jesus’ chest and asked Him about the one intending to betray Him.

† John remained faithful to his Master ... and followed Him all the way to the cross

- 1) On the night that Jesus was arrested, John followed him to the house of the High Priest, closely followed him not as Peter did. (John was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. Then he went out and spoke to the one who kept the door, and brought Peter in) (John 18:15-18)
- 2) Being faithful to his Master all the way to the cross, he deserved to be entrusted by Jesus to take care of His mother. (John 19:25-27) (Maybe John had a house in Jerusalem).

- 3) In the early morning on the day of resurrection, Peter and John together made their way to the empty tomb running. John outran Peter and came to the tomb first and he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and they both saw the linen cloths lying there. So John was one of the first who believed in the resurrection (John 20:1-10) that's why he was called the "Beloved".
- 4) After the resurrection, John was one of the seven disciples that Jesus showed Himself to at the Sea of Tiberius. John was the first to know and proclaim "It is the Lord!" when Jesus asked them to cast the net on the right side of the boat, and they were able to catch multitude of fish after they caught nothing the whole night. (John 21:1-7)
- 5) In the same chapter (John 21) starting from verse 20 we can read the conversation between Jesus Christ and both Simon Peter and John. This conversation that was mistakenly interpreted that John will not suffer death, but it is obvious that it points out to John experiencing the Second Coming of Jesus Christ through the spirit of prophecy in the book of Revelation.
- 6) After the ascension of Jesus Christ we reads in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:13) that John was among the group that went up into the upper room in Jerusalem and prayed together with the women, Saint Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers.
- 7) In the Acts of the Apostles we can see him being twice with Simon Peter:
 - i. In the first time, both went into the temple healed the lame man and preached the name of Christ to the people. Upon which they were arrested and imprisoned for a while and then were released as the authorities feared the people's rage. (Acts 3, 4)
 - ii. While the second time mentioned in (Acts 8:15-25) as the Samaria had received the word of God due to Philip's preaching. The Church of Jerusalem sent them there to pray for the Samaritans that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
- 8) In (Acts 12:1, 2) the martyrdom of James the brother of John during the reign of Herod Agrippa I. Ever since that event in the year 44 A.D. till the Council of Jerusalem in the year 50 A.D. nothing is mentioned about John and it is know for us how did he spend this period.
- 9) John was in Jerusalem and he attended the Council of Jerusalem in the year 50 A.D. and Paul mentioned him being one of the great pillars of the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:6) and (Gal 2:9) "and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised".

The disciple whom Jesus loved is ... the author of the 4th Gospel:

The author of the fourth gospel intentionally conceals his name although being careful to identify accurately the location and occasion of all mentioned events. He only points to himself in his gospel by "The other disciple" or "The disciple whom Jesus loved". In spite of this we can easily conclude that the other disciple whom Jesus loved and the author of the fourth gospel is John the beloved the son of Zebedee.

✠ In the first chapter (John 1:35-40) it is pointed out to two of the disciples of John the Baptist who knew Jesus Christ through the testimony of their teacher. It is mentioned the name of only one of them, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, while the other's name is completely neglected. It will be seen in the following discussion that the other disciple was John the beloved the author of the gospel.

✠ In a number of occasions the author mentions “The other disciple” or “The disciple whom Jesus loved”

- 1) (John 13:20-26) During the last supper Jesus revealed to his disciples that one of them is going to betray Him “... ²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. ²⁵ Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?” ...”
- 2) (John 18:15-17) When they were leading Jesus for His trial in the house of the High Priest “... ¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in ...”
- 3) (John 19:26, 27) By the cross “²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home”
- 4) (John 20:2-8) When the author is talking about resurrection “² Then she (Mary Magdalene) ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” ³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb ... ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed”

Remark: Given that the author never mention the name of this disciple but only referring to him by “The disciple whom Jesus loved” implicitly shows that this disciple was well known to the entire Church.

