Dr. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Lecture 5
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Characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels

Review and Preview

We are continuing our Synoptic Gospels course here. So far we have looked at unit one, the historical Jesus; unit two, the Jewish background to the New Testament; unit three, the introduction to Jesus and the narrative genre; and then a look at Matthew 2, the visit with the Wise Men. Then last time we got started on unit four, authorship and date of the Synoptics and, in fact, we covered authorship and date of the Synoptics, but I also have a pretty long section in that [lesson] on characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels, so that is where we want to pick up right now—on characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels. We will do them as we did before: characteristics of Matthew, characteristics of Mark, and characteristics of Luke.

Characteristics of Matthew

So characteristics of Matthew: let’s think a little bit about Matthew, the author, and the answer is that we don’t know much about him. He is mentioned by name seven times in four different books in the New Testament. But these really only involve two occasions: one is his conversion and two is the apostle lists, as he is called in the apostles lists “Levi of Alphaeus” in Mark 2:14 So he may have been the son of Alphaeus and the brother of James the little. James is listed as the son of Alphaeus in Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18 Luke 6:15, and Acts 1:13.

Of his conversion we have a narrative in Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5, 27, and 29. Mathew was a tax collector, and after his conversion he held a dinner for his old friends in order that they could meet Jesus. An interesting picture then of what I think believers should do in some sense when they come to Christ, and that is significant there. The apostle list in Mathew 10:3 is the only one using the term publican/tax collector, and the other three lists—Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, and Acts 1:13—just list him by name. In these four lists the apostles are sometimes in slightly different orders, but they’re always
grouped in three groups of four and are never mixed between groups. We don’t know the significance of that, but that’s how it looks anyway. Matthew is always in the second group as either disciple number seven or disciple number eight, and that is as the last or next to last in the second group. That’s basically what we know about Matthew; there are obviously some traditions and such, but we’ll let those ride.

**Matthew’s Audience**

Matthew’s original audience: the Messianic emphasis in Matthew is certainly more appropriate for Jews, and you find rather quickly in the Gentile church “Christ” almost becoming kind of Jesus’ surname of “Jesus Christ” rather than his title, which any of the Jews would have recognized, which [the title] was the Greek translation of “Messiah,” “anointed one,” if you would like. Matthew’s Gospel tends to assume knowledge of Jewish practices rather than explain them. Mark tends to explain them, for instance, and that again then suggests principles and readers in view are Jews and Jewish Christians. So in Mathew 15:2 we have the tradition of the elders about washing their hands, and Mark gives three or four verses of explanation and Mathew doesn’t. Then in Mathew 23:5 the Gospel writer says, “They broaden their phylactery and lengthen the tassels,” and even the EDSB finds it necessary to expand that so that Gentile readers of the 20th and 21st century can understand it; so they add to “lengthen the tassels” parenthesis “of their garments” un-parenthesis.

To show their piety, some Pharisees wore bigger phylacteries and longer tassels than the average person. I remember meeting an Orthodox Jew over in Jerusalem, and the person had these tassels hanging out over his belt extra, so that still goes on today in some Orthodox Jewish circles.

In Mathew 23:27 the scribes and the Pharisees are described as white-washed tombs. The Jews would, of course, recognize that allusion because they would white-wash tombs to prevent people from accidentally touching them and then becoming unclean, especially right before a festival. It wouldn’t matter so much if they did that sometime during the year. So there were tendencies to white-wash the tombs right before the
festivals. So it seems as if Matthew is writing to Jews and Jewish Christians. Well, Matthew gives no direct statement in his Gospel of his aim, so we can try and infer the aim by looking in the context of the Gospel.

The context suggests that Matthew’s purpose is to show Jesus as the Messiah who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. Matthew often cites more prophecies and a wider variety of them more than any other Gospel writers. Matthew appears also, I think I mentioned this earlier, to draw a subtle parallel between the ministry of Jesus and the history of Israel. The Hosea 11:1 prophecy, “out of Egypt I have called my son,” in Hosea is applied to Israel, but Mathew says it was a parallel there with Jesus as well and Jesus’ use of Scripture at the temptation. Here he is out in the wilderness fasting, and his responses to Satan are all drawn from Israel and the wilderness passages.

Another way to try and figure out something as to what Matthew is doing is to look for internal evidence of structure. In general, when we are working with biblical writers and, for that matter, with other writers as well, we should try to find out how that writer outlined his material had he provided us with an outline. So how do we go about that rather than making arbitrary guesses of some sort? This will give us more of an accurate view of the book’s structure.

Well, there are two possible passages that look like transition passages in Matthew that both begin with a phrase, “After that Jesus began” something or other. One’s in Matthew 4:17; after that Jesus began to preach. If you look at the contents of the Gospel that begins Jesus’ ministry to the multitudes—before that we had been looking at the genealogy, the birth narratives and Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness—now this begins the ministry to the multitudes. So the transition is to the preparatory narratives to Jesus’ proclamation to the Gospel.

Then further on in Matthew 16:21: “After this Jesus again” then began to show his disciples. This begins what is generally called Jesus’ private ministry to the disciples, and in a sense it outlines the rest of the book: that he is going to show his disciples that he needs to suffer, be killed, and rise again. So with these two transition passages we divide this Gospel into three pieces: the preparatory material, Jesus’ public proclamation of the
Gospel, and then at the other end—or the back end if you like—Jesus’ private ministry to his disciples, his suffering, death, and resurrection.

There are a number of discourses in the Gospel of Matthew; more than and longer than in Luke and Mark. Mark, except for the Olivet discourse, has only very short materials. Usually there are only 5 discourses seen in the Gospel of Matthew; this goes back, I don’t know how far, but back to Godet’s, *Introduction to New Testament*, anyway. Then all end with a similar formula: “And it came to pass when Jesus had finished,” or something, and then it goes back into the narrative at that point. So, “The Sermon on the Mount” takes up Matthew 5-7, and at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, we have this formula: “And it came to pass when Jesus had finished,” and then it goes on with the following narrative. Then, in chapter 10 of Matthew, we have the instructions to the twelve, and 11:1 forms a transition passage. In chapter 13, we have the “Kingdom Parables,” and 13:53 forms such a transition passage. Then in chapter 18, we have the “church discipline” material and a discourse to his disciples. Then in 19:1, we have a transition passage. And then in chapters 24 and 25 we have the Olivet Discourse, and chapter 26:1 is the closing formula on that.

