

*a paper:*

ON THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

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PREFACE

What are we to say of the variations between The Four Gospels? The skeptic and heathen presume that The Holy Scriptures, and The Gospels in particular, are but the manmade community creations of The early Church. But The faithful Church declares, and The Holy Scriptures themselves proclaim, that this is The unerring and inspired Word of GOD to man. The Four Gospels, not being exactly identical, can only then be intended by The Almighty to be taken – not individually – but as complementing one another into a mosaic of a unified whole picture of The Person and works of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

The atheist and the heretic - both of whom deny the Divine inspiration of The Holy Scriptures - will however refuse to be forced to this conclusion. They will instead grasp at any and all straws of hope that this is not so. For if it is, then they would be forced to concede their need to repent of their sins, confess and believe in the salvation of The Cross of CHRIST. Therefore they will instead seek out all manner of hypotheses, no matter how convoluted, to explain by “natural means” the formation of The Gospels, looking always for differences between The Four as “proofs” of a mere manmade nature of The Word of GOD. But alas, they grasp but in vain!

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### ABSTRACT

The question at hand is the historical accuracy of The Gospel accounts of The Crucifixion of JESUS CHRIST. If there are variations on the account of this crucial event in Christianity, does this mean that The Biblical record is to be discounted, as biblical criticism calls for? Or can any such differences be accounted for in other ways, allowing us to retain the high view of Holy Scripture as The inspired and unerring Word of GOD? As we shall see, variations between the four Gospel accounts of these central events of The Cross of JESUS CHRIST can be accounted for in ways other than denying the veracity of The Biblical account, leaving no reason why we should not fully believe in The Word of GOD.

### EPIGRAPH

“These things are written in The Gospel according to Mark – and likewise in all of The other Gospels [according to Matthew, Luke and John], correspondingly. Although the expressions may vary slightly in each Gospel, they all show identical agreement in meaning.” – Clement of Alexandria, 195 AD. <sup>1</sup>

### DEDICATION

To Saint Peter The Apostle, who declares to us in I PETER 1:25, “...The Word of The Lord endureth for ever. And this is The Word which by The Gospel is preached unto you!” <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Gospels,” p 318, 4<sup>th</sup> entry. “Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, E), 2.592.”

<sup>2</sup> KJV, I PETER 1:25.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The central event of all Four Gospels of The New Testament is The Passion-Crucifixion-Resurrection of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. For this was the purpose for which He came into the world, that He could thereby redeem mankind and creation by offering Himself up as our sin offering. And if by His death we who are His adopted children are washed clean of our sins before His Judgement Seat Above, then we are born to new life of holiness in Him by His resurrection. Here we shall limit ourselves to The Passion-Crucifixion events and compare its account between The Four Gospels, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE and JOHN.

The question at hand is the historical accuracy of The Gospel accounts of The Crucifixion of JESUS CHRIST. If there are variations on the account of this crucial event in Christianity, does this mean that The Biblical record is to be discounted, as biblical criticism calls for? Or can any such differences be accounted for in other ways, allowing us to retain the high view of Holy Scripture as The inspired and unerring Word of GOD? As we shall see, variations between the four Gospel accounts of these central events of The Cross of JESUS CHRIST can be accounted for in ways other than denying the veracity of The Biblical account, leaving no reason why we should not fully believe in The Word of GOD.

Indeed, if The four Gospels are inspired by GOD, they not being exactly identical, can only then be intended by The Almighty to be taken – not individually – but as complementing one another into a mosaic of a unified whole picture of The Person and works of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. But the atheist and the heretic - both of whom deny the Divine inspiration of The Holy Scriptures - will refuse to be forced to this conclusion. They will instead grasp at any and all straws of hope that this is not so. For if it is, then they would be forced to concede their need to repent of their sins, confess and believe in the salvation of The Cross of CHRIST. Therefore they will instead seek out all manner of hypotheses, no matter how convoluted, to explain by “natural means” the formation of The Gospels, looking always for differences between The Four as “proofs” of a mere manmade nature of The Word of GOD. But alas, they grasp but in vain!

Now it is to be expected that no two witnesses of any given event, even The Events of The Cross of The Messiah JESUS – The very Center and Focal Point of the universe – recorded for us in The Holy Scriptures under the unerring inspiration of The Spirit of The Almighty, should be exactly the same in every minute detail. For The Writers of The blessed Gospels were still human. Therefore, some differences between The Four Holy Texts are to be expected. Each Gospel was written by different men of GOD. They were written for different audiences. They were written at slightly different times in the birth pangs of The very early Church. They were compiled using some common, but also other differing, sources. They were written in different languages. They each have different emphases. But these things should not surprise us.

The existence of variations between The Gospels, however, in now way “disproves” the veracity of The Events which They record. Our task will be to identify Those Events and examine possible reasons for differences between The Writers, while at

the same time always realizing that This is The very Word of GOD revealed to men and preserved for us by The faithful Church down through the ages. As the psalmist declares in PSALM 33:4, “For The Word of The LORD is right; and all His works are done in truth.”<sup>3</sup> And again, as Saint Paul declares in II TIMOTHY 3:16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD...”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, as Saint John records The very Words of JESUS CHRIST – The Living Word of GOD Incarnate - in JOHN 10:35, “...The Scripture cannot be broken.”<sup>5</sup>

## II. THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF JESUS CHRIST

A prayer tradition in The Catholic Church is The Rosary, which is composed of 4 sets of meditations on events recorded in The Word of GOD, focusing primarily on The Gospel accounts of The Person and works of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Each of these 4 Mysteries – The Joyful, The Sorrowful, The Glorious and The Luminous – each consists of 5 separate meditations. It is upon the last meditation of The Sorrowful Mysteries, The Crucifixion, that we shall focus.<sup>6</sup> The Scripture cited in This Mystery is LUKE 23:46, “And when JESUS had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost.”<sup>7</sup>

Our attention will thus be directed to The Crucifixion of The Messiah JESUS as recorded in MATTHEW 27:1-66, MARK 15:1-47, LUKE 23:1-56 and JOHN 19:1-42. We shall attempt to identify the major classes of events surrounding The Crucifixion of CHRIST in The 4 Gospel accounts and compare them. We shall then attempt to account for any differences of these major event categories of The Crucifixion and draw our conclusions. This will require first a brief overview of the 2 views of Holy Scripture – the secular view and the traditional Christian view.

## III. OVERVIEW OF SECULAR VIEW OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The secular view of Holy Scripture is perhaps best understood through what is called “Biblical criticism,” which has as its basic presumption that The Holy Scriptures are not Divinely inspired revelation from GOD to man, that they are man’s aspirations in search of GOD down through the ages, that therefore they are not unerring, that they are therefore not reliable records of the historical events involving persons and events to

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<sup>3</sup> 1, KJV, PSALM 33:4.

<sup>4</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 3:16.

<sup>5</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 10:35.

<sup>6</sup> 2, The Marians, “Pray The Rosary Daily.” The Joyful Mysteries focus on The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Birth of JESUS, The Presentation and Finding The Child JESUS in The Temple. The Sorrowful Mysteries focus on The Agony in The Garden, The Scourging at The Pillar, The Crowning with Thorns, The Carrying of The Cross and The Crucifixion. The Glorious Mysteries focus on The Resurrection, The Ascension, The Descent of The HOLY SPIRIT, The Assumption and The Coronation. The Luminous Mysteries focus on The Baptism of JESUS, The Wedding at Cana, Proclaiming The Kingdom, The Transfiguration and The Institution of The Eucharist.

<sup>7</sup> 1, KJV, LUKE 23:46.

which they speak. Such a view of Scripture holds that, in the case of The Gospels, primitive Christian oral tradition and circulating fragments of the sayings and parables of JESUS were “overlaid with editorial additions... [shaped by] the Christian community.”<sup>8</sup>

Biblical critics such as Dibelius and Bultmann presume the impossibility of the supernatural, and thus “reject the miraculous and therefore the historicity of The Gospel account of miracles.” For such men, all Biblical “miracle story” arose naturally from the folklore of the early Christian community as part of its self-justification, self-understanding and self-identity.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, any Text related to the supernatural is assumed to be “non-authentic,” and that “every saying that met the [presumed] needs of the community must be the product of the community.”<sup>10</sup>

It is crucial to understand this alternate perspective of modern biblical criticism, which is based in the assumption above all else that the supernatural and miraculous is impossible. So while the man of Faith looks at the variations between The Gospel Records and gives thanks to GOD for the opportunity to understand the hand of GOD more deeply, the atheist and skeptic look at the same phenomenon and see “proofs” that The Gospel Record is a merely manmade accumulation of redacted literature compiled – perhaps by well meaning men down through the ages or perhaps by dishonest men cooperating in a dark conspiracy through The Church down through the centuries – and foolishly attempt to assure themselves in their hearts as the fool does in PSALM 14:1, “...There is no GOD...!”<sup>11</sup> Thus the intense speculative search of various schools of secular inquiry to account for the non-supernatural formation of The Holy Scriptures.

Guthrie, in “New Testament Introduction,” lists 8 assumptions of biblical form criticism, which are the foundations from which all modern biblical criticism arises: “1. That before The written Gospels there was a period of oral tradition; 2. That during this period, narratives and sayings (except The Passion narrative) circulated as separate self-contained units; 3. That The Gospels must be regarded as folk literature; 4. That The Gospel material can be classified according to literary form; 5. That The Gospels are to be regarded as community productions; 6. That the vital factors which produced and preserved these forms are to be found in the practical interests of the Christian community, known as The Sitz im Leben; 7. That the traditions have no chronological or geographical value; 8. That the original form of the traditions may be recovered by studying the laws of the tradition.”<sup>12</sup>

So in the so-called “quest for The historical JESUS” and His historical acts and Words, modern biblical criticism requires as at least 7 basic tenants of faith - if you will - which revolve around the presumed need to discover the true mere human being, Man JESUS of Nazareth, from the mythological Divine CHRIST invented by the Gospel

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<sup>8</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 211, paragraph 1. “I. Reasons for the Rise of Form Criticism.”

<sup>9</sup> 3, Ibid., p 217, paragraph 1. “b. The Christian Imagination Theory.”

<sup>10</sup> 3, Ibid., p 227. “c. The New Quest.”

<sup>11</sup> 1, KJV, PSALM 14:1.