✠ But how do we conclude that “The disciple whom Jesus loved” is the author of the fourth gospel? It is easily concluded by studying this gospel and in its last chapter (John 21:20-22) as he speaks about Jesus showing Himself to seven of His disciples at the Sea of Tiberius, when Jesus asked Simon Peter to follow Him “²⁰ Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” ²¹ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?” ²² Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me” .”

Then in the following verses the author explicitly states the identity of this disciple whom he concealed his name earlier, explaining the reason for doing this. (John 21:24) “This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things ...” This shows clearly that “The disciple whom Jesus loved” is the author of the gospel.

✠ And how do we conclude that this disciple is John the son of Zebedee?

It makes sense that “The disciple whom Jesus loved” is one of the closest disciples to Jesus. It was mentioned earlier, in the same section, referring to the other gospels mentioning four disciples being so close to Jesus, namely Peter, James, John, and Andrew, in other occasions only three are together with Christ, those are Peter, James and John. It is by intuition that “The disciple whom Jesus loved” has to be one of those four disciples.

- 1) It can't be Andrew, as Andrew was mentioned by name in the first chapter of this gospel, and “The other disciple” was with him. Besides Andrew didn't join Jesus in a number of occasions in which only three had joined Him. Hence we remain with only three Peter, James and John.

- 2) It wasn't Peter also because he's mentioned together with "The other disciple" in so many occasions mentioned earlier (John 13:20-26), (John 18:15-17), (John 20:2-8) and (John 21:20-24).
- 3) Then the author has to be either one of the brothers James or John the sons of Zebedee. But given that James martyred during the reign of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2) around the year 44 A.D. and the 4th gospel was written around the end of the first century, we conclude that James can't be its author.
- 4) Sure enough the author of the 4th gospel is John the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Remark: The author intentionally concealed not only his identity but also did the same thing with his brother, and parents. He had to mention his father name once (John 21:2) because there was a must to do it.

Remark: The character of John

John led a deep thorough life, he was observing his Master and while listening to His teachings he was filling his heart with all the love that he got. Being so close to his Master filled him with such a zeal that made him sometimes get out of his silence to defend his Master and His teachings. We can see him with his brother asking for fire to come down from heaven to consume the people of the Samaritan village who rejected Christ (Luke 9:54). He also forbade people, whom he thought they don't have the right, to teach about Christ (Mark 9:38) and (Luke 9:49). For this Jesus called him and his brother, Boanerges which means the sons of thunder (Mark 3:17). Hence we can conclude that John wasn't emotionally passive on the contrary he had a fiery spirit that kept him always zealously defending the truth motivated by strong understanding and deep faith.

Question: John is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loves; does this mean that Jesus wasn't fair in loving his disciples? Does it mean that His love wasn't for all?

Jesus is the love itself (God is love) and he offers His love to all, but it depends on the how far people are responding to this love. John sensed that love and responded proclaiming deep love and devotion to the Lord; this made him worthy to be called John the beloved, "The disciple whom Jesus loved".

John the beloved, the rest of his life:

According to tradition John preached the bible in Asia Minor also in Ephesus. Accordingly the seven churches of Asia Minor were enjoyed his love tending them. Church tradition teaches us also that Roman Emperor, Domitian, ordered him to be exiled to the island of Patmos. On such a small, rocky, almost uninhabited island, St. John received his Revelation of the last days.

When the Roman Emperor Nerva reigned the empire in the year of 96 A.D.; he released John and allowed him to get back. John returned to Ephesus and among of his disciples was Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius of Antioch. Jerome wrote that St. John remained in Ephesus till he departed during the reign of Trojan (98-117 A.D.). Jerome also mentioned that John died peacefully (didn't martyr) in the year 98 A.D. and he was the last of the disciple to live till the end of the first century.