There are a number of interpreters that have suggested that Matthew models his Gospel around the Pentateuch, so we have five discourses equivalent to the five books of the Pentateuch. Well, the Sermon on the Mount, perhaps, would fit Exodus fairly well, but then the question is: “What do you do with Genesis? The others don’t seem to me to be particularly impressive in that direction. So, there are five discourses, but it’s not immediately obvious that that’s what they’re doing.

Some see some further parallels as well; the genealogy in Matthew corresponds to the “Book of the Generations,” so if you drop the discourse idea you could perhaps suggest that the Gospel of Matthew starts out with kind of a Genesis section, which would be preparation. The Sermon on the Mount might work as Exodus, or something. But I’m not sure you could carry that too well.

The “wilderness temptations” even could be seen as “the wanderings,” perhaps; though that would bring that after, that’s on the wrong side of “the giving of the law, at
Sinai,” if you like, which is before “the wanderings,” and such. Well, we’ll not wander off there.

There are two other discourses in Matthew, however, not just five; so that throws things for a little bit of a loop. There’s Matthew 23, “Woe to the Pharisees,” or “Woes to the Pharisees,” and admittedly, you could say 23, 24, and 25, but it looks like there’s a big shift when you go into 25: you just get logical material going on there. Then also there’s a discourse in Matthew 3, but that’s John the Baptist’s discourse. So again you could make some remarks about what that is. It does appear that Matthew’s technique, if you like, is to give topical samples of Jesus preaching relevant to “Jesus is.” To attempt to get these samples to fit the “Pentateuch” seems to me to be rather stretched. But Matthew uses fairly big chunks, whereas Mark uses very short pieces, and Luke uses different kinds of pieces, if you like; I think that’s fairly clear.

Some have suggested that Matthew is involved with shifting his materials chronologically and gathering them by theme rather than chronologically. His discourses are, as we’ve said, admittedly by topic, and his miracles are mainly concentrated in chapters 8 and 9. On top of that, we can say that Matthew’s order of events is different from that of Mark and Luke in a few places. Certainly all the Gospels have the same order of events in the sense of public ministry and then private ministry, and then the triumphal entry, and death, resurrection, and such. But we find no solid evidence of chronological liberty between the Gospels; that is, the same events are explicitly said to have happened in different order. There are complications, and the question is in looking through the Gospels of whether two events seen in two different Gospels are the same even event or whether they are different events. Liberals have often claimed that there was really only one “cleansing of the temple,” but John for some reason, or the Synoptics for some reason, put it at different ends of Jesus’ ministry. Of course, you’ve also got the miraculous catch of fish in John, which is at the end of Jesus’ ministry, and in the Synoptics it is at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. My read on those is that some of those are things [that] are done over again.
Some others that we’re not so sure about: there’s a very strong resemblance between the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and what is often called “The Sermon on the Plain” in Luke. My own inclination is that those are probably two different ways of condensing the same sermon. But I might be wrong because Jesus is an itinerate preacher, if you like; not quite in the same form of visiting different churches like our itinerate preachers do, but more like Wesley or somebody who speaks in the open at different places. So he may well have used similar material at different places; that would not be at all that surprising, in that case.

Well, different cultures have different literary procedures. Quotations have to follow a specific accuracy and style for an academic thesis in the West; but the requirements for a newspaper article are nowhere near as formal. So we should not be surprised that sometimes Jesus’ words sound somewhat different in one Gospel record than another. Of course, to invent dialogue which never occurred should be viewed as bad in any culture, and I think that that’s correct. When you’re condensing a long speech or a long narrative, a writer might use key sentences from a discourse, or he might simplify the action, or summarize it in his own words. Those kinds of approaches would certainly be acceptable as long as he tells us what actually took place. He may not, however, actually tell us what he’s doing; that just makes the narrative longer and complicates things in one way or another. So my read on this is that the Gospels are thoroughly reliable and tell us what happened, et cetera; but without a time machine, we may not be able to figure out exactly how to harmonize all the particular incidents nor tell for sure whether these two “healings of a leper” are actually the same event or two different occasions of that.

Moving on, we’re still describing the characteristics of Matthew: characteristic phrases in Matthew. There are two phrases that are rather common in Matthew; one of them, of course, is: “That it might be fulfilled.” Some of these “fulfillments” are also noted in other Gospels, but not so many as in Matthew. Some liberals have suggested that a “Book of Testimonies” [existed]; that is, a compilation of Old Testament proof-texts about the Messiah used in the early Church. Well, this might be so, but it’s more likely
that these go back to Jesus’ own explanation. If you remember that on the “road to Emmaus” he explained Old Testament passages to the two there, and then in the upper room a few hours later he explained them to a larger group of disciples. My suggestion is that the fulfillment remarks, such as Matthew’s, and the citation of various Old Testament passages in Paul and Peter and such are, in fact, a reflection of what Jesus told them at that time. He, of course, of all people would know what Old Testament prophecies were designed to point to the Messiah.

The other characteristic phrase in Matthew is “Kingdom of Heaven.” This phrase occurs over 30 times. Although there are some who would disagree, I think this phrase is synonymous with “Kingdom of God.” What we find is that Mark and Luke never have “Kingdom of Heaven”, and Matthew almost always has “Kingdom of Heaven,” but occasionally will have “Kingdom of God”, et cetera. That Matthew’s “Kingdom of Heaven” is used in a lot of the same contexts that Mark and Luke’s “Kingdom of God” is and Matthew also has one passage where he uses both terms in parallel; that’s in Matthew 19, verses 23 and 24. Some light can be shed on this, by knowing some of the Rabbinic literature. In Rabbinic sources we find that the Rabbis were reluctant to use the term “God,” and so they would use replacements for that. One of those replacements was “heaven,” one of those was “glory,” and one of those was “the place,” and various other things of this sort. So it appears then that Matthew, as a pious Jew, is using “Kingdom of Heaven,” rather than “Kingdom of God” most of the time.