<sup>12</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 230. “III. General Criticisms of Form Criticism.”

writers and The early Church. This requires a brief review of these 7 basic tenants of the faith. Nothing could make this low view of Holy Scripture clearer than that which the anti-supernaturalist scholars of “The JESUS Seminar” have put forward. These modern critical Bible scholars, in search of “The historical JESUS” – as apart from “The mythical CHRIST” – reject out-of-hand any Divine inspiration and thus inerrancy of The Holy Writ because they reject out-of-hand any and all forms of the miraculous as a presupposition.<sup>13</sup>

First, there is the presumed need to find “...the historical JESUS, [Who is] to be uncovered by historical excavation, and The CHRIST of Faith encapsulated in The first Creeds,” such as contained in The Apostles’ Creed. Second, it further presumes as a pillar of faith that The Synoptic Gospels – MATTHEW, MARK and LUKE – are “...much closer to the historical JESUS than The Fourth Gospel – JOHN – which presented a ‘spiritual’ JESUS.”<sup>14</sup>

“Only 7 percent of The Gospel of Mark is unique, as 93 percent of MARK can be found in MATTHEW and LUKE.”<sup>15</sup> Third, modern biblical criticism therefore calls us to accept this tenant of faith, that “The recognition of The Gospel of MARK as prior to MATTHEW and LUKE, and the basis for them both...” Fourth, materials that MATTHEW and LUKE have in common beyond MARK, referred to as “the double tradition,” is attributed to “the hypothetical source Q.”<sup>16</sup> “Q” is taken from the German word “Quelle,” meaning “Source,” a list of about 200 sayings and parables of JESUS common to MATTHEW and LUKE outside of MARK.<sup>17 18</sup> This is specifically called “source” or “redaction criticism,” where it is presumed “that MATTHEW and LUKE used both MARK and Q” as sources.<sup>19</sup>

Where MATTHEW and LUKE differ from MARK and Q in the sayings and parables of JESUS, additional sources are termed “M” for “Special MATTHEW” and “L” for “Special LUKE.”<sup>20</sup> The Gnostic “Gospel of Thomas” manuscript uncovered in 1945 at Nag Hammadi, Egypt – strictly a compilation of 114 sayings and parables attributed to JESUS – is seen as an additional source possibly used by The Gospel writers. Biblical criticism finds here 47 parallels to MARK; 40 to the hypothetical Q; 17 to MATTHEW; 4 to JOHN; about 65 unique to The Gospel of Thomas.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 4, Funk and Hoover, The Five Gospels, “Introduction: The Search for The real JESUS: Darwin, Scopes & All That,” p 1-38.

<sup>14</sup> 4, Ibid., p 3, paragraph 2. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> pillars of modern biblical criticism, “The Seven Pillars of Scholarly Wisdom.”

<sup>15</sup> 5, Walvoord and Zuck, Bible Knowledge Commentary, MATTHEW, p 13. “c. The document theory.”

<sup>16</sup> 4, Funk and Hoover, The Five Gospels, p 3, paragraph 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> pillars of modern biblical criticism, “The Seven Pillars of Scholarly Wisdom.”

<sup>17</sup> 4, Ibid., p 12, paragraph 1. “The mystery of The Double Tradition.”

<sup>18</sup> 5, Walvoord and Zuck, Bible Knowledge Commentary, MATTHEW, p 14.

<sup>19</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 241, paragraph 1. “c. Limitations of Redaction Criticism.”

<sup>20</sup> 4, Funk and Hoover, The five Gospels, p 14, paragraph 2. “Additional Sources M and L.”

<sup>21</sup> 4, Ibid., p 15, to paragraph 1. “Gospel of Thomas.”



Further, many such biblical criticism scholars theorize that “an earlier written source, a Gospel of Signs” was a source for JOHN.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, some theorize that “The Letters of Paul and other early Christian documents, such as The Teaching of The Twelve Apostles,” known also as “The Didache,”<sup>23</sup> may have been other sources for The Gospel writers.<sup>24</sup> Some critics admit a mixture of oral and written sources presumably employed by the writers and redactors of The Gospels, while others insist that only written sources would have been used. But the mere fact of the extremely wide difference of opinions of these many and often drastically changing unproven hypotheses of biblical criticism themselves show the instability and subjectivity of such views of The Holy bible.

Fifth, modern biblical criticism requires several more tenants of faith of its believers: The separation of the sayings and parables of The JESUS Who was concerned with the issues of everyday people from “The eschatological JESUS,” which alleges that He was incorrectly painted as an “advocate of an impending cataclysm” and the imminent arrival of The Kingdom of GOD on earth by His early disciples, “a view that JESUS’ first disciples had acquired from [John The] Baptist.”<sup>25</sup> Sixth, modern biblical criticism asserts that The true historical JESUS is not to be found in the printed Word contained in The Bible, but only in lingering fragments of oral tradition within The Gospel Texts. These presumed fragments are “short, provocative, memorable, oft-repeated phrases, sentences and stories.”<sup>26</sup>

Seventh, The Gospel Texts being assumed to be mostly historically inaccurate, the few historical fragments must be distilled out. This Gospel Texts are assumed to represent The early Church’s “...memory of JESUS [that] is embellished by mythic elements that express The [early] Church’s faith in Him, and by plausible fictions that enhance the telling of The Gospel story for first century listeners” who lived in a culture that presumed the truth of “Divine men and miracle workers.”<sup>27</sup>

#### IV. OVERVIEW OF THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

The traditional Christian view of Holy Scripture is this: The unerring and Divinely inspired Word of GOD revealed to man versus the erring and merely humanly inspired aspirations of hope and meaning in search of The Divine. The Mother Catholic Church, and her sister faithful orthodox Churches, have always taught that The Holy Scriptures are The Divinely revealed and thus unerring Word of GOD. The Catholic Church teaches of the writing of The Gospels that there were 3 distinct time periods: 1) “The life and teachings of JESUS,” leading to His Passion, death, resurrection and

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<sup>22</sup> 4, Funk and Hoover, *The Five Gospels*, p 16 to paragraph 1. “Independent & Derivative Sources.”

<sup>23</sup> 4, *Ibid.*, p 16, paragraph 2. “The Didache” was “an early instructional manual” used by the early Church to catechize new Christian converts.

<sup>24</sup> 4, *Ibid.*, p 16, paragraph 2. “Independent & Derivate Sources.”

<sup>25</sup> 4, *Ibid.*, p 4, paragraph 2. “The Seven Pillars of Scholarly Wisdom.”

<sup>26</sup> 4, *Ibid.*, p 4, paragraph 4. “The Seven Pillars of Scholarly Wisdom.”

<sup>27</sup> 4, *Ibid.*, p 4, paragraph 5 – p 5. “The Seven Pillars of Scholarly Wisdom.”

ascension into Heaven; 2) “The oral tradition,” during which the Apostles orally taught and preached The Gospel of CHRIST; 3) “The written Gospels,” when from oral traditions and their accounts as eyewitnesses the Apostles set down, under the inspiration of The HOLY SPIRIT, that which was necessary for men to receive for their life and salvation in JESUS CHRIST. <sup>28</sup>

The Catechism of The Catholic Church states, “GOD is The Author of Sacred Scripture... ‘For Holy Mother Church, relying on The Faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical The Books of The Old and The New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of The HOLY SPIRIT, They have GOD as their Author and have been handed on as such to The Church herself.’” <sup>29</sup> So The faithful Church did not create The Holy Scriptures. Rather, she faithfully receives them from the hand of GOD, preserves them and preaches them to mankind down through the ages.

GOD being The ultimate Author of Holy Scripture, inspired men under the direction of The Divine Spirit, select holy men down through the ages recorded The Words as the proximate authors of Holy Scripture. “GOD inspired the human authors of The Sacred Books. ‘To compose The Sacred Books, GOD chose certain men who, all the while He employed them in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though He acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever He wanted written, and no more.’” <sup>30</sup>

This traditional Christian view of Holy Writ is declared with equal forcefulness in The Westminster Confession, Chapter I, Section I, “Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of GOD, as to leave men inexcusable; <sup>31</sup> yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of GOD, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation: <sup>32</sup> therefore it pleased The Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; <sup>33</sup> and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit The Same wholly unto writing... <sup>34, 35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 6, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 126, p 41. “We can distinguish three stages in the formation of The Gospels.”

<sup>29</sup> 6, Ibid., # 105, p 36. “Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture.”

<sup>30</sup> 6, Ibid., # 106, p 36-37. “Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture.”

<sup>31</sup> 1, KJV, ROMANS 1:19-20,32; 2:1,14-15; PSALM 19:1-3.

<sup>32</sup> 1, KJV, I CORINTHIANS 1:21; 2:13-14.

<sup>33</sup> 1, KJV, HEBREWS 1:1.

<sup>34</sup> 1, KJV, PROVERBS 22:19-21; ISAIAH 8:19-20; MATTHEW 4:4,7,10; LUKE 1:3-4; ROMANS 15:4.

<sup>35</sup> 7, WCF 1.1.

The logical endpoint of this traditional Christian view is that The Holy Scriptures are thus without error, and are true records of the historical people and events – both earthly and spiritual – which are thus recorded. Returning to The Catechism of The Catholic Church, “The Inspired Books teach The truth, ‘Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by The HOLY SPIRIT, we must acknowledge that The Books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error, teach That Truth which GOD, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to The Sacred Scriptures.’”<sup>36</sup>

The traditional Christian view of The Holy Scriptures, that The Church did not create The Holy Bible, but rather received its Books of The Old and New Testaments at the hands of Divinely inspired men, is well summed up by Protestant theologian Benjamin Warfield, “From the very beginning the Old Testament was as cordially recognized as law by the Christian as by the Jew.” CHRIST Himself and His Apostles “imposed The Scriptures upon the infant Churches as their authoritative rule of faith and practice.” The Books of The Holy Bible – Old and New - being revealed by The HOLY SPIRIT, are “therefore of Divine Authority... and their writings were the depository of these [Divinely inspired] Commands.”<sup>37</sup> Cornelius VanTil echoes this theme, that “The Bible is, in its Autographia, is The infallible Word of GOD.”<sup>38</sup>

#### V. COMPARING 15 MAJOR SETS OF CRUCIFIXION EVENTS IN THE GOSPELS

I compare the four Gospel accounts of The Crucifixion of our Lord JESUS CHRIST from MATTHEW 27:1-66, MARK 15:1-47, LUKE 23:1-56 and JOHN 19:1-42. In doing so, I have identified 15 common major sets of landmark events recorded for us of The Crucifixion: 1. The conspiracy of Judas to betray JESUS; 2. The interrogation of JESUS by Pilate; 3. Pilate’s desire to release JESUS over Barabbas; 4. Pilate declares the innocence of JESUS; 5. CHRIST is mocked by the Roman soldiers; 6. JESUS is brought to the place of Crucifixion; 7. JESUS offered drink on The Cross.