The time of writing the Gospel:

The gospel of St. John is the last to be written among the four gospels, it is mostly believed that John wrote it during the last days of his life. Writing the gospel took place in the city of Ephesus between

80 and 90 A.D. this would be 20 to 30 years after the other gospels. Consequently, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in the year 70 A.D. that's why John didn't refer to Jesus foretelling about the destruction of Jerusalem as mentioned in the other gospels. A number of opinions support that John points out in more than one occasion to the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e. (John 18:1) "... He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden ...", and (John 19:41) "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden ..."

The place of writing the Gospel:

- † John wrote the gospel in the city of Ephesus where he spent the last days of his life; this is being supported by a number of early Church fathers. [This would be explained in details in the following section]
- † There are internal evidences from the gospel itself that show support writing the gospel took place in Ephesus
 - 1) It is obvious that John didn't address the people lived in Palestine because he explained the Greek meaning of some Hebrew words, i.e. (John 1:38) "... They said to Him (Jesus), "Rabbi" which is to say, when translated, Teacher, where are You staying?", and (John 4:25) "The (Samaritan) woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming" ..."
He also explained some of the Jewish traditions as in "² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. ³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water", also in (John 9:7) "And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" which is translated, Sent ..."
 - 2) It is certain that the gospel was written in the Greek language.
 - 3) St. John cared to mention Jesus' encounters with Greeks, (John 7:35) "Then the Jews said among themselves, Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?" and (John 12:20) "Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast."
 - 4) The gospel used the term "Logos" proving that the author wrote his gospel in Asia Minor being wealthy of Phoenician philosophy during that time.

The Major content of the Gospel:

Ch. 1:

- † The prologue: (1:1-18) concerning the incarnation of the Word
- † (1:19-51): The testimony of John the Baptist for Christ - The first disciples meet Jesus (John, Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathaniel).

Ch. 2:

- † The wedding in Cana of Galilee (1-11)
- † The first Passover after Jesus starts his service (12-25)

Ch. 3:

- † Jesus meets Nicodemus and discusses the second birth (1-21)
- † John the Baptist's testimony for Christ (22-36)

Ch. 4:

- † Jesus meets the Samaritan woman (1-42)
- † Jesus healing the nobleman's son (43-54)

Ch. 5:

✠ The second Passover for Jesus to attend – The healing of a man at the pool of Bethesda – The discussions with the Jews following the miracle.

Ch. 6:

✠ Feeding the five thousand next to the Sea of Tiberius near to the third Passover (1-15)

✠ Jesus walks on the water and the wind cease to blow (16-21) Jesus talks about the True, Heavenly Bread (The Eucharist) (22-71)

Ch. 7:

✠ Jesus attends the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and converse with the Jews

✠ Nicodemus defends Christ in front of the Sanhedrin (45-52)

Ch. 8:

✠ Jesus sets free the adulteress (caught in the very act) (2-11)

✠ Jesus preaches to the Jews (the light – the true freedom – the seed of Abraham)

Ch. 9:

✠ Jesus gives back the sight to the man born blind

Ch. 10:

✠ Jesus teaches about the Good Shepherd during the Feast of Dedication, and conversing with the Jews.

Ch. 11:

✠ Jesus raises Lazarus from the Dead after four days.

Ch. 12:

✠ Jesus in Bethany hosted by Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with very costly oil (1-11)

✠ Jesus enters Jerusalem (12-19)

✠ “Sir, we wish to see Jesus” – Jesus discusses his passion and resurrection (20-25)

Ch. 13:

✠ Last supper – washing the feet – Jesus’ prophecy concerning both Judas and Peter.

Ch. 14-17:

✠ Jesus gives his last speeches to the disciples (the Paraclete) – after the last supper and in the way to Gethsemane – His last prayers.

Ch. 18:

✠ In the garden of Gethsemane – the arrest of Jesus and His trial.

Ch. 19:

✠ The trial – the Crucifixion – the burial (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus).