Some other materials that are in Matthew are unique to Matthew and, therefore, are characteristic in that sense. We already mentioned that Matthew refers to various Jewish customs and usages that, perhaps, would not be especially interesting to Gentiles. Matthew and Luke both have birth material, but some of it is distinct to Matthew, [and] some of it is distinctive to Luke. Both are clear on the Virgin Birth, but otherwise they don’t overlap a whole lot. Matthew notes the Wise Men coming, Herod’s attempt to kill Jesus, and the flight to Egypt, etc. Luke doesn’t mention those at all. It appears to me that Matthew gives Joseph’s perspective, and Luke gives us Mary’s perspective. In Matthew we see Joseph wondering, Joseph worrying, Joseph acting, while Luke says,
“Mary pondered these things in her heart,” etc. It’s Mary who goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and such. So that is my take on the difference between the two birth narratives.

Interestingly, for the most Jewish of the Gospels, if you like, there is some interesting material on the church in Matthew, and really nothing comparable to that in Luke or Mark or John. We have Peter and the church in Matthew 16. Church discipline is in Matthew 18. I would suggest this raises some sort of problem for the variety of Dispensationalism, which makes such an absolute distinction between the church and Israel, and which sees Matthew as the Jewish Gospel in the sense that it’s not for this dispensation, which is sort of characteristic of old, or classic, Dispensationalism rather than what we call “Progressive Dispensationalism” today. “Upon this rock I will build my church [ecclesia]” in Matthew 16. Ecclesia is a Septuagint term. It’s the term that is used for “congregation,” and is so often the translation of qahal from the Hebrew [for] “congregation.” But, of course, Jesus does speak of “my ecclesia” [church], so that’s to be distinguished from the Old Testament ecclesia.

Then there’s the Great Commission in Matthew 28. A commission also appears in Mark that is in a somewhat questionable text. Luke, Acts, and John each have something of the sort as well in a different context one from the other. Jesus saw the spread of the Gospel as sufficiently important to repeat the instructions on several occasions. Liberals don’t tend to like the implications of “go to all the nations” and such, and that Jesus will be with the disciples through the ages—and the Trinitarian formula, for that matter. So they tend to deny that this goes back to Jesus.

It’s rather interesting, though, that the Gospel of Matthew, as well as a number of other places in the Scripture, predicts the worldwide spread of the Gospel, but all of the Bible was written long before there was any worldwide spread of the Gospel. So you’ve got some kind of fulfillment going on there anyway. They [liberals] tend to question Matthew’s authenticity and date because [of] the perceived conflicts with Acts: the Matthew account command to go versus the early reluctance in Acts of the Apostles to go; and the Trinity baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit versus the early baptism in the name of Christ [only], etc. And perhaps both of those are over-
reading the passages to suggest you’re getting an exact formula or something that’s used in baptismal ceremonies. None of these sorts of things are serious if Christianity is true.

If Jesus is who the Bible claims he is, then his coming resurrection is certainly news of earthshaking importance. Psalm 22 says this much, and it was certainly written before the rise of Christianity. If Jesus is God, and there’s only one God then he’s present everywhere and shares his name with the Father. The Acts problems relate largely to emphasis: The early disciples were apparently willing, or apparently waiting, for further instructions on how to go about this and did not at first realize the Gentiles would become Christian’s as Gentiles without [first] converting to Judaism. We probably misread Matthew and Acts in taking the phrases “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” and “in the name of Jesus Christ” as instructions on the exact wording to be used in the ceremony.

I’ll give a sketch outline here on Matthew, but I’m not sure that comes across terribly well in reading. Let me just give you a quick tour of it without all the numbers. Matthew starts out with the genealogy [that] runs for most of chapter one; then the birth and infancy that brings us to the end of chapter 2; and then preparation for ministry, which takes us through all of three and part of four. Then the Galilean ministry runs from middle of chapter four to the end of chapter 18 and can be divided up into public ministry—middle of four to beginning of 13—and limited ministry for about three chapters; and then a private ministry for about three chapters. This is followed then by the journey to Jerusalem, which takes up about two chapters, 19:1 to 21:1. Then the last week, and that’s about five chapters; and then the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion takes up two chapters. Finally, the post-resurrection appearance takes up one chapter. So basically Matthew has just the Galilean ministry. We’ll see something similar with Mark, whereas Luke has [the] Perea ministry, and John has a good deal on the Judean ministry as well. Here already the last week through the resurrection takes up eight chapters of the 28-chapter book. So there is a big, big section on the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, if you like.
Characteristics of Mark

John Mark the Person

We’re going to move on to characteristics of Mark, and as we did with Matthew, we’ll start with the man John Mark. Mark is actually mentioned in the New Testament 10 or 11 times, so actually more than Matthew, even though Matthew is an apostle and Mark is not. Mark is mentioned, however, six times in Acts, so that’s where we get most of his material from; and then three times in the Pauline Epistle’s: once each in Colossians, Philemon, and 2 Timothy; once in 1 Peter—“Mark my son,” etc., says Peter—and then perhaps in Mark 14:51, 52: the losing sheet at the arrest incident. So he is mentioned ten or eleven times; that’s enough material to allow us to do a little something of tracing his life.

Colossians 4:10 tells us that Mark was a cousin of Barnabas. I think the KJV has “nephew.” The word is actually cognate to “nephew,” anepsios, but is generally understood now to be a little more generic word, so “cousin,” which doesn’t tell you a great deal since there are first and second and third cousins, and removes, and all of that sort of thing, at least [in] English genealogical terminology.