Further, 8. The soldiers cast lots for CHRIST’s garments; 9. The sign placed over JESUS’ head on The Cross; 10. The chief Priests and thieves mock CHRIST; 11. CHRIST’s last moments before His death; 12. Events immediately at the death of JESUS; 13. The women at The Cross; 14. The Body of CHRIST taken to the tomb; 15. The watch posted at the tomb of CHRIST. I offer this breakdown of these 15 categories of events related to CHRIST’s Crucifixion:

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<sup>36</sup> 6, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 107, p 37. “Inspiration and Truth of The Sacred Scripture.”

<sup>37</sup> 8, Warfield, “The Inspiration and Authority of The Bible,” p 411.

<sup>38</sup> 8, Ibid., p 3.

1. THE CONSPIRACY OF JUDAS TO BETRAY JESUS<sup>39</sup>

MT1 - MATTHEW 27:1-10

2. THE INTERROGATION OF JESUS BY PILATE

MT2 – MATTHEW 27:11-14

MK2 – MARK 15:1-6

LK2 – LUKE 23:1-5

JN2 – JOHN 18:28-38; 19:9-12

3. PILATE’S DESIRE TO RELEASE JESUS OVER BARABBAS

MT3 – MATTHEW 27:15-22

MK3 – MARK 15:7-15

LK3 – LUKE 23:6-20

JN3 – JOHN 18:39-40; 19:1,4-15

4. PILATE DECLARES THE INNOCENCE OF JESUS

MT4 – MATTHEW 27:23-25

LK4 – LUKE 23:21-25

JN4 – JOHN 8:38

5. CHRIST IS MOCKED BY THE ROMAN SOLDIERS

MT5 – MATTHEW 26:26-30

MK5 – MARK 15:16-20

JN5 – JOHN 19:2-3

6. JESUS IS BROUGHT TO THE PLACE OF CRUCIFIXION

MT6 – MATTHEW 27:31-33

MK6 – MARK 15:21-22

LK6 – LUKE 23:26-33

JN6 – JOHN 19:16-18

7. JESUS OFFERED DRINK ON THE CROSS

MT7 – MATTHEW 27:34

MK7 – MARK 15:23

LK7 – LUKE 23:36-37

JN7 – JOHN 19:28-29

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<sup>39</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 6:64-71, “But there are some of you that believe not. For JESUS knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him... JESUS answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of The Twelve.” JOHN makes it clear that JESUS was well aware that Judas would betray Him. But the actual details of the conspiracy between Judas and the religious leaders is not recorded as in MATTHEW. See also JOHN 12:4; 13:2,11,21.

8. THE SOLDIERS CAST LOTS FOR CHRIST'S GARMENTS

MT8 – MATTHEW 27:35-36

MK8 – MARK 15:24-25

LK8 – LUKE 23:34

JN8 – JOHN 18:23-24

9. THE SIGN PLACED OVER JESUS' HEAD ON THE CROSS

MT9 – MATTHEW 27:37

MK9 – MARK 15:26

LK9 – LUKE 23:38

JN9 – JOHN 19:19-22

10. THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THIEVES MOCK CHRIST

MT10 – MATTHEW 27:38-44

MK10 – MARK 15:27-32

LK10 – LUKE 23:35,39-44

11. CHRIST'S LAST MOMENTS BEFORE HIS DEATH

MT11 – MATTHEW 27:45-50

MK11 – MARK 15:33-37

LK11 – LUKE 23:44-47

JN11 – JOHN 19:30

12. EVENTS IMMEDIATELY AT THE DEATH OF JESUS

MT12 – MATTHEW 27:51-54

MK12 – MARK 15:38-39

LK12 – LUKE 23:48

JN12 – JOHN 19:31-37

13. THE WOMEN AT THE CROSS

MT13 – MATTHEW 27:55-57

MK13 – MARK 15:40-41

LK13 – LUKE 23:49

JN13 – JOHN 19:25-27

14. THE BODY OF CHRIST TAKEN TO THE TOMB

MT14 – MATTHEW 27:57-61

MK14 – MARK 15:42-47

LK14 – LUKE 23:50-56

JN14 – JOHN 19:38-42

15. THE WATCH POSTED AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST

MT15 – MATTHEW 27:62-66

## VI. DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES EVIDENT BETWEEN THE 4 GOSPELS

We find in these 15 categories the following: 1. The conspiracy of Judas to betray JESUS: MT1 - MATTHEW 27:1-10. 2. The interrogation of JESUS by Pilate: MT2 - MATTHEW 27:11-14, MK2 – MARK 15:1-6, LK2 – LUKE 23:1-5, JN2 - JOHN 18:28-38; 19:9-12. 3. Pilate's desire to release JESUS over Barabbas: MT3 - MATTHEW 27:15-22, MK3 – MARK 15:7-15, LK3 – LUKE 23:6-20, JN3 - JOHN 18:39-40; 19:1,4-15. 4. Pilate declares the innocence of JESUS: MT4 - MATTHEW 27:23-25, LK4 – LUKE 23:21-25, JN4 - JOHN 8:38. 5. CHRIST is mocked by the Roman soldiers: MT5 - MATTHEW 26:26-30, MK5 – MARK 15:16-20, JN5 - JOHN 19:2-3.

Further: 6. JESUS is brought to the place of Crucifixion: MT6 - MATTHEW 27:31-33, MK6 – MARK 15:21-22, LK6 – LUKE 23:26-33, JN6 - JOHN 19:16-18. 7. JESUS offered drink on The Cross: MT7 - MATTHEW 27:34, MK7 – MARK 15:23, LK7 – LUKE 23:36-37, JN7 - JOHN 19:28-29. 8. The soldiers cast lots for CHRIST's garments: MT8 - MATTHEW 27:35-36, MK8 – MARK 15:24-25, LK8 – LUKE 23:34, JN8 - JOHN 18:23-24. 9. The sign placed over JESUS' head on The Cross: MT9 - MATTHEW 27:37, MK9 – MARK 15:26, LK9 – LUKE 23:38, JN9 = JOHN 19:19-22. 10. The chief Priests and thieves mock CHRIST: MT10 - MATTHEW 27:38-44, MK10 – MARK 15:27-32, LK10 – LUKE 23:35, 39-44.

Further, 11. CHRIST's last moments before His death: MT11 - MATTHEW 27:45-50, MK11 – MARK 15:33-37, LK11 – LUKE 23:44-47, JN11 - JOHN 19:30. 12. Events immediately at the death of JESUS: MT12 - MATTHEW 27:51-54, MK12 – MARK 15:38-39, LK12 – LUKE 23:48, JN12 - JOHN 19:31-37. 13. The women at The Cross: MT13 - MATTHEW 27:55-57, MK13 – MARK 15:40-41, LK13 – LUKE 23:49, JN13 - JOHN 19:25-27. 14. The Body of CHRIST taken to the tomb: MT14 - MATTHEW 27:57-61, MK14 – MARK 15:42-47, LK14 – LUKE 23:50-56, JN14 - JOHN 19:38-42. 15. The watch posted at the tomb of CHRIST: MT15 - MATTHEW 27:62-66.

We observe 1) The Gospel of MATTHEW is the most comprehensive of The 4 Gospels on these key events, recording all 15 Passion event categories. MARK, LUKE and JOHN record 12 of these 15 event categories, but not all the same 12; 2) MARK, LUKE and JOHN omit the same 2 events that are reported only in MATTHEW: MT1 - The conspiracy of Judas to betray JESUS and M15 – The watch posted at the tomb of CHRIST; 3) MARK, LUKE and JOHN each omit a different 3<sup>rd</sup> Crucifixion event: MARK omits what we find in MT4, LK4 and JH4 – Pilate declares the innocence of JESUS; LUKE omits what we find in MT5, MK5 and JN5 – CHRIST is mocked by the Roman soldiers; JOHN omits what we find in MT10, MK10 and LK10 – the chief Priests and thieves mock CHRIST.

## VII. PLAN OF ATTACK – QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

We then find is a strikingly close correspondence of these major 15 categories of events of The Crucifixion of CHRIST, though there is some variation in the sequence of how these events are recorded, particularly between The 3 Synoptic Gospels versus The Gospel of JOHN. Most significantly, what we find are no contradictory reports between The 4 Gospels on The Crucifixion of JESUS CHRIST. Our secondary task is to account for the omissions in MARK, LUKE and JOHN that we find recorded in MATTHEW. Our primary task is to account for the very close agreement of The 4 Gospel records of these events.

We will limit our effort to account for the differences observed in The Crucifixion accounts to these 4 categories: 1) How The 4 Gospels arose, in what order, and from what sources; 2) The different emphases of The 4 Gospels; 3) The different human authors of the 4 Gospels; 4) The different historical situations in which The 4 Gospels were written.

## VIII. HOW THE GOSPELS AROSE, IN WHAT ORDER & FROM WHAT SOURCES

Can different theories of how The 4 Gospels arose, in what order, and from what sources, account for these variations in The Crucifixion accounts? Church tradition - “a view that goes back to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD” - has long held that MATTHEW was the first Gospel written,<sup>40</sup> designed primarily for a Jewish audience. If MATTHEW was first, then those parts common to MARK, LUKE and MATTHEW would suggest that MARK and LUKE used MATTHEW as a primary source document. Thus the close correspondence between The 3 Synoptic Gospels. The Book of JOHN, written last, would then have all 3 previous Gospels available as source documents.

If the emphasis of MATTHEW is to show The Kingship of CHRIST, in the line of King David, over all of Israel and the world,<sup>41</sup> then we would expect to find MATTHEW making great efforts to show that only JESUS fulfills all the Old Testament messianic prophecies. This is exactly what we find, MATTHEW 1:1 opening, “The Book of the generation of JESUS CHRIST, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”<sup>42</sup> The genealogy of JESUS is carefully established, Who is The Eternal King of Israel Incarnate. MATTHEW 1:17 declares, “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto CHRIST are fourteen generations.”<sup>43</sup> As The New American Bible comments, MATTHEW’s “...purpose is to show that He was The One to Whom the prophecies of Israel were pointing,” The Messiah JESUS, “...for in Him GOD is with us.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> 9, NAB, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” p 1106, paragraph 1. “Introduction.”

<sup>41</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 990, VII, 1. Introductory notes, “The Four Gospels.”

<sup>42</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 1:1.

<sup>43</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 1:17.