Ch. 20:

✠ The glorious Resurrection – Jesus’ appearances (to Mary Magdalene – the disciples without Thomas – the disciples with Thomas).

Ch. 21:

✠ Jesus’ appearances to seven of His disciples at the Sea of Tiberius, performing the miracle of catching multitude of fish – Restoring Peter

Main features of the Gospel:

- 1) The Gospel according to St. John has some special features more than the other gospels and the rest of the New Testament writings. Simply the prologue (1:1-18) that shows the theological depth of the apostle, as he gives a brief introduction about the divinity of Christ the Word he explains:
 - ✠ The eternal being of Jesus Christ
 - ✠ The distinction between the Son hypostasis and the Father hypostasis
 - ✠ The Unity between the Father and the Son
 - ✠ Christ the creator
 - ✠ The exclusive Sonship to the Father
- 2) The rest of the gospel is considered an extension, explanation and fortification of what was written in the prologue. This is due to the reason that a major objective of this gospel is to present the divinity of Christ. The gospel becomes a witness for the divinity of Christ as John the Baptist and all the prophets of the Old Testaments witnessed. It showed that not only by mentioning the miracles and powers of Jesus Christ but by recording the testimony of Jesus Christ as well. In such a testimony, Jesus Christ revealed His divinity and His relation to the Father and the world, Jesus Christ pointed out to the importance in believing in His testimony and its importance for finding the true life.

“And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (17:3)
- 3) The gospel reached the optimum when used simple words and phrases to attain rich meanings and spirituality.
- 4) The other gospels’ writers managed to present biography of Christ to support His teachings; meanwhile St. John presented the divinity of Christ supported by Christ’s own teachings. In many occasions John succeeded in presenting the sermons of Christ and His conversations. It is obvious that John mentioned what other writers missed to mention.
- 5) In the other gospels, writers focused on Christ’s service in Galilee, but John focused on Christ’s service throughout the entire Judea.
- 6) John presented a gospel that’s distinguished by mentioning certain events and sayings that was not addressed in any of the other gospels. He looked over other events and sayings reported by other gospels. (refer to the section dedicated to show the “Complementary objective of the gospel”)
- 7) Only the Gospel according to John, among all the four gospels, mentions the Feasts of Passover that Jesus Christ attended during His service. Namely mentioning all the three Feasts of Passover that Christ attended (John 2, 5 and 6), and being crucified in the fourth we were able to tell the length of service of Jesus Christ, in total three years and a half.
- 8) The other evangelists just mentioned sermons and miracles of Jesus Christ without presenting any commentary. On the other hand, St. John presented explanations and details that carried significant theological interpretations.
- 9) The gospel cared of particular numbers such as the numbers (3) and (7)
Concerning the number (3)
 - ✠ Mentions that Jesus visited Galilee 3 times, presenting 3 miracles performed in Galilee. (The wedding of Cana of Galilee, Ch. 2), (Healing the nobleman’s son, Ch. 4) and (Feeding the five thousand and walking on the sea, Ch. 6).

- ✠ Mentions going to Judea 3 times, and selecting 3 miracles performed by Christ there (The sick man at the pool of Bethesda, Ch. 5), (The born blind, Ch. 9) and (Catching the multitude of fish after the Resurrection, Ch. 21).
- ✠ Records 3 phrases said by Jesus Christ while being on the cross (Woman, behold your son! ... Behold your mother!), (I thirst!), and (It is finished!) (Ch. 19:26, 27, 28, 30).
- ✠ Records 3 appearances of Jesus after Resurrection: to Mary Magdalene – to the disciples without Thomas – to the disciples with Thomas. (Ch. 20).