Mark’s mother was Mary, and we’re told in Acts 12:12 that she owned a house in Jerusalem. His father is not mentioned; maybe he was already dead, or maybe he was not a believer; we don’t know there. Mark might have been present at Jesus’ arrest—that’s Mark 14:51, 52; this is speculation. A possible story [that] suggests how that would work is the Last Supper [where it] is suggested to be held at Mary’s house. We don’t know that, but we do know that Mary owned a house and that it was used by the believers later on anyway. If the Last Supper was held at Mary’s house, the mob comes to the house to arrest Jesus; after all, Judas can’t be expected to know exactly where Jesus was going after that point, but he’ll try out various locations perhaps. Mark awakens from a mob arriving at the house; likely he follows the mob at a distance wrapped in his bed sheet all the way to Gethsemane, watches the arrest from the bushes, and almost gets caught himself. This is speculation, but a little picture nevertheless.

Mark was living in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12) with his mother during the persecution
in which James the son of Zebedee was killed and Peter was imprisoned. That takes place, we think, around 44 AD, or shortly before, based on information we have in Josephus about the time and the death of Herod Agrippa I who was the guy that was involved there.

Then Barnabas and Paul take Mark with them to Antioch, Acts 12:25. Mark then goes along with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, Acts 13:5, as their assistant. A ἀπορρέτης originally meant an “under rower” and a trireme or something of that sort, but has become a generic term for “assistant” by this point. As Mark probably had little training in the Word, certainly compared with Paul and Barnabas, he probably did things like looking after housing and food and that sort of thing.

Mark, however, abandons them when they go into Asia Minor from Cyprus. Perhaps Mark had been to Cyprus before since Barnabas was a cousin and didn’t want to go into the new territory or something. We see that in Acts 13:13. The estimated date for that trip is 47-48 AD. Whatever the reason was, Paul didn’t think it was a good reason, and some possibilities have been suggested on why Mark might have abandoned them. One might be, it looks like there might be a switch in leadership from Barnabas to Paul in the early part of this first missionary journey narrative. Barnabas is listed ahead of Paul, but then after the incident on Cyprus, where Sergius Paulus is converted and Elymus the sorcerer is blinded by Paul, or by God, obviously, thereafter Paul is mentioned first, and it’s possible that Mark was irritated by this (we don’t know, we’re guessing here: reconstructions if you like).

Secondly, there is a possibility that going into Asia Minor was a change of plan, and Mark did not want to be gone that long. Or thirdly, Mark opposed the aggressive evangelization of the Gentiles which is then going to begin to take place. Or he became fearful as it was dangerous, or disillusioned, or homesick; all of those are possibilities, and again we’re speculating as we have no time machines.

After the Jerusalem council, Paul and Barnabas planned a second missionary journey to visit the churches they had established; this is narrated for us in the latter part of Acts 15. Barnabas wants to give Mark a second chance, but Paul does not. So they
split up, and Mark and Barnabas go to Cyprus, and Paul and Silas—a mature Christian—head for Asia Minor; and this is around 50 AD. Well, we hear nothing more of Mark until later in the epistles since Acts, as you recall, mainly follows Paul.

About ten years later, something like 61-63 AD, Mark is back in the good graces of Paul. We see that in Colossians 4:10 and finally into [verse] 24. Mark is apparently being sent on a mission by Paul and is commended to the Colossian church. He is now a fellow worker with Paul. Still later, Mark is near Ephesus and is commended as being useful to Paul, 2 Timothy 4:11, somewhere in the 64-68 AD period. Timothy is to bring him along when he comes from Ephesus. In 1 Peter 5:13—so this is Peter, which might predate the 2 Timothy reference; we don’t know—Peter is still alive, but the Roman persecution, I think, has apparently begun, so we suggest it’s maybe 64 or later. It seems to me that Peter is warning the Asian churches about this persecution, perhaps even warning Paul’s churches about this, which may suggest perhaps Paul is off in Spain or something of that sort. Mark is with Peter in Babylon, okay, and sends his greetings. Peter calls him “my son,” presumed in a spiritual sense. We have no indication that Peter is the father of Mark and Mary is Peter’s wife, although I suppose one could construct something of that sort.

Where is Babylon? Where is this Babylon they’re in? Well, it is [a] literal possibility as the area of Mesopotamia around where the city of Babylon had been. There was still a large Jewish community. So we have the Babylonian Talmud as the name of the Eastern Rabbinic collection of literature there.

[There is] this place in Egypt near modern Cairo that was called Babylon; I don’t know the history of how it got that name. It also had a large Jewish community.

The third possibility is Rome. It’s certainly called Babylon in Revelation. Well, maybe it’s too strong to say certainly, but I think that’s the general reading of the commentators. It may be that Peter is using a code to throw off the authorities in case the letter is intercepted. That sort of thing is not unheard of in the history of dealing with governments by groups that are being mistreated by them for one reason or another. Tradition says that Mark later went down to Alexandria in Egypt and became a leader of
the church there.

So that much then for Mark the man: we do know a lot more about him than we do about Matthew, at least from the scriptural material.

**Mark’s Audience**

What about Mark’s audience? Pretty clearly his audience is Gentile and possibly Roman. The Aramaic phrases, of which there are many in Mark, are generally translated. Thus readers were not expected to know Aramaic. Jewish practices are explained. For instance the cleansing of the hands is explained. For any Jew something like that would be unnecessary. Thus, it appears that Mark is writing to a non-Jewish audience which is unfamiliar with the languages and culture of Palestine.

The people are clearly Gentiles from tradition and perhaps from the Latinisms; as we’ll see some Latinisms here in a moment. We may also infer that these Gentiles were Romans; while the evidence is not that strong, it is certainly a possibility.