<sup>44</sup> 9, NAB, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” p 1106, paragraph 2. “Introduction.”

Wessel observes that MARK had long been a neglected Gospel until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD with the rise of modern biblical criticism. He observes of MARK that first, it was not written by an Apostle; second, the language is “rough and ungrammatical;” third, it was generally held to be “an abridgement of MATTHEW.” Only as “the priority of MARK” theory arose was more study given to MARK.<sup>45</sup> This view holds that MATTHEW and LUKE hold much common Text between them because their primary written source was MARK. Where LUKE and MATTHEW differ from MARK, but are in common with each other, a second written hypothetical source – “Q” for the German “Quelle” for “Source” – is presumed. Where LUKE and MATTHEW differ from MATTHEW and from each other, additional unique hypothetical sources are proposed, “L” for a LUKE-specific only source and “M” for a MATTHEW-specific only source.<sup>46</sup>  
<sup>47</sup> Therefore, MATTHEW = MARK + Q + M ; LUKE = MARK + Q + L.<sup>48</sup>

But as Guthrie observes, “There is considerable difference of opinion among scholars who postulate a Q source as to the precise details of contents...,” although many such critics agree on the general outline of its supposed contents. Never the less, all such conjectural hypotheses are “speculative.”<sup>49</sup> Did this single or multiple “Q” source - oral, written/oral or oral in whatever languages [Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek or others] - contain The Passion narratives? Most source critics, as Guthrie observes, answer no.<sup>50</sup> “It would be clear that the compiler of Q had little conception of chronological or topical arrangement and that his primary purpose was the preservation of the teaching of JESUS without much regard for sequence.”<sup>51</sup>

The Passion events JESUS - His suffering, death and resurrection - are the central events of The First Advent of CHRIST in all 4 Gospels. Q is clearly not a Gospel or proto-Gospel, for it supposedly lacks any record of The Passion.<sup>52</sup> What do the widely varied opinions of what this Q might have looked like indicate? And if Q was so vital in The early Church, why is it not preserved, much less any mention of it made by The Church in any age to us? Q and further additional speculations of other source documents for The Gospels remain hypotheses offered by secular scholars who begin with the premise that The Holy Bible is not inspired by The HOLY SPIRIT, but is a compilation of the “Sitz im Leben,” the “life-situation[s] in which they arose,” in Israel and then in The Church.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor’s Bible Commentary, MARK, Introduction, p 603-604. “1. The Place of Mark’s Gospel in Biblical Studies.”

<sup>46</sup> 4, Funk and Hoover, The Five Gospels, “Introduction: The Search for The real JESUS: Darwin, Scopes & All That,” p 3-14.

<sup>47</sup> 9, NAB, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, p 1098, paragraph 7-p 1009, paragraph 1.

<sup>48</sup> 5, Walvoord and Zuck, Bible Knowledge Commentary, MATTHEW, p 14.

<sup>49</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, “b. The contents of Q,” p 167.

<sup>50</sup> 3, Ibid., p 169, paragraph 1.

<sup>51</sup> 3, Ibid., p 169, paragraph 3.

<sup>52</sup> 3, Ibid., p 173, paragraph 1.

<sup>53</sup> 3, Ibid., p 144, paragraph 5, “3. The oral theory ...”



So the emphasis then of MARK - supposedly “pure Gospel” that preserves the greatest degree of the humanity of JESUS - is a view which suits those well who begin with the presuppositional denial of Divine inspiration of Holy Scripture in biblical criticism. MATTHEW and LUKE are then held to be artificial “expansions” of MARK to meet the needs of The early Church community, allegedly skewing The true Person of JESUS to meet the needs of the early Church.<sup>54</sup> Wessel observes, “The main assumption of form criticism is that units of Gospel tradition circulated orally before they were written down and that, in the oral period, these units were shaped, even created, by the Sitz im Leben (life setting) of the early Christian community.” Those men who supposedly edited these Christian traditions into The 4 Gospels are thus held to present more the story of The early Church - the evolution of the moral teacher of The Law JESUS, into The Divine CHRIST - than that of the historical man JESUS.<sup>55</sup>

JOHN is held to have been written lastly, circa “AD 90-100,” probably outside of Palestine, possibly in Ephesus, Antioch or Alexandria.<sup>56</sup> So the human author of JOHN would have had The written 3 Synoptic Gospels, or at least the established traditions in written and/or oral forms, at his disposal. Additionally, if the human author is the Apostle John, then we have before us in JOHN an eyewitness account of the events recorded in That Gospel surrounding The Person and ministry of JESUS CHRIST. This would be the eyewitness written of in MATTHEW 10:2 as an Apostles of The Lord, “...James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.”<sup>57</sup>

Whatever the order of the final writing of The 3 Synoptic Gospels, it is widely held that JOHN was The last Gospel written - composed after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD - while The Synoptics were composed before this key event. And from its contents and purpose, it is widely held that JOHN was written independently of, though by no means divorced from, The 3 Synoptics. We find in JOHN only 7 miracles,<sup>58</sup> surrounded by lengthy discourses between JESUS and others - particularly the Jewish religious authorities - and extensive narration of the events recorded therein.

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<sup>54</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Introduction, p 604, paragraph 1.

<sup>55</sup> 11, Ibid., p 604, paragraph 3.

<sup>56</sup> 9, NAB, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p 1137, paragraph 4.

<sup>57</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 10:2.

<sup>58</sup> 1, KJV, 1) JOHN 2:1-12, the water into wine at the wedding feast; 2) JOHN 4:46-54, the healing of the nobleman’s son; 3) JOHN 5:1-15, the healing of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda; 4) JOHN 6:1-15, the feeding of the 5,000; 5) JOHN 6:16-21, JESUS walks on the water; 6) JOHN 9:1-41, the healing of the man born blind; 7) JOHN 11:1-44, the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

JOHN uniquely ties the concept of Gentile Hellenistic view of The Divine Word - ὁ λόγος<sup>59</sup> - O Logos, with the Jewish understanding of The LORD GOD, Creator of Heaven and earth, The Word of The LORD - דְּבַר־יְהוָה<sup>60</sup> - DEBAR-[‘ADONAY<sup>61</sup>].<sup>62</sup> This reflects a time in The early Church - after the destruction of The Jerusalem Temple by the Roman army in 70 AD<sup>63</sup> - when The Gospel Message is now expanding out beyond Palestine in great force across the known Gentile world and the majority of new Christians are no longer Jewish but Gentile, the synagogue and The Church eventually going their separate ways.<sup>64</sup>

#### IX. THE DIFFERENT EMPHASES OF THE 4 GOSPELS

Can the different emphases of The 4 Gospels account for the variations we observe in The Crucifixion accounts? In MATTHEW, JESUS is The promised Davidic King come to set His people free and rule upon the Davidic throne over The Kingdom of GOD.<sup>65</sup> Of MATTHEW, Tertullian writes in 210 AD, “...for no other reason... except to show us clearly the fleshly lineage of CHRIST” - i.e., The Lord’s humanity as The Messiah promised in Old Testament prophecies - “Matthew begins his Gospel in this manner [in MATTHEW 1:1]: ‘The Book of the generation of JESUS CHRIST, The Son of David, The Son of Abraham.’”<sup>66</sup> Origin notes the same internal evidence of MATTHEW 1:1, observing in 228 AD, “Matthew wrote for the Hebrews, who looked for The [Messiah] to come from the line of Abraham and of David...”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> 12, GNT, JOHN 1:1, “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.” “En arche en O Logos, kai O Logos en pros Ton Theon, kai Theos en O Logos!” Or literally, In The Beginning, The [Divine] Word was, and The [Divine] Word was with GOD, and GOD was The [Divine] Word and The [Divine] Word was GOD!”

<sup>60</sup> 13, BHS, GENESIS 15:1, “After these things The Word of The LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying...” In The Hebrew Text:

אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם בַּמַּחֲזָה לְאָמֹר  
‘AMAR HADBARIYM HA’ELEH HAYAH DEBAR-[‘ADONAY] ‘EL-‘AVRAM  
BAMMACHEZEH LE’MOR... Or literally, “After the things the these are The Word [of] The LORD to Abram in [a] vision, for to say...”

<sup>61</sup> It is the practice of faithful Jewish people to not pronounce The Name of The LORD - יְהוָה - “The Tetragrammaton,” out of reverence for Him, but rather in reading The Sacred Scriptures in The Hebrew to substitute - הַשֵּׁם - HASHEM, which means simply “The Name,” or - אֲדֹנָי - ‘ADONAY, which means “The Lord,” a title of JEHOVAH. We shall do so here.

<sup>62</sup> In my transliteration of The Hebrew, I represent the letter א aleph = ‘ and the letter ע ayin = “

<sup>63</sup> 20, Fausset’s Bible Dictionary, entry “Jerusalem,” 1947.15.

<sup>64</sup> 20, Ibid., entry, “Church,” 827.08.

<sup>65</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 990, VII, 1. Introductory notes, “The Four Gospels.”

<sup>66</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “MATTHEW,” p 442, 3<sup>rd</sup> entry. “Tertullian (c. 210, W), 3.540.

<sup>67</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “MATTHEW, Gospel of,” p 442, 4<sup>th</sup> entry. “Irenaeus (c. 180, E/W), 1.573.

Early Church Fathers – “Papias (80-155 AD), Irenaeus (130-202 AD), Origen (185-254 AD), Eusebius (Fourth Century AD) and Jerome (Sixth Century AD)” – write that MATTHEW was first written by the Apostle Matthew in Aramaic, a language similar to Hebrew. Papias refers to The Sayings of JESUS compiled by Matthew however as “The Logia.” Possibly “a second, shorter account of The Lord’s Words” in Aramaic for Jewish readers. The early Church probably possessed MATTHEW in Greek. But none of these possibilities take away from the very Jewish nature of MATTHEW. That none of The Synoptic Gospels mention the monumental event of the destruction of Jerusalem and The Temple in 70 AD, as prophesied by JESUS in MATTHEW 24 strongly suggest that they were written before that cataclysmic date.<sup>68</sup>

This would place MATTHEW as a Gospel of The early Palestinian Church, which was primarily Jewish, when keeping of The Mosaic Law, Temple worship and Jewish traditions presumably continued both inside and outside The Church.<sup>69</sup> Thus the emphasis of JESUS The Messiah as The Divine King come to initiate and rule over The Kingdom of GOD. Walvoord and Zuck offer 2 purposes for the writing of This Gospel by Matthew: 1) “to show unbelieving Jews that JESUS is The Messiah...,” that they might believe as he believed; 2) “to encourage Jewish believers. If indeed JESUS is The Messiah, a horrible thing had occurred. The Jews had crucified their Messiah and King...!”<sup>70</sup> What would become of the nation, the people and The Church? Divine judgement would indeed come upon that generation of remnant Israel, but she would be restored again in GOD’s time. Meanwhile, The Kingdom of GOD was now at hand as The Church on earth and in Heaven. And every believer - Jew and Gentile - is called to faithfully confess JESUS CHRIST as Lord and Saviour.