Concerning the number (7)

- ✠ St. John mentions 7 witnesses for Jesus Christ
 - i. The Law witness for Him, (12:38), (13:18), (15:25), (17:12), (18:9) and (19:24, 36)
 - ii. John the Baptist, (1:7, 15, 19, etc.), (3:26-etc.) and (5:53-etc.).
 - iii. The Samaritan woman, (Ch. 4)
 - iv. The great multitude, (12:17)
 - v. The Father witness for Him through His acts, (5:31-36), (8:17-etc.), (10-37) and (14:10-etc.)
 - vi. The Holy Spirit, (15:26)
 - vii. The disciples (15:27)
- ✠ St. John selects 7 miracles to present and mentions “the last day” 7 times.

The theological perspective of the Gospel according to St. John:

- 1) The gospel is centered on showing the reality of Jesus Christ, the Son. Through mentioning the acts of Jesus Christ, His teachings and sayings, St. John proves the eternal being of Jesus Christ and His mission when sent from Heavens to deliver mankind and His return to His Heavenly Glory. In this we find Jesus address Himself during His theological teachings by saying ‘I ...’ or ‘I am ...’ [refer to “Christ in the Gospel of St. John”]
- 2) The gospel represents the salvation that Christ presented to humanity by the ‘True Life’, the ‘True Light’; this salvation is attained through the ‘second birth’ for those who believe in Him. This salvation is guaranteed and ascertained by obeying Christ, pure submission to His commandments, true faith in Him and uniting with Him. (3:5, 16, 36) and (4:14).
- 3) Both faith and love in this gospel form the main foundation of the ethical life gained through the salvation by the sacrifice of Christ.
- 4) St. John sets the people in two categories believers and unbelievers unlike in the other gospels that divided them into righteous and sinners. In this way he was able to show that the unbelievers lost the main condition required to reach eternity due to their disbelief:
 - ✠ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (3:18).
 - ✠ “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (3:36)
 - ✠ “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (5:24)
 - ✠ “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:40)
 - ✠ “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” (11:26)

- 5) The 'love' in this gospel has its special merit: It is the new commandment, the practical side to lead a life of faith in Christ. "34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:34-35). Another asset for love is to be the base to keep Christ's word "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (14:23) and "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (15:14).
- 6) John also addressed the eternal life and the judgment: Eternal life for each person is determined based on their life on earth, basically founded on believing in Christ and accepting Him as a savior as mentioned earlier. (3:18), (5:24).

Christ in the Gospel according to St. John, the Son of God the Word:

This gospel is the gospel of divinity and love, no wonder about this as John is the disciple whom Jesus loved. John, in his gospel, introduces the Son of God and reveals His person.

† Our Godly friend: St. John wrote his testimony to declare that the Son of God is our Godly friend ... The first chapter proves that He is "The Only-Begotten Son, who is in the Father's bosom". While the last chapter shows "The disciple whom Jesus loved who used to be reclining on Jesus' bosom". From the beginning all the way through the end of this gospel, a clear correlation can be seen between God's heart and man's heart, as if Jesus was repeating what was written earlier "I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (Exodus 19:4). This verse in particular works perfectly to be the evangelical purpose of this gospel, showing us that Jesus carried us on Godly wings and brought us to the Father "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24). This verse leads our minds to consider the prologue of this evangel (In the beginning was the Word) taking us to the Creation relating the making of all things to the glorious declaration of the Son of God (and the Word was God), (All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made). Then Christ is the creator of all things, the provider of all its needs and on top of this He presented Himself as a friend to mankind.

† One more asset of this gospel is presenting the meeting between Christ, the friend of mankind, and a number of persons conversing with them as the honest friend. In general John presented the loving God in His meeting with sinners, weary, and needy people.

Among these meetings: His meetings with His first disciples (Ch. 1), Nicodemus (Ch. 3), the Samaritan woman (Ch. 4), the sick man at the pool of Bethesda (Ch. 5), the born blind (Ch. 9), Lazarus, Mary and Martha (Ch. 11), Thomas the doubtful (Ch. 20), Simon Peter, the one who denied Him with cursing and swearing, to restore him saying "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" (Ch. 21). Truly it is the gospel of divine love, and all the above forms a clear evidence for the true friendship of Jesus to our souls.