There are several Latinisms; that is, the use of Latin terms put in Greek alphabet, if you like, that occur in the Gospel of Mark. There’s a *phragello* in Mark 15:15; it means “to whip” or such. “To flagellate” actually is the verb which has been imparted over to English from the Latin *flagello*. This term, however, also appears in two other Gospels: in John 2 and Matthew 11; so it may only show that since the Romans had been dominant in Israel since 63 BC that some of their terms had come over. You could certainly find that sort of thing happens with an occupying army for 50 or 100 years when a number of terms become common in the local language, if you like. One that is a little more distinctive is *kenturion*, which occurs three times in Mark 15, from the Latin *centurion*, and that doesn’t seem surprising to us because we have imported it into English as well, but Matthew, Luke, and Acts use the Greek equivalent: *hector* in our case—leader or ruler over a hundred. So you might say that’s the Greek term for that level of officer in an army. Well, I doubt that we should put a lot of weight on just a few Latinisms like that when it comes to guessing the audience.
Purpose of Mark

Aim of Mark: no direct statement is given in the Gospel. It’s more difficult to infer an aim from Mark than from Matthew. The author does not say he’s intending to preserve the traditions of Peter, for instance, or that he’s intending to present the Gospel to Romans, or Gentiles for that matter. The opening line, of course, may very well state the aim. Mark 1:1: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” That, of course, is something shared by all four of the Gospels, so it wouldn’t be what we call a distinctive aim; but clearly it’s the aim of Mark in the sense that this is the good news about Jesus, who is the Messiah, and who is the Son of God.

Well, perhaps Mark—this has been suggested by some commentators—is aimed especially at Roman mentality as compared with the Greeks anyway. And, of course, you could compare them with the Hebrews, and the Assyrians, and the Egyptians and things [of] that sort. The Romans tended to be practical, action-oriented, organized, etc. And, of course, Peter himself had such a practical temperament, so he probably fit well with the Romans in this, and that’s when we read the little thing out of Clement of Alexandria about Mark: that the people in Rome were excited hearing what Peter had to say and they wanted Mark to write it up. So that’s perhaps what we’ve got here. Plus there may have been a demand for his material among the Romans, as our tradition from Clement says.

Characteristics of Mark

Well, characteristics of Mark: we mentioned these briefly back earlier when we were discussing authorship and date. There’s vividness in Mark. Mark is full of graphic and picturesque details, which are not required for the action, but add some color and depth to the narrative. “The five thousand reclined on the green grass.” Well, that wouldn’t sound like anything in England, or the US, or the Eastern US, or something of that sort; but the grass is only the green part of the years in that part of the world. So it’s really telling you something.

Mark notes Jesus’ emotion; he uses the historical present frequently to add life to the narrative. That’s at least been a common suggestion on what the historical present
There is a lot of detail in Mark. Mark is shorter than Matthew or Luke or John, but he often reports incidents with more detail than do Matthew or Luke. He sometimes gets the names of the people involved, the time of day, the surrounding crowds are mentioned, and these things are frequently not found in the other Gospels. Yet, as I said, Mark is the shortest Gospel; the shortness is obtained by omitting long discourses and reporting fewer events.

Activity: another feature that is distinctive of Mark is the activity in the Gospel. The action in Jesus’ ministry is emphasized. This Greek word, *euthus*, “immediately,” is often translated that way. It is used over forty times and tends to give Mark’s narrative sort of a rushed, breathless quality. Mark stresses Jesus’ actions more than Jesus’ words. Mark does not usually give long discourses of Jesus, as I’ve mentioned before. The Mark thirteen discourse is Jesus’s longest speech in Mark. Mark is packed with miracles. Eighteen are recorded, though only two are unique to Mark. So, that’s a characteristic of vividness, detail, and activity.

Aramaic: many Aramaic words are recorded and usually translated into Greek. Some of these Aramaic words are unique to Mark: *Boanerges* that Jesus gives to the two sons of Zebedee, meaning sons of thunder. *Talitha cum*, Mark 5:41; the command to Jairus’ daughter: “Little girl, arise.” *Ephphatha*, 7:34: the command to the deaf-mute, “Be opened.” Bartimaeus, [the] named blind man, just means “Son of Timaeus.” Mark even translates the Aramaic name Bartimaeus, [and] suggests that the audience had no feel for Aramiac whatsoever. There’s *abba*, 14:36: Jesus addressing God, meaning “Father” that is used elsewhere by Paul in Romans and Galatians, but not in the other Gospels.

There are also some Aramaic words in Mark that are also found in the other Gospels: *corban*, 7:11: “Gift of the temple,” which is explained in Mark but not translated in Matthew 27:6. *Golgotha*, 15:22, means “place of the skull.” Both Matthew and John use this, and all three translate it. *Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani*, 15:34: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” Matthew uses it and also translates it, as does Mark. Rabb.i or *Raboni*, is used a number of times: in Mark four times, in Matthew four
times, in John nine times. But it is only translated once, and that is by John. Mark probably used the Aramaic for vividness, but it may again be, as the tradition suggests, Peter recalling the very words Jesus used, or something of that sort. These quotations do not tell us that Jesus only spoke Aramaic. His conversations with a Syro-Phonecian woman and with Pilate imply that he had knowledge of Greek.

Well, now I will give a sketch outline of Mark. Let me walk you through that one again. We’re looking at a considerably shorter gospel than Matthew by chapters; and Matthew’s got twenty-eight chapters and Mark only sixteen. Preparation for the ministry in Mark only takes part of chapter one, then the Galilean ministry picks up in the middle of chapter one and runs to the end of chapter nine. It is not clearly divided up into public, limited private, or something like that. Then you have the journey to Jerusalem which takes up a chapter, chapter ten. The last week takes up three and some, three chapters and about ten verses (11:1 to 14:10). Then you’ve got the betrayal, trial, and the crucifixion that takes up less than two chapters. The resurrection is one chapter. And, of course, with the question of the last twelve verses of Mark, eight verses for the post-resurrection materials. So that’s the gospel of Mark.