In MARK, JESUS CHRIST is wonder-working Servant Who comes in Divine authority and power.<sup>71</sup> Matthew Henry compares LUKE to MATTHEW, observing that much of the material is in common between The Two Gospels, saying of MARK that it is “...much shorter than Matthew's, not giving so full an account of CHRIST's sermons as that did, but insisting chiefly on His miracles.”<sup>72</sup> About 1/3 of MARK focuses on the death of JESUS at The Cross. The way of the faithful Christian lies on the same “via dolorosa” - “The Way of The Cross” - following The Lord.<sup>73</sup>

If The Saviour JESUS CHRIST suffered and died for righteousness’ sake and for us His Church, Mark is saying, then so shall those of His faithful Church. MARK presents to us the other side of The Person of JESUS CHRIST, not so much The Divine GOD-Man, but the intense humanity of The sinless Man-GOD. Thus, “the emphasis on JESUS’ true humanity, underscored by His sufferings” in His Passion that lead Him to

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<sup>68</sup> 5, Walvoord and Zuck, Bible Knowledge Commentary, MATTHEW, p 14, paragraph 1.

<sup>69</sup> 5, Ibid., MATTHEW, p 16, paragraph 1.

<sup>70</sup> 5, Walvoord and Zuck, Bible Knowledge Commentary, MATTHEW, p 16. “The Occasion for Writing The First Gospel.”

<sup>71</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 990, VII, 1. Introductory notes, “The Four Gospels.”

<sup>72</sup> 15, Matthew Henry, MARK, Introduction, II.

<sup>73</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor’s Bible Commentary, MARK, p 610, paragraph 2.

The Cross for us His saints.<sup>74</sup> Mark then writes as an intensely concerned theologian, interpreting and arranging The Traditions he heard from the Apostles, the "...preaching materials, designed to tell the story of GOD's saving action in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of JESUS of Nazareth."<sup>75</sup> MARK is then a Gospel of Evangelical Preaching of hope to a persecuted Church.

In LUKE, JESUS CHRIST is The Man-GOD, The Son of Man and head of the human race.<sup>76</sup> Of LUKE, the New American Bible observes that Luke may give evidence in his Gospel that "...he was acquainted with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70," and so is likely to be dated shortly after that time, may scholars date The Book to "AD 80-90."<sup>77</sup> But reference to these events in LUKE 21:20-24<sup>78</sup> may be prophetic Words of CHRIST, rather than fulfilled events recorded by Luke. So Scofield places LUKE as being written just prior The Jewish War in question, falling "between AD 63 and 68," shortly before Jerusalem's fall.<sup>79</sup> Further, "Luke's consistent substitution of Greek names for the Aramaic or Hebrew names..., his omission from The Gospel of specifically Jewish Christian concerns..., his interest in Gentile Christians..., and his incomplete knowledge of Palestinian geography, customs and practices... suggest that Luke was a non-Palestinian writing to a non-Palestinian audience that was largely made up of Gentile Christians."<sup>80</sup>

The focus of LUKE is, as Wycliffe observes, to present JESUS CHRIST as The Saviour of all men, focused on "...lifting men out of their sin and bringing them back to life and hope" in GOD.<sup>81</sup> So Simeon prophesied in The Spirit of GOD over the infant JESUS in The Temple in LUKE 2:31-32, Here is The One, O LORD, "Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel!"<sup>82</sup> Luke's Title of CHRIST as "The Son of Man" serves to emphasize "...His humanity and His compassionate feeling for all men."<sup>83</sup> JESUS declares of Himself to the tax collector Zacchaeus in LUKE 19:10, "For The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."<sup>84</sup> Luke writes as a Gentile Christian, "...with

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<sup>74</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor's Bible Commentary, MARK, p 610, paragraph 4.

<sup>75</sup> 11, Ibid., MARK, p 611, paragraph 3. "6. Literary Form."

<sup>76</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 990, VII, 1. Introductory notes, "The Four Gospels."

<sup>77</sup> 9, NAB, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, P 1091, paragraph 2.

<sup>78</sup> 1, KJV, LUKE 21:20-24, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

<sup>79</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 1070, paragraph 1, Introduction. "The Gospel According to St. LUKE."

<sup>80</sup> 9, NAB, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, p 1091, paragraph 3.

<sup>81</sup> 16, Wycliffe, "THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE," p 1028, "Summary of Message."

<sup>82</sup> 1, KJV, LUKE 2:31-32.

<sup>83</sup> 16, Wycliffe, "THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE," p 1029, paragraph 1.

<sup>84</sup> 1, KJV, LUKE 19:10.

deep appreciation of GOD's Revelation through the Hebrew people, and yet with a warm sympathy for those who are not included in The First Covenant of The Law. [Therefore] his Gospel is truly universal in scope."<sup>85</sup> Thus we have JESUS CHRIST as The Son of Man in MARK, The Saviour and Redeemer of all men.

In JOHN, JESUS CHRIST is The King of the universe Incarnate come down from Heaven,<sup>86</sup> The Divine Word Who takes upon Himself human flesh.<sup>87</sup> So in JOHN 20:31 we read the central purpose of The Book, "But these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is The CHRIST, The Son of GOD; and that believing ye might have life through His Name."<sup>88</sup> This is a Gospel of continuity between The Old and New Testament, quoting from Old Testament prophecies, recording the miracles and discourses of JESUS, and in The Text's narratives, that He is indeed the universal Messiah for all men because of His full Divinity in The Incarnation. So the author of JOHN takes GENESIS 1:1 of The TORAH and offers it up in JOHN 1:1 to the Greek speaking world of his day, to both Jews and Gentiles, those both within and those outside of remnant Israel. GENESIS 1:1, "In the beginning GOD created the heaven[s] and the earth."<sup>89</sup> JOHN 1:1, "In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with GOD, and The Word was GOD."<sup>90</sup>

Bible critics may object that the Apostle John could not have been the author of JOHN because, being a Palestinian Jew, he would have had no knowledge of Greek philosophy or language. But this is mere conjecture. As Guthrie says, "If... our Lord is given credit for expressing His Message in a form which could be adaptable to The universal Mission, the existence of concepts which would be appreciated by Gentiles is no surprise in an Apostolic Writing!"<sup>91</sup> So we see a great synthesis here of The Gospel Message between Jewish and Greek understanding of Who GOD is, but remaining firmly rooted in The Jewish Scriptures. Repeatedly Moses records in The Creation Account, as in GENESIS 1:11, "And GOD said... and it was so."<sup>92</sup> It is by "the power of GOD's Word" that all that is has existence and continuance.<sup>93</sup> In The TARGUM, The Aramaic Old Testament, the verb here for "to say" - אָמַר - 'AMAR – also means "to pronounce, think, command, to be called and to be ordered."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> 16, Wycliffe, "THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE," p 1028, paragraph 1.

<sup>86</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 990, VII, 1. Introductory notes, "The Four Gospels."

<sup>87</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 1:14.

<sup>88</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 20:31.

<sup>89</sup> 1, KJV, GENESIS 1:1.

<sup>90</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 1:1.

<sup>91</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 267, paragraph 2.

<sup>92</sup> 1, KJV, GENESIS 1:11.

<sup>93</sup> 17, Geneva Bible Notes, GENESIS 1:11.

<sup>94</sup> 18, TARGUM, GENESIS 1:1, CAL Lexicon אָמַר - 'AMAR – verb, "to say," definitions # 011, 012, 013, 015, 042, 043.

The Word of The Eternal Creator speaks forth from His mouth, and all that He says in His Word becomes so. JOHN introduces JESUS CHRIST as The Personal Word of GOD, present with GOD The Creator forever, present when creation was brought into being, of Whom JOHN 1:3 declares, “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.”<sup>95</sup> Strong comments that The Divine Logos - ὁ λόγος - of JOHN then “denotes The essential Word of GOD, JESUS CHRIST, The personal [Divine] Wisdom and Power in union with GOD, His Minister in creation and government of the universe, The Cause of all the world's life both physical and ethical, which for the procurement of man's salvation put on human nature in The Person of JESUS The Messiah, The Second Person in The Godhead, and shone forth conspicuously from His Words and deeds.”<sup>96</sup>

As Fausset observes, JOHN corrects the error of Philo's misunderstanding of The Divine Word – “Logos” - which “excludes Personality, and is identical at times with GOD, at other times with the world.” When men speak, they make known their mind by their words. When The Almighty speaks, He makes The Divine Mind known to man by The Divine Word, “Who is in GOD's Image...” The Word of GOD The Father, JESUS being The personal Word of GOD The Son - eternally preexisting, Incarnate, crucified, dead, arisen, ascended and reigning Above at the right hand of The Father forever - is then “The Medium of every external act of GOD... in the physical and spiritual creations.”<sup>97</sup> The Gospel of JOHN makes this connection for 2 reasons: 1) to show that JESUS CHRIST is, though fully Man, also fully GOD - fully Divine; 2) therefore He alone is The Saviour of all men, both Jews and Gentiles.

#### X. THE DIFFERENT HUMAN AUTHORS OF THE 4 GOSPELS

Can the different human authors of The 4 Gospels account for variations we observe in The Crucifixion accounts? Of MATTHEW, Origin writes in 245 AD, “...I have learned by tradition that The Gospel according to Matthew (who was at one time a tax collector and afterwards an Apostle of JESUS CHRIST) was written first. He composed it in the Hebrew tongue and published it for the converts from Judaism.”<sup>98</sup> If MATTHEW was the first Gospel written, then the Church tradition that “Matthew the publican” of MATTHEW 10:3<sup>99</sup> is indeed the human author of This Gospel. Such a man as this tax collector for the Romans, who became one of JESUS' 12 Apostles, would have been of necessity literate, educated and multilingual. He was himself a Jew living in remnant Israel under Roman occupation. So as the writer of MATTHEW, it is very probable that such a man would have written to his fellow Jews about The Jewish Messiah in the traditional Hebrew language or perhaps in Aramaic.

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<sup>95</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 1:3.