Moreover, this gospel presents the relationship between Christ and His Church, testifying that it is similar to the relation between the bride and the bridegroom (3:25-29), and the bond between the vine and its branches having one body and sharing His own blood (15:1-5) and (6:48-57) and to the living water flowing out of his heart (14:10, 13, 14) and (7:37-40).

This kind relationship between Christ and man (His Church) appeared was manifested in many occasions such as His relation with His beloved disciple, in the house of Lazarus (Bethany) and in His last speech to His disciples. John the evangelist addressed saying “having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” (13:1), “¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (15:12, 13, 14). He declared this in His last prayer, when He showed His will to gather His own from the world towards Him to become united with Him “Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are” (17:11), “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (17:24). The love that Christ offers is truly complete, perfect and unlimited.

“I am ...”

In this gospel, St. John presents Christ in many of His speeches starting by either “I” or “I am”. These speeches show clearly the divinity of Christ, as will be introduced shortly, and as well explain to us how Christ, and only Christ, is the one who can satisfy our mortal needs. These speeches worked also as an introduction to the full divine glory of Christ on the cross.

	I am	Verse	Satisfy our needs	On the cross
1	Bread of life	(6:35, 48)	Our spiritual food	Breaking the bread
2	Light of the world	(8:12)	Enlighten our darkness	Light against darkness
3	Door of the sheep	(10:7, 9)	Shelter our estrangement	The door through which life is found
4	Good shepherd	(10:11, 14)	Sacrifice Himself for our sake	Puts Himself for the sheep
5	Resurrection and the life	(11:25)	In Him we defeat death and gain life	“unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” (12:24)
6	The way, the truth, and the life	(14:6)	He is our tools for salvation	The way is stepped over
7	The true vine	(15:1, 5)	Unite us with Him	The vine is squeezed

Adding to this many other verses:

When He was talking to the Samaritan woman, He said (4:26) “I who speak to you am He (the Messiah)”. He presented to us (through meeting with her) the one who fills our empty lives and satisfies our needs to a divine savior who has to be both God and human at the same time.

The clause “I am” as we mentioned presents an evidence for the divinity of Christ. It is the same clause that was translated to “Jehovah” it is ‘God’s name’ declared by Moses after appearing to him in the bush. It is also being translated as ‘I exist’ as in His words “I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (1:1), (8:58) and (13:19). Hence “I” expresses the divine being (And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM**” And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you), this expression of ‘being’ bears within itself the immortality.

The Jews understood that Christ was referring to Himself in this way; they understood that He was proclaiming His divinity. They said He blasphemed (made Himself equal to God) and should be stoned. This is clear in their accusations against Him in front of Pilates Pontius, as he was about to set Him free, they said to him "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (19:7).

Thus it shows clearly that John wrote this evangel such that each one may believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah the Son of God, and may have life in His name (20:31). That's why the word 'faith' and its synonyms are repeated in this gospel nearly a hundred times (97 times), also the word 'testimony' around fifty times. John the evangelist mentioned them to prove the divinity of Christ.

Main objectives of the gospel:

1) Complementary objective of the gospel (will be discussed in detail in an independent section)

2) The educational, theological and practical objectives

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31), John wanted to prove that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Eternal Word, that He is God Himself.

To attain such a main objective St. John mentioned most of the miracles performed and sayings made by Jesus Christ. It was impossible though to mention all the events, teachings, and miracles of Jesus Christ (John 20:30-31). Hence, St. John avoided repeating what was recorded by the other Evangelists, and explained more what they didn't illuminate.

3) The defensive objective The third objective of this gospel is to defend Christianity against heresies that were spread around during the first century. These heresies are related to the divinity/humanity of Jesus Christ, as example the Docetism and Gnosticism both claiming that Jesus did not have a physical body; rather, that his body was an illusion.