Characteristics of Luke

Person of Luke

We’re going to now do the same thing with Luke. Characteristics of Luke: Luke’s the physician. Luke is only mentioned by name three times in the New Testament: Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, and 2 Timothy 4:11; so of the three people (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Luke is mentioned far fewer times by name. From these sparse references, however, we can infer that Luke was a physician, and that he was loved by Paul (Colossians 4:14). He was a faithful companion to Paul, even to the very end in Rome (2 Timothy 4:11). He is, apparently, Gentile rather than Jewish. We’ll have some zealous people say that all the New Testament is composed by Jews, but the evidence is really quite strong that Luke is a Gentile.

What’s that evidence? Well, it’s indirect, but Colossians 4:10-14 is a series of
greetings that Paul is sending from his friends from where he is to Colossi. Paul breaks those into two groups. He says in the middle of that, “These are all of those from the circumcision that were with me,” and then he goes on through the latter group. It’s clear that the people ahead of that are Jewish—at least a couple of them are clear. And he says that for the whole group. Luke is in the uncircumcised group.

But in addition to these just three references to Luke by name, we have what we call the “we” passages in Acts; that is, places where the writer of Acts indicates that he is present with the others in the narration at that particular point. The author in these cases writes in the first person plural, including himself in the action. There are three textually certain occurrences of this: Acts 16:10-17 (Paul’s second missionary journey), after Paul receives a vision to go to Macedonia, “We perceived etc….us.” It picks up there, and so on through that eight verse passage, the group there consisting of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and the author.

The use of “we” starts in verse 10, ends in verse 17, and that’s geographically they are doing some traveling then. It would imply that the author would have joined the group at Troas and left them at Philippi. Then in Acts 20, verse 5, “we” passages pick up again, and they run on to 21:18, so over a chapter. This is on the third missionary journey. The usage is more spotty throughout this section, but note that the “we” begins in Philippi; so it ended a few years earlier in Philippi and picks up again in Philippi.

Well, if you take the simplest hypothesis, which is not always correct, the suggestion would be that Paul dropped Luke off to help with the new church in Philippi, and that he was still there several years later when Paul come back through Philippi. It goes on from Philippi and ends in Jerusalem. Perhaps he offers to go as a delegate for the Philippian church in taking gift money to Jerusalem. He does not name himself, however, in the list of delegates, unless he’s not Luke; but it looks like Luke’s practice is not to name himself in the Book of Acts.

Well, we’ll go on from there. The third “we” passage is in Acts 27:1-28:16, the voyage to Rome. This is now two more years later. “We” picks up in Caesarea, where Paul has been in prison now for nearly two years, and ends in Rome. This suggests that
perhaps Luke remained in Palestine with Paul through Jerusalem, and then meets him two years later in Caesarea. For the two years between the third missionary journey and this fourth journey to Rome, my suggestion is that Luke perhaps used this time to research the Gospel materials that he writes up.

So when I was back there doing the dating of Luke, my suggestion was he researched the material for the Gospel of Luke, wrote it up, and had it ready before they left for Rome. It begins to circulate in the East. He may have lost his copy in the shipwreck, we don’t know that, so that might explain why the Gospel circulates later in the West than it does in the East, but that’s all guessing.

We also have one “we” passage of uncertain text—that’s in Acts 11:28, [and] occurs in what we call the Western text, and it’s at Antioch before Paul’s first missionary journey. The passage refers to Agabus, the prophet in Antioch, and here the “we” may reflect just an early tradition that Paul was originally from Antioch. Or, as someone suggested, that Codex Beza in the Western family manuscripts represents a slightly different edition of Acts, and then it may even be Luke’s remark that he was present at Antioch when Agabus showed up there.

Liberals tend to discount the force of these “we” passages by saying that the author of Acts, who they think is not Luke, used a diary and extracted the “we” passages as direct quotes. This is not the most natural interpretation of the phenomenon, but those things do happen.

Well, we move on, still talking about Luke the physician—Luke is a Greek physician. Given Luke’s use of medical terminology, Luke was probably trained in the Greek medical tradition. We know something about it. The two most famous Greek physicians of Antiquity belong to the so-called Hippocratic School. Most of us have perhaps heard of another Hippocratic Oath, the oath that physicians used to take. I’m not sure whether they still do so or not because one of them is to do no harm to the people while they’re trying to heal them. The two most famous physicians of the Hippocratic School are Hippocrates himself, fourth century BC, and Gaylum, second century AD, so after Luke’s time. Some of the writings of the Hippocratic School are available today. We
don’t always know who wrote particular ones, and they give us their general procedures. These men and their associates were noted—that is, distinct from many of the other methods of doing medicine of Antiquity—were noted for diagnoses by observation and deduction.

A rather important, what you would say, medical movement in the Greco-Roman world was in the temples of the healing god Asclepius: Asclepius in Greek and Aesculapius, in Latin. Their method of diagnosis was by divination. But the Greek Hippocratic School diagnosed by observation and then making deductions from that by careful collection of case reports, so that a particular location or particular doctor would have lots of case reports written up, which you could check against then and see, “Well, the symptoms look like this…,” “What went on in that case?” and such. And as you get more and more of those, you begin to get some valuable information on how to treat various diseases. So case reports, symptoms, and treatments helped to build experience, or at least showed what not to do in various kinds of cases.

The Hippocratic Schools are also noted for simple treatments. They used some herbal drugs, they used diet, and they used rest. They tended to stay away from exotic stuff like magic, putting dung on puncture wounds, or chicken teeth, or things of that sort. A nice discussion of these sorts of things occurs in the book by S. I. McMillen and his grandson David Stern, I believe. None of These Diseases, which gives a good discussion of the Bible contrasted with some of your more exotic, ancient medicine. The Hippocratic School’s also noted for pretty high standards of hygiene.

Well, it looks like Luke probably had this background, and it seems that [when] he ended writing his Gospel and Acts, that he had interviewed people whom Jesus perhaps had healed, and did it in perhaps a case report style. So occasionally you get a number of medical terms that he gives in his healing miracles, if you like.