<sup>96</sup> 19, Strong's Data, 3056 λόγος – logos, entry 3) “In JOHN [1:1], denotes The essential Word of GOD, JESUS CHRIST...”

<sup>97</sup> 20, Fausset's Bible Dictionary, entry 3723.01 “Word, The,” JOHN 1:1.

<sup>98</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Gospels,” p 318, 9<sup>th</sup> entry. “Origin (c.245, E), 9.412.

<sup>99</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 10:3.

But if MARK was the first Gospel written, and MATTHEW and LUKE following, how do we account for the close correspondence of The Texts in The Synoptics? In ACTS 12 we find King Herod, after having James The Just put to death, had Peter arrested, bound in chains and thrown into prison. But GOD sent an angel to release Peter, who in ACTS 12:12 finds himself at the door of "...the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."<sup>100</sup> After King Herod died, we find John Mark accompanying Barnabas and Paul.<sup>101</sup> And when Paul and Barnabas parted ways in strife after going to Antioch together, we find John Mark accompanying Barnabas.<sup>102</sup> Matthew Henry adds that Mark was, after their first missionary journey together, displeasing to Saint Paul, "...but afterward had great kindness for [him]..., and sent for him to be his assistant..." Church tradition holds that "St. Mark wrote This Gospel under the direction of St. Peter, and that is was confirmed by his authority" as an original Apostle of The Lord.<sup>103</sup>

Tertullian writes in 207 AD that Saint Mark obtained his material primarily from the Apostle Peter, commenting, "...that which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's."<sup>104</sup> Origin in 245 AD writes of MARK, "The Second One written according to the instruction of Peter. For Peter, in his General Epistles [in I PETER 5:13], acknowledged Mark as a son, saying, "The Church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, salutes you,"<sup>105</sup> the verse closing with "...and so doth Marcus my son."<sup>106</sup> Eusebius quotes a lost work of Papias from about 140 AD that "...Mark, who became Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately, though not in order, all that he remembered of the things said or done by The Lord... [Mark] was careful of this one thing, to omit none of the things he had heard [from Peter] and to make no untrue statements therein."<sup>107</sup> So if this man is the human author of MARK, although he was not an Apostle of JESUS, he certainly was well exposed to the early disciples of The Lord who were themselves eyewitnesses of the events recorded in The Gospels.

Accepting that MARK was the first written Gospel, The New American Bible comments that Matthew - the former tax collector and then Apostle of CHRIST - would then not have likely been the human author of MATTHEW, "...because The Gospel [of MATTHEW] is based, in large part, on The Gospel according to MARK (almost all the verses of That Gospel have been utilized in This [Gospel of MATTHEW]), and it is hardly likely that a companion of JESUS would have followed so extensively an account

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<sup>100</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 12:12.

<sup>101</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 12:25.

<sup>102</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 15:35-41.

<sup>103</sup> 15, Matthew Henry, MARK, Introduction, I.

<sup>104</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry "Gospels," p 318, 7<sup>th</sup> entry. "Tertullian (c. 207, W), 3.350."

<sup>105</sup> 14, Ibid., entry "Gospels," p 318, 9<sup>th</sup> entry. "Origin (c.245, E), 9.412.

<sup>106</sup> 1, KJV, I PETER 5:13.

<sup>107</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor's Bible Commentary, MARK, p 605. "The earliest reference [to MARK] is found in the Church historian Eusebius, who quoted from a lost work (Exegesis of The Lord's Oracles) written by Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, about AD 140. Papias, in turn, quotes the Elder, probably the elder John [The Apostle], referred to elsewhere by Eusebius." 2. Authorship, "Early Tradition" of MARK.

that came from one who admittedly never had such an association, rather than rely on his own memories.” The point is well taken. But in either case, this does not help us explain the areas of divergence between The 4 Gospels on The Crucifixion.

Of LUKE, Tertullian writes also in 207 AD that “...men usually ascribe Luke’s form of The Gospel to Paul.”<sup>108</sup> Matthew Henry comments on Saint Luke, “He was a Jewish proselyte, and, as some conjecture, converted to Christianity by the ministry of St. Paul at Antioch... [and] his constant companion.”<sup>109</sup> Origin in 245 AD writes of LUKE, “And Third, was The One according to Luke, which he composed for the converts from the Gentiles. This is The Gospel commended by Paul.”<sup>110</sup> The New American Bible confirms the early Christian tradition, which “...from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD on, identifies the author of This Gospel and of The ACTS of The Apostles as Luke, a Syrian from Antioch,”<sup>111</sup> a Gentile Christian physician who accompanied the Apostle Paul on missionary journeys.<sup>112</sup> Luke was not a first generation Christian, “but is himself dependent upon the traditions he received from those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of The Word.”<sup>113</sup>

Luke confirms this in LUKE 1:1-4 of his Gospel, “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of The Word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”<sup>114</sup>

Of JOHN, there is nowhere in The Gospel where the author states his name, but leaves many strong suggestions of his Apostolic identity.<sup>115</sup> For example, in JOHN 1:14, the author writes that he was an eyewitness at The Transfiguration of CHRIST, “And The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His Glory, The Glory as of The only Begotten of The Father,) full of grace and truth.”<sup>116</sup> The Synoptics record that only 3 Apostles witnessed this event of CHRIST, where they saw and heard Him conversing miraculously with Moses and Elijah - the Apostles Peter, James and John. MATTHEW 17:1-3, “And after six days JESUS taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And,

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<sup>108</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Gospels,” p 318, 7<sup>th</sup> entry. “Tertullian (c. 207, W), 3.350.”

<sup>109</sup> 15, Matthew Henry, LUKE, Introduction.

<sup>110</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Gospels,” p 318, 9<sup>th</sup> entry. “Origin (c.245, E), 9.412.

<sup>111</sup> 9, NAB, “The Gospel According to Luke,” p 1091, paragraph 1.

<sup>112</sup> 1, KJV, COLOSSIANS 4:14; PHILEMON 24; II TIMOTHY 4:11.

<sup>113</sup> 9, NAB, “The Gospel According to Luke,” p 1091, paragraph 1.

<sup>114</sup> 1, KJV, LUKE 1:1-4.

<sup>115</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 253. “a. Personal allusions in The Gospel.”

<sup>116</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 1:14.



behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.”<sup>117</sup> The Apostolic identity of the writer of JOHN not being either Peter or James, it must then be John.

Origin in 245 AD writes of The 4 Gospels, “Last of all, there is The One according to John.”<sup>118</sup> Origin himself was a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn had learned of The Gospel specifically from the Apostle John.<sup>119</sup> Church tradition identifies the human author of JOHN as this man, John the Apostle, one of The Twelve.<sup>120</sup> Did the author of JOHN have at his disposal the final written forms, or at least their sources, of The Synoptic Gospels? Would the author of JOHN, if he is indeed the Apostle John and thus an eyewitness to the Words and events surrounding JESUS CHRIST of which he writes, use Texts written by those who were not his fellow Apostles - John Mark and Luke - to write The Fourth Gospel? But then why not, if MARK contains the preaching of the Apostle Peter and LUKE the carefully researched records of Paul, the surviving first Apostles and so many other eyewitnesses? And if the overlapping Texts between JOHN and The Synoptics are admitted, why would we not expect them to correspond and be in harmony?<sup>121</sup> This in itself testifies to the reliability and accuracy of the same salvation events recorded by many eyewitnesses via different human authors.

Secular critics have pointed to differences, though never proving contradictions, between The Synoptics and JOHN as reason to reject The Fourth Gospel as unhistorical and not possibly written by an Apostolic eyewitness. Such objections are unsubstantiated. Yet JOHN then offers very strong evidences - both internal and external - that strongly agree with the traditional Church tradition of the Apostle John as the human author.<sup>122</sup> Guthrie observes, “John’s innovations are more an evidence for than against Apostolic authorship. If The Three Synoptics were already in circulation and were accepted as authentic accounts, it would need an author of no mean authority to introduce a Gospel differing from Them so greatly in form and substance as does The Fourth Gospel. The only intelligible hypothesis is that an Apostle was directly responsible for it, either as an author or as main witness.”<sup>123</sup> Bible critics overlook the most obvious answers which The faithful Church has held to for 2 millennia: 1) that the human writer of JOHN is indeed the Apostle John, an eyewitness to the events recorded therein; 2) that GOD exists and that He has inspired, via whatever means by The HOLY SPIRIT, the human author of JOHN.

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<sup>117</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 17:1-3. See also MARK 9:2-5; LUKE 9:28-30.

<sup>118</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Gospels,” p 318, 9<sup>th</sup> entry. “Origin (c.245, E), 9.412.”

<sup>119</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 269-270. “(i) Evidence for the Apostolic authorship of The Gospel [of John].”

<sup>120</sup> 9, NAB, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p 1136, paragraph 2.

<sup>121</sup> 3, Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p 265. “(i) Treatment of similar material [between The Synoptics and JOHN].”

<sup>122</sup> 3, Ibid., p 263-264. “(ii) Introduction of unique material.”

<sup>123</sup> 3, Ibid., p 266, paragraph 1.

## XI. HISTORICAL SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE 4 GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN

Can different historical situations in which The 4 Gospels were written account for the variations we observe in The Crucifixion accounts?

Consider first MATTHEW: If Mark was the companion and recorder of the Apostle Peter, and Luke the companion and recorder of the Apostle Paul – and both Peter and Paul were preaching outside Israel primarily to the Gentile world – we may expect them to approach their audiences quite differently than the writer of Matthew’s Gospel, who it is held wrote first in Hebrew or Aramaic to a Jewish audience primarily in the land of Israel. Eusebius quotes Papias, who declared in 120 AD, “Matthew put together The Oracles [of The Lord] in the Hebrew language...”<sup>124</sup>

Irenaeus gives this further weight, saying in 180 AD, “Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome.”<sup>125</sup> We have already noted, beginning with MATTHEW 1:1 how This Gospel begins, “The Book of the generation of JESUS CHRIST, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”<sup>126</sup> The thrust of MATTHEW is to show that JESUS is The promised Anointed Messianic One Who comes in the full Jewish genealogy of King David to sit upon His throne eternally, and that JESUS CHRIST alone fulfills all such Old Testament messianic Kingdom prophecies.