Also the Cerinthianism (followers of Cerinthius) that denied the divinity of Christ and misunderstood the manifestation, it is was misbelieved that Jesus was human; and Christ is a superior spirit that descended on Jesus from above during baptism and departed Him at the cross. Against the Ebionism heresy as well: which Eusebius commented on their beliefs saying (their beliefs were so degraded towards Jesus Christ, they thought of Him as if He was a regular person whom was solely justified due to his virtue. They also claimed that He was not before Mary, his mother, but He was a conceived by St. Mary after uniting with a certain man. In their beliefs it was essential to cling to the Law as they were not to be saved by believing in Christ only, but by leading a life similar to His as well.

This Gospel didn't intend only Jews, Roman or Greek, but rather all believers in Christ of all nations. Thus it would help them to abide in their faith to Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Light of the world, as it shows in "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). Based on the above we can read the result (19:35), an honest testimony, an evidence in true believes in Jesus Christ.

St. John didn't overwhelm the readers of his gospel by mentioning or rebuking heresies that infected the Church meanwhile. Rather, by taking a positive attitude, he presented the truth and assured true believers of their faith.

a) The complementary objective of this gospel

It can be seen that St. John through his gospel wanted to conclude for all the other gospels.

St. John didn't want to repeat what was narrated by the other Evangelists as he intended his gospel to be a message to people who knew Christ and His teachings to help them face wrong beliefs or philosophies spread by heretics.

It was a new responsibility that St. John had to take to fulfill new demands, different from the other gospels which presented events more related to an external view of Christ, St. John had to present Jesus Christ in His divine glory proved in each event narrated.

To prove such a complementary objective

- i. St. John neglects to mention some of the events despite its importance
 - a. He mentions nothing about choosing the twelve disciples although on the sixth chapter he quotes Christ saying "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (6:70)
 - b. Regarding the imprisonment of John the Baptist: He assumes that the readers of his gospel know that John the Baptist was thrown in prison, as he says "For John had not yet been thrown into prison" (3:24)
 - c. John left out mentioning the birth of Christ, His baptism, and the temptation on the mount and almost all the miracles mentioned by the other evangelists (except seven miracles). John also touched on the last supper, the passion in Gethsemane and the resurrection.
- ii. On the other hand John mentioned what was left out by the other Evangelists
 - a. After the miracle of feeding the five thousands that was mentioned by the four Evangelists
 - Matthew (14:22) and Mark (6:45) points out that Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.
 - As for John (6:15) commented on Jesus sending the multitudes saying "Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone"
 - b. Mentioning the event of the woman pouring the very costly fragrant oil on Jesus
 - Matthew (26:6) and Mark (14:3) points out that woman approached Jesus and poured the fragrant oil on His head.
 - But John (12:3) mentioned that the woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, adding that she anointed the feet of Jesus without mentioning that she poured the oil on His head considering that to be a known matter.
- iii. The gospel of John keeps its historical or biographical nature, although caring the most about the divinity of Christ, in a way where it fits to say:

John was while narrating the life of Christ spent an exceptional effort to explain this life, and reveal its theological meaning. In this prospect (biographical) John agrees with the other Evangelists.

 - a. When the Jews asked for a sign from Jesus Christ to prove what His teachings. (Matthew 12:38-45, 16:1-4), (Mark 8:11-13), (Luke 11:16, 19, 32), (John 2:18)
 - b. The accusations that Jesus Christ has a demon, (Matthew 9:34, 12:24), (Mark 3:22), (Luke 11:15), (John 8:48-52, 10:19-21)
 - c. Doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath, (Matthew 12:21), (Mark 2:23), (Luke 6:1), (John 7:22)
 - d. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19) and in a very similar way by both Matthew and Mark (Matthew 16:61), (Mark 14:58, 15:29)
 - e. The Last Supper, John didn't leave this out completely, although he didn't discuss it in the same way the other Evangelists did, he showed its importance and necessity for life (John 6:48-59).