Okay some other suggestions about Luke—Luke’s hometown: Both Eusebius and Jerome from antiquity say that Luke was a native of Syrian Antioch. There were a lot of Antiochs scattered through the world. The famous one was the one there in Syria, which fits that variant that shows up in the Western text of the New Testament. Well, Luke’s
use of the term “Hellenists” in Act 11:20 apparently refers to Pagans rather than Jews. It may be that Luke means by “Hellenist” someone who is not Greek racially, but who adopted Greek culture; and that would sit with lots of different towns, but would sit well with Antioch where he had lots of Syrians who had adopted Greek culture, and so they were Hellenists, but they weren’t Hellenistic Jews. So you’ve got this problem whether to translate “Hellenists” or “Greeks” in that particular passage in Acts 11:20. And “Hellenist” is definitely [a] harder reading.

William Ramsey, who has done a lot of work on Paul, thought that Luke was from Philippi, as this is where Luke is left and where he’s later picked up. Of course, that’s possible, but there is no particular reason for that; Paul would obviously have used associates to help and work with the early churches and such. Ramsey also goes on, rather speculatively, to claim that Luke was the cause of Paul’s Macedonian vision. We see a little bit of a rationalistic approach in Ramsey, that Paul had met Luke, and so dreamed about him that night, and went over to Macedonia with him, et cetera. I would say this idea seems rather unlikely, although Luke does appear suddenly in the narrative at Troas.

If Luke is from Antioch, then apparently either he meets Paul accidentally in Troas, or he had been sent out by the Antioch church to try and find Paul and perhaps bring him money, or something of that sort, to help with his missionary trip.

Another suggestion about Luke is that Luke is the brother of Titus. Alexander Souter is the one who suggested this, and he bases it on 2 Corinthians 8:18, where the brother mentioned in that verse could be translated as “his brother.” Here’s what the passage looks like in NASB: “Paul says we have sent along with him,” and he’s been referring to Titus, just before, “We have sent along with him the brother, who’s name in the gospel has spread through all the churches.”

So Souter notes that Titus is a significant person in Paul’s epistles but strangely is never mentioned in Acts. He suggests this is similar to the phenomenon we see in the Gospel of John where the author never mentions himself or his brother James. Souter then suggests that Luke minimizes all references to himself and apparently felt that
references to his brother would call attention to him as well. Well, once again, it’s pretty speculative since Paul does refer to other people as brothers and frequently uses the term spiritually.

**Purpose of Luke**

Well, that brings us to that question of the aim and method of Luke. For aim, we get an explicit statement in Luke. It’s in the first four verses. The aim of Luke is to allow Theophilus, the person who is first addressed in the writing the Gospel Luke, to know the certainty, or reliability, of the things that he has been taught. So Theophilus, apparently, has been taught at least the basics of Christian faith. So Luke’s aim is given in [the] prologue at Luke 1:1-4, written in Greek of an even more classicized, careful Hellenistic style than his usual writing. [The] prologue is compressed in comparison with that of other prologues in other histories of other times. But then again he is writing a one-volume history, and Josephus is writing a 7 volume, or 20 a volume history, or something of that sort. But the prologue gives the same information in such prologues and serves as the dedication in explaining how and why the work was undertaken.

Liberals are nervous about this term “reliable,” as it applies that someone tried to write as accurate history of Jesus as was possible in about AD 60. If Luke succeeded, then Liberal theology is down the drain.

The “most excellent” use of that title for Theophilus is a title given to government officials. Such usage is seen in the book of Acts [and] also seen in other Greek book dedications. For instance, the “Writings of Galen” and the “Early Christian Apostle to Dignitas,” they both had that kind of thing as well. Theophilus may or may not be a Christian. His name is what we call theophoric, or a god-bearing name. Theophilus, is “lover of God.” So some have said it’s just an allegorical name for sending this book out to all those people who love God. Possible. An allegory is certainty not unheard of in the Greco-Roman world. Yet, god-bearing names like his were common in Greek and Jewish cultures, so we can think of a huge number of theophoric names in the Hebrew Old Testament and Hebrew names of that sort in the New Testament as well. But we actually have a number of god-bearing names in the New Testament, as well that
obviously are real names.

There are three of them in 1 John. Let’s see if I can remember their names: Gaius, which apparently connects with Gaia, the earth mother; and Diotrephes, “nourished by Zeus.” Diotrephes, and what’s the other—I’m not coming up with it off the top of my head; that’s why I’ve got notes here. I can’t remember these things. Well, anyways, that’s two of three of them there. So we can’t really very well argue that the person is imaginary merely based on the etymology of his name. Presumably, in any case, Luke had a wider circulation in mind for this Gospel; probably his intended wider audience is educated Gentiles, and so he writes in a rather nice style—and it’s written in Greek, of course.

Luke’s prologue also tells us not only about his aim, but his method. We are told, first of all, that Luke was aware of the status of his subject at the time of writing. “Many have undertaken to draw upon accounts.” Well, what’s that about? As far as canonical Gospels are concerned, there couldn’t have been more than two written at this time. So John is certainly later, and Luke is writing a third one, if you would like. So what does “many” mean? Probably is not referring to canonical Gospels at all, but referring to the fact that the apostles had been traveling around first in Israel then over to the eastern part of the Roman Empire. So people were excited about what they were seeing and tried to write up what Peter, or Paul or somebody else was saying in a particular place. They heard only a bunch of anecdotes and were not able to put anything together satisfactorily because they didn’t have enough information or enough connections; and that’s my suggestion of what was going on there.

Luke says that he had studied all related materials carefully himself. He says he studied them “from the beginning,” probably a reference to a subject matter rather than that Luke was with Jesus from the beginning. It’s possible, but I think not likely. Luke does start with the earliest earthly events; he goes back to the annunciation to Zechariah for the birth of John the Baptist etc. He could alternatively mean the beginning place, Palestine. One can construct a history either by living through the events or by carefully studying their available data later. The usual historical method turns out to be studying the available data later just because not that many people have typically seen a particular
thing. Luke is doing this, but Luke, we see, thirdly, used materials delivered by groups
designated as eyewitnesses or ministers of the word. These people would obviously
include the apostles and other full time workers such as, perhaps, the 70 who were also
the eyewitnesses.