Of MARK, Eusebius quotes Papias from about 120 AD, “Having become the interpreter of Peter, Mark wrote down accurately whatever he remembered. However, he did not relate the sayings or deeds of CHRIST in exact order. For he neither heard The Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter.”<sup>127</sup> If Peter preached mostly to Gentiles, it would make sense that “Peter accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his (non-Jewish) hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of The Lord’s sayings. Accordingly, Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For one thing, he took special care not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements.”<sup>128</sup>

Origin reinforces this view, writing in 180 AD, “...Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter.”<sup>129</sup> Clement of Alexandria in 195 AD confirms this view, “Mark was the follower of Peter... [who] publicly preached The Gospel at Rome... In order that thereby they might

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<sup>124</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “MATTHEW, Gospel of,” p 442, 1<sup>st</sup> entry. “Papias (c. 180, E/W), 1.414.”

<sup>125</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “MATTHEW, Gospel of,” p 442, 2<sup>nd</sup> entry. “Irenaeus (c. 180, E/W), 1.414.

<sup>126</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 1:1.

<sup>127</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “MARK, Gospel of,” p 422, 1<sup>st</sup> entry. “Papias (c. 120, E), 1.55, as quoted by Eusebius.”

<sup>128</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “MARK, Gospel of,” p 422, 1<sup>st</sup> entry. “Papias (c. 120, E), 1.55, as quoted by Eusebius.”

<sup>129</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “MARK, Gospel of,” p 422, 2<sup>nd</sup> entry. “Irenaeus (C. 180, E/W), 1.414.

be able to commit to memory what was spoken by Peter, Mark wrote entirely what is called The Gospel according to Mark.”<sup>130</sup>

Mark’s Gospel is traditionally placed in Rome, probably written during the persecutions of the Roman Church under Emperor Nero circa 64 AD. It is a Gospel written primarily to Gentile believers who are facing, not just oppression, but living under the constant threat and very bloody reality of martyrdom.<sup>131</sup> This accounts for the rougher quality of The Greek used in MARK, for John Mark was a Jewish Aramaic-speaking believer.<sup>132</sup> And MARK says nothing about the Jewish War of Independence against Rome in 66-70 AD, which lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and The Temple by the Roman army in 70 AD.<sup>133</sup> Church tradition, as per Irenaeus, places the martyrdom of Saint Paul and Saint Peter circa 67 AD. It is likely then that John Mark was at Rome and an observer of these events.<sup>134</sup>

Paul writes from Rome of his impending martyrdom to Timothy in II TIMOTHY 4:8-11 to have John Mark brought to him, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which The Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me... Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”<sup>135</sup> So we may see why John Mark writes This Gospel as he does, it being “not historical or biographical,” but rather “intensely practical” for “the guidance and support of his fellow Christians in a situation of intense [bloody] crisis.”<sup>136</sup>

Of LUKE, Tertullian writes in 207 AD, “...Luke, however, was not an Apostle, but only an apostolic man. He was not a master, but a disciple.”<sup>137</sup> Irenaeus observes in 180 AD, “Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded The Gospel in a Book.”<sup>138</sup> From a fragment of the Muratorian canon, “The Third Book of The Gospel [in LUKE] is that according to Luke... Now, he himself did not see The Lord in the flesh. And he... began his narrative with the birth of John [The Baptist]... Moreover, the Acts of all the Apostles are comprised by Luke in One Book [in ACTS]... because these different events took place when he was personally present. The principle on which he wrote was to write only of what fell under his own notice...,”<sup>139</sup> or what he could confirm from

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<sup>130</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “MARK, Gospel of,” p 423, 2<sup>nd</sup> entry. “Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, E), 2.573.

<sup>131</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor’s Bible Commentary, MARK, p 609. “5. Life Setting.”

<sup>132</sup> 11, Ibid., MARK, p 612, paragraph 2. “7. Language and Style.”

<sup>133</sup> 11, Ibid., MARK p 608, paragraph 2. “3. Date.”

<sup>134</sup> 11, Ibid., MARK p 608, paragraph 3.

<sup>135</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:8-11.

<sup>136</sup> 11, Wessel, Expositor’s Bible Commentary, MARK, p 610, paragraph 1. “5. Life Setting.”

<sup>137</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “LUKE,” p 411, 1<sup>st</sup> entry. “Tertullian (c. 207, W), 3.347.”

<sup>138</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “LUKE,” p 410, 1<sup>st</sup> entry. “Irenaeus (c. 180, E/W), 1.414.”

<sup>139</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “LUKE,” p 410, 3<sup>rd</sup> entry - p 411. “Muratorian Fragment (c. 200, W), 5.603.

eyewitness and reliable sources, such as from Paul and the other Apostles in The Jerusalem Church.

Of JOHN, Irenaeus writes in 180 AD, “John, the Disciple of The Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”<sup>140</sup> Victorinus says in 280 AD, that after the Apostle John’s release from the labor mines on the island of Patmos at the death of the Emperor Domitian, “John later delivered [to The Churches] this same Apocalypse [that is, REVELATIONS]... He later wrote The Gospel [of JOHN] of The complete Faith for the sake of our salvation...”<sup>141</sup>

The declaration of The full Divinity of JESUS CHRIST in JOHN 1:1-4 is very significant, as it sets the theme of the same message throughout The Fourth Gospel, equating JESUS CHRIST before His Incarnation as The Word of GOD, fully present and equal with GOD as GOD Himself. So we read, “In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with GOD, and The Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was The Light of men.”<sup>142</sup>

We must recall that, by the close of the first Century AD, Jerusalem had been assailed and decimated by Roman armies 30 or so years prior. The Temple had been desecrated once again by pagan Gentile hordes. And there had set in a deep and irreconcilable division between synagogue and Church. As the New American Bible comments, the strife “...between synagogue and Church produced bitter and harsh invective, especially regarding the hostility toward JESUS of the [ruling Jewish] authorities – Pharisees and Sadducees – who are combined and referred to frequently as ‘the Jews.’”<sup>143</sup>

So deep was the division between synagogue and Church by the time of the writing of JOHN, that we find JESUS in JOHN 8:42-44 deriding the Jewish authorities of His Day, “...If GOD were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from GOD; neither came I of myself, but He sent Me... Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it!”<sup>144</sup>

## XII. DISCUSSION – DID WE ANSWER ANY OF OUR FOUR QUESTIONS?

After identifying 15 event categories in The 4 Gospel accounts of The Passion of JESUS CHRIST, we identified and explored 4 questions, hoping that we might be able to account for the variations we have found in The Gospel Texts. 1) Can different theories

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<sup>140</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “JOHN, Apostle,” p 381, 3<sup>rd</sup> entry. “Irenaeus (C. 180, E/W), 1.414.

<sup>141</sup> 14, Ibid., entry “JOHN, p 382, 3<sup>rd</sup> entry. “Victorinus (C. 280, W), 7.353,354.”

<sup>142</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 1:1-4.

<sup>143</sup> 9, NAB, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, p 1136, paragraph 4.

<sup>144</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 8:42-44.

in how The 4 Gospels arose, in what order, and from what sources, account for these variations in The Crucifixion accounts? 2) Can the different emphases of The 4 Gospels account for variations we observe in The Crucifixion accounts? 3) Can the different human authors of The 4 Gospels account for variations we observe in The Crucifixion accounts? 4) Can any different historical situations in which The 4 Gospels were written account for the variations we observe in The Crucifixion accounts?

Recall that we observed these differences in the 4 Passion accounts: 1) The Gospel of MATTHEW is the most comprehensive of The 4 Gospels on these key events, recording all 15 Passion event categories. MARK, LUKE and JOHN record 12 of these 15 event categories, but not all the same 12; 2) MARK, LUKE and JOHN omit the same 2 events that are reported only in MATTHEW: MT1 - The conspiracy of Judas to betray JESUS and M15 - The watch posted at the tomb of CHRIST; 3) MARK, LUKE and JOHN each omit a different 3<sup>rd</sup> Crucifixion event: MARK omits what we find in MT4, LK4 and JH4 - Pilate declares the innocence of JESUS; LUKE omits what we find in MT5, MK5 and JN5 - CHRIST is mocked by the Roman soldiers; JOHN omits what we find in MT10, MK10 and LK10 - the chief Priests and thieves mock CHRIST.

So we are left with 5 questions: 1) Why does MATTHEW alone record MT1 - The conspiracy of Judas to betray JESUS - while MARK, LUKE and JOHN omit this event? 2) Why do MATTHEW, LUKE and JOHN record MT4, LK4 and JN4 - Pilate declares the innocence of JESUS - while MARK omits this event? 3) Why do MATTHEW, MARK and JOHN record MT5, MK5 and JN5 - CHRIST is mocked by the Roman soldiers - while LUKE omits this event? 4) Why do MATTHEW, MARK and LUKE record MT10, MK10 and LK10 - the chief priests and thieves mock CHRIST - while JOHN omits this event? 5) Why does MATTHEW alone record MT15 - The watch posted at the tomb of CHRIST - a while MARK, LUKE and JOHN omit this event?

### XIII. THE 2 MISSING CRUCIFIXION UNITS FOUND ONLY IN MATTHEW

We have observed that only MATTHEW contains Crucifixion units MT1 - MATTHEW 27:1-10 - the conspiracy of Judas to betray JESUS; MT15 - MATTHEW 27:62-66 - the watch posted at the tomb of CHRIST. These 2 Crucifixion units in question are central to The Divinity of JESUS CHRIST proclaimed by The Lord Himself, The Apostles and The faithful Church down through the ages. MATTHEW is The Gospel written principally to call the Jewish people shortly after His Crucifixion as a call to recognize JESUS as The Messiah promised by GOD throughout The Old Testament, a call very well summed up by Luke in ACTS 2:38, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in The Name of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of The HOLY GHOST" for salvation and eternal life."<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 2:38.

So it is not surprising that MATTHEW address 2 of the strongest charges against The early Church from non-believing Jews: that JESUS could not have been The Messiah, for otherwise He would have known that Judas would betray Him; that The Body of JESUS was stolen by His followers from the tomb. The Text answers that JESUS knew full well that Judas would betray Him, and that it was Divinely ordained to be allowed for the salvation purposes of The Almighty for mankind. The Text also answers the impossibility of The Apostles or anyone else stealing The Body of JESUS after His death in the presence of a military guard placed – at the request of the Jewish religious authorities and on Pilate’s authority – at the tomb. .

If however the priority of MARK is correct, LUKE and MATTHEW then following, the fullest Crucifixion account might be found in the latest of The Three – if MATTHEW was the latest. These 2 major Jewish objections to The Messiahship of JESUS not having been addressed by MARK or LUKE, it might have fallen to the author of MATTHEW to do so for both Jewish and Gentile audiences. But we can reverse the priority of The Synoptics and reasonably make the same claim for MATTHEW, that if it was The first Gospel written, it might have been the most comprehensive for the same reasons. But then why would MARK and LUKE omit answers to such significant Jewish objections to JESUS as The CHRIST? This does not offer a satisfactory answer.