- f. The Sermon on the Mount, mentioned by both Matthew and Luke. John didn't mention it at all, but referred to it through the words of Jesus Christ during the Last Supper highlighting the duties required by each Christian also the favorable virtue of meekness. (John 13:1, 15, 34, 35), (14:15), (15:10, 12, 17).
- g. Prerequisite for discipleship, these were mentioned by the three other Evangelists, and also presented by John. Compare (John 12:25) to (Matthew 16:25, 26), (Mark 8:35, 36) and (Luke 9:22, 25). Also (John 13:16, 15:20) to (Matthew 10:24), and (John 13:20) to (Matthew 10:40), (Luke 10:16).
- h. Teaching in parables, this is one of the main features of the other three gospels, and similarly in the gospel of St. John we find the parable of the True Shepherd (John 10:1-6), explained in (10:7-10)
- i. St. Mary conceiving through the Holy Spirit, St. John didn't directly mention this event; rather he talked about Christ the Bread of Life coming down from Heaven. The Jews understood that this refers to the miraculous birth of Christ that's why they said "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven?'" (6:42)
- j. Christ's baptism in the River of Jordan: John didn't mention this event, but he didn't leave out the chance to the theological meaning that's lying within.
This was clear when he quoted John the Baptist in his testimony to Jesus Christ "³² And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God'" (John 1:32-34)
- k. The Transfiguration, wasn't mentioned by St. John, but John talked about the glory of Christ the Son of God that showed always and specially in the Transfiguration "and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14)
- iv. Other similarities adding to the above: (Mark 14), (John 12)
 - ✠ Between John and Mark
 - ❖ (Mark 14:3) with (John 12:3) "very costly oil of spikenard"
 - ❖ (Mark 14:4) with (John 12:5) "the price of oil"
 - ❖ (Mark 14:68) with (John 12:7)
 - ❖ (Mark 14:8) with (John 12:8)
 - ✠ Between John and Luke
 - ❖ (Luke 22:34) with (John 13:38) "the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times"
 - ❖ (Luke 23:53) with (John 19:41) "a tomb where no one had ever lain before"

- ❖ This complementary objective of this gospel was recognized by Eusebius of Caesarea and he commented on by saying [After Mark and Luke wrote their gospels, it is said that John who spent all his time preaching the gospel started to write for the following reason: the three previously mentioned gospels reached everyone, including John who accepted them and testified their authenticity, but lacked the explanation of Christ's activities during His early service. This being correct as the other three Evangelists recorded the actions of the Savior a year after throwing John the Baptist in Jail. The Evangelists showed this in this narrative as Matthew says after mentioning the 'fasting forty days and forty nights and the following temptation' "When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee". And mark as well says "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee". As for Luke before he starts his narrative of actions of Jesus Christ he points to the time frame saying "Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison". Then it is said that when John was asked to write his gospel for the above mentioned reason, he described the period that was left out by the other Evangelists. Mentioning the actions Jesus made before John the Baptist imprisonment, clarifying this by saying "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee" (John 2:11). Also when he talked about John the Baptist while he was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, he clarified that same matter by saying "For John had not yet been thrown into prison" (John 3:24).

Based on this John, in his gospel, wrote down the actions of Jesus Christ before John the Baptist being thrown in Jail, but the other three Evangelists starts their narrative after this event. Knowing this will not confuse a person assuming some disagreement among the gospels because the Gospel of St. John mentions Christ's early signs while the other Evangelists narrate what happened toward the end of Christ's mission.

As for the genealogy of Jesus Christ, it was normal that John would avoid talking about as Matthew and Luke mentioned it. On the other hand John started with a powerful theological belief that was saved for him being the most able among the Evangelists through the help of the Spirit of God] [Eusebius III: XXIV, VII-XIII]

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