As to the different emphases of The 4 Gospels, we have observed that each Gospel has similarities and dissimilarities, though The 3 Synoptics closely correspond to one another in contents and flow. Scofield comments, “...MATTHEW [is written] to present JESUS as King; MARK [is written] to present Him as Servant, and LUKE [is written] to present Him as Son of Man.”<sup>146</sup> In contrast, JOHN “...does not outline the life of our Lord but selects its material, including much that is not in The first three Gospels, in keeping with the writer’s declared aim of presenting JESUS as The Son of GOD...”<sup>147</sup> But this does not help us, for all 4 Gospels have, as their central core, The full Divinity of JESUS CHRIST that makes the victory at The Cross over sin and death on our behalf possible. And whatever we may have observed about the different human authors of The 4 Gospels and the historical situations in which they were written, we arrive at the same point.

#### XIV. THE 3 MISSING INDIVIDUAL CRUCIFIXION UNITS

Why doesn’t MARK record that Pilate declares the innocence of JESUS? We have noted the absence of a Crucifixion in MARK that is clearly recorded in MT4 – MATTHEW 27:23-25; LK4 – LUKE 23:21-25; JN4 – JOHN 8:38. But in fact, MARK does address this, which is strongly implied elsewhere in The Crucifixion events in MARK. Pilate would not have risked his position and very life under his tyrant Emperor if he had knowledge that JESUS was in fact guilty of high treason against his Roman master.

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<sup>146</sup> 21, King James Version Bible, Scofield Study System, “THE FOUR GOSPELS,” p 1230, VIII., paragraph 1.

<sup>147</sup> 21, Ibid., p 1230-1231, VIII, paragraph 3.

John Mark clearly records Pilate's efforts to release JESUS, as do all the other Gospels, in MARK 15:6-15, "Now at that Feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired... But Pilate answered the, saying, Will ye that I release unto you The King of The Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him for envy..." And when the people, moved by the chief priests, cried out, "Crucify Him!" – we find Pilate responding, "...Why, what evil hath He done?" But being a politician and fearing riot and rebellion, Pilate surrenders JESUS up to scourging and death by crucifixion.<sup>148</sup>

Why doesn't LUKE record that CHRIST was mocked by the Roman soldiers? We have noted the absence of a Crucifixion unit in LUKE that is clearly recorded in MT5 – MATTHEW 26:26-30; MK5 – MARK 15:16-20; JN5 – JOHN 19:2-3. But in fact, LUKE does address this. Though the mocking incident of the Roman soldiers of JESUS with the crown of thorns, the rod of rule and the military cloak about his shoulders is absent from LUKE, we find confirmation of CHRIST being mocked by the soldiers in LUKE 23:36 combined with other related events, "And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar."<sup>149</sup> It is possible that Luke did not obtain details of this Crucifixion unit from the sources he examined. In any event, the entire mode of public humiliation and death at the hands of the Romans, at the behest of the Jewish authorities, is one of mocking designed to maximize His disgrace and intimidate all the occupied Jewish people into utter abject subjection.

Why doesn't JOHN record that the chief priests and thieves mock CHRIST? We have noticed an absence of a Crucifixion unit in JOHN that is clearly recorded in MT10 – MATTHEW 27:38-44; MK10 – MARK 15:27-32; LK10 – LUKE 23:35,39-44. But in fact, JOHN does address this. The Jewish rulers could not have so swayed the people to cry out for JESUS' Crucifixion if they had not created an overwhelming atmosphere of public mocking against Him. So when Pilate sought to release JESUS, JOHN 19:12 records, "...but the Jews cried out, saying, if thou let This Man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."<sup>150</sup> And again, when Pilate asks in JOHN 19:15, "...shall I crucify your King?" we read further, "The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar!"<sup>151</sup>

That the hypocrisy of the Jewish authorities, conspiring so openly and haughtily to murder The Anointed One of The Most High, does not qualify as mocking is a hard stretch. As to the absence in JOHN of mention of mocking by the 2 others crucified with JESUS that day at "the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha,"<sup>152</sup> this sheds no doubt on the veracity of John's Gospel account. Though an eyewitness of JESUS's last moments, recall that Saint John writes his Gospel in his old age, many decades after the events and under great duress and hardship. That he recalls their

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<sup>148</sup> 1, KJV, MARK 15:6-15.

<sup>149</sup> 1, KJV, LUKE 23:36.

<sup>150</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 19:12.

<sup>151</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 19:15.

<sup>152</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 19:17.

presence is attested to in JOHN 19:18, “Where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, on either side one, and JESUS in the midst.”<sup>153</sup>

#### XV. IT IS THE HAND OF GOD

Selective reporting of the same events does not necessarily mean distortion or falsification of the facts. We are not surprised when separate witnesses view the same single event, say a car accident, and report to police immediately after the fact many common basic observations along side of observations often unique to each and missed by other eyewitnesses. We may read the police report statements of say 4 witnesses, each having witnessed the events of the accident from their unique vantage points, reporting the key events in question and – at the same time – supplementing each other’s testimony with things common to their own observations. From the reading of the many witnesses’ testimony, the authorities gain a fuller overall picture of the accident.

It should then not surprise us that The 4 Gospels do not present exactly identical perspectives of the same events of the life and work of JESUS CHRIST. The fact that there are no contradictions between the 4 Texts attest to the accuracy, honesty and reliability of witnesses reported in them. We have already noted the different emphases of The 4 Gospels and their different initial intended audiences in the ancient world. And here, too, selective reporting of different aspects of The Crucifixion, and choosing of different early oral and written sources within The early Church community by the different writers of each Gospel, in no way proves either distortion or falsification of the facts. Rather, their converging testimonies of so many people in The Gospels does just the opposite.

So we must point out again that The Gospels are not designed to be complete historical textbook accounts of every event that ever occurred in the life and work of CHRIST. They are designed to bring The Good News of salvation of The Cross of The Messiah JESUS to all men. Therefore, “though designedly incomplete as a story, are complete as a revelation” from GOD. They are designed, not that we may “know everything that JESUS did, but that we may know Him.” So Scofield offers that, in The “...four Great Narratives, each of which in some respects supplements the other three, we have JESUS CHRIST Himself,” and that complete in all that GOD decrees that we must know for our salvation via The faithful Church.<sup>154</sup>

Various forms of Bible criticism claim that early oral and written fragmentary traditions within The early Church community formed – perhaps spontaneously and perhaps intentionally – to meet the faith needs of the early believers. This view presumes that The Bible record, especially The Gospels, have no sure historical accuracy as a result. Such a view rejects the miraculous as a presupposition, asserting before all else that The Bible is not Divinely inspired nor inerrant because there is no GOD, or certainly no GOD Who is active in working, guiding and revealing His will for men within human

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<sup>153</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 19:18.

<sup>154</sup> 21, King James Version Bible, Scofield Study System, p 1229, “The Four Gospels,” Background, paragraph 2.



history. But the same people that would look at 4 modern day police reports of a motor vehicle accident and accept different perspectives of the same factual events look at the same phenomenon in The Gospels and take this as proof of error, fabrication and mere cultural storytelling – a most unsubstantiated view.

But GOD and The faithful Church call us to recognize from the start the Divinely inspired and unerring nature of The Gospels, taking all four together as a unified whole, the better to understand The one Person and works of JESUS CHRIST. Of the unified Person and purpose of JESUS CHRIST, Scofield observes, “Especial emphasis rests upon that to which all Four Gospels bear a united testimony.... The One JESUS is King in MATTHEW; Servant in MARK; Man in LUKE and GOD in JOHN. But not only so; for Matthew’s King is also Servant, Man and GOD; and Mark’s Servant is also King, and Man, and GOD; Luke’s Man is also King, and Servant, and GOD; and John’s eternal Son is also King, and Servant, and Man.” In each Gospel, JESUS CHRIST is presented with a different emphasis on His Person and Mission on man’s behalf. But He is always The same one historical Person of JESUS CHRIST. “That fact alone would mark These Books as inspired!”<sup>155</sup>

#### XVI. IN CONCLUSION

Clement of Alexandria in 195 AD observes of all that is recorded in The 4 Gospels, that “These things are written in The Gospel according to Mark – and likewise in all of the other Gospels, correspondingly. Although the expressions may vary slightly in each Gospel, they all show identical agreement in meaning.”<sup>156</sup> The Christian mind begins with the understanding that The Holy Bible is not the mere creation, by whatever means, of men alone, but is Divinely inspired by The Spirit of GOD. Scripture is thus without error in its original Autographia, preserved and guarded first by Israel in part and now by The faithful Church in full. The Scriptures are The Creator’s direct Special Revelation as His Word to mankind.

So the question is, which school of view is more reasonable and more likely? The secular view – requiring us to “believe” that there is no GOD - which asks us to confess that the unity and lack of contradiction in Holy Scripture is the evolutionary result of religious communities of men expanding their aspirations and hopes over thousands of years? Or worse, an active conspiracy down through the ages of history – a conspiracy that would have to involve countless armies of people in authority throughout the world down through millennia – to artificially construct this phenomenon? Or the Christian view – that GOD is, that His Providence is active in human history, and that He reveals Himself to men in both nature and in Scripture? That The King of the universe gives us His Word through inspired, trustworthy, honest and godly men via first Israel and now The Church for the good and salvation of mankind?

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<sup>155</sup> 10, Scofield KJV, p 990, VII, 1. Introductory notes, “The Four Gospels.”

<sup>156</sup> 14, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Gospels,” p 318, 4<sup>th</sup> entry. “Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, E), 2.592.”

The honest and reasonable man is forced to choose the Christian view over the secular view of these issues as far more likely. As to the complimentary variations in The Gospels of the same events recorded in general, and of The Crucifixion accounts specifically that we have considered, we must conclude that they are to be accepted as part of GOD's revealed Word to mankind. For if He ordained that they not be there, they would not exist. But since they do, they must be there for His purposes on our behalf. And in the end, we can but accept them and give thanks for the lovingkindness of The LORD, The Creator of the heavens and the earth, that He should love and care us enough to so reveal His will to us in His Holy Word and in The Divine Word Incarnate. It is the hand of GOD. Therefore, as Saint Peter declares in I PETER 1:25, "...The Word of The Lord endureth for ever. And this is The Word which by The Gospel is preached unto you!"<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> 1, KJV, I PETER 1:25.

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