The single definite article for the two terms indicates the group was viewed as a
unity having both qualifications. I won’t push that too hard, but it syncs it into one group
together. Luke probably interviewed many people who were healed or who were present
at various locations that he narrates.

My suggestion is that Luke may have also interviewed Mary since Luke has birth
material from Mary’s perspective. It’s possible she is still alive in the 50s being, perhaps,
70 or 80 years old by that particular point. When Luke tells us he wrote up an orderly,
sequential, accurate account, that should be an encouragement to Christians. Obviously,
all such claims as above make Liberals again rather nervous. This Gospel, we are told, is
written in Greek by a trained intellectual Gentile who had personally investigated the
testimonies of eyewitnesses is rather striking. The general way to get away from that is
saying, “Well, all writers throw stuff like that in the front of their material.” But where
Luke is testable, he has proved to be quite impressive.

Characteristics of Luke

Here are some characteristic of Luke, or emphases, of Luke’s Gospel. There are a
number of features we can say that seem to be emphases in Luke’s Gospel. I’m going to
mention here universalism. Not in the sense of the Unitarian Universalist Church where
everyone is going to be saved. But universalism [in] that [the] Gospel is for all kinds of
people. It’s not just for Jews. It’s not just for middle-class or wealthy people, etc. Luke
has an unusual emphasis on both Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, men and women,
respectable people and outcasts. In fact, with regard to the outcasts, Luke emphasizes
Jesus’ gracious attitude toward the outcasts of society, towards notorious sinners, lepers,
Samaritans, harlots, tax collectors and so forth.

Luke also has a significant emphasis on prayer. More of Jesus’ prayers and Jesus’
parables on prayer are included in Luke than in any of the other Gospels. Luke has certain emphasis on society relations, especially an interest in wealth and poverty. Why did Luke, what should we say, stress these particular relationships? We don’t know. We were not there. Perhaps because these appealed to his audience. The Greek philosophers of the New Testament period, as opposed to the early Greek philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates—were very much concerned with ethics. Many cultured Greeks of the period were also interested in ethics and were unhappy with what they saw. I think of the debauchery of Rome and of the high handed run over the poor people and such, so that may be what we are seeing going on here.

As we sketched some material unique to Matthew, so we sketch some material that’s unique to Luke here. Luke first of all, and somewhat surprisingly, as a much more Gentile Gospel, if you like, than Matthew, presents and preserves some Semitic praise psalms. These are in fact very Semitic. Otherwise, the Gospel of Luke is the least Semitic of the four Gospels. The Latin names given for these particular praise psalms are taken from the first words of their texts, and probably translated into Latin from Greek. They represent even a Hebraistic way of naming books and works and things of that sort.

So, there is the *Magnificat* in Luke 1:46-55; Mary is concerned about how she will be received at Elizabeth’s house, and she is received very well because Elizabeth already knows about what has been revealed secretly to Mary. John the Baptist jumps in her womb at the greeting of Mary. So Mary praises God, and *magnificat* [is] the Latin for “praise,” or “I praise.” Then there is the Benedictus, Luke 1:68-79, where Zechariah praises God after John’s birth. The Gloria of Luke 2:14 [is where] the Lord’s angels at Jesus’ birth sing, “Glory to God in the highest,” etc. This is actually a little short to be technically a psalm but would fit nicely with the refrains that frequently occur in the Psalms. Then there is, fourthly, the *Nunc Dimittis*, “Now let your servant depart,” in Luke 2:29-32. It is Simeon's prayer upon seeing Jesus. He had been told that he would see the Messiah before his death, and now he has handled the baby Jesus and is ready to depart.

Luke, the Gospel, is not distinctive for having parables in it. All three of the Synoptic Gospels have parables, and the Gospel John has what is effectively the same
thing, though he uses the word *paroimia* where he refers to them.

There are two general types of parables in the Gospels, what we might call story parables, which are quite adequately characterized by the phrase “earthy stories with heavenly meanings” that is a two level, often even a secular story here and then a spiritual significance that it has. The Wheat and Tares would be typical of such a thing. The earthly agricultural story of an enemy of a landowner trying to get back at him by messing up his crops, and yet he conveys information on the progress of the Gospel.

Then illustrative parables are also called example parables, or paradigm parables. These are unique to Luke. There is one possible candidate in Matthew, Matthew 12:43-45, and there is definitely an Old Testament parallel to it. But these do not transfer meanings from physical to spiritual, or secular to religious; instead, they picture a sample of the spiritual truth in operation, and we are to generalize the principle by hints in the context. Some examples of these paradigm, or sample parables: the Good Samaritan. Augustine did try to make this into a story parable with the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho as an Adam/man, etc.; and falling amongst thieves—these ambushed by Satan, and Jesus as the Good Samaritan, and the church as the inn, and he works out some sacramental uses of the oil and the wine. But the context itself indicates, I think, that it is in fact a sample of what it means to be a neighbor, what it means to act as a neighbor towards someone, in publishing the answer to the Pharisee’s question: “Who is my neighbor?” The answer is: anyone who is in need. The principle is “Go and do likewise”; so it is a nice example of a sample parable. A sample of this particular disastrous incident is how to be a neighbor, if you like.

Another example is the Rich Man and Lazarus. This sample of what happens after death. And a particular sample, picks about as poor a man as you can imagine, together with about as rich a man as you can imagine. It suggests that when they die, their statuses are reversed: that before, the rich man is inside his mansion feasting, and the poor Lazarus is outside with the dogs and the sores, etc. And then suddenly, with death, Lazarus is feasting at Abraham’s bosom, just like John at Jesus’ bosom at the Lord’s Supper, and the former rich man is outside begging, if you like. Well, there are people
who want to make that into a story parable. Jehovah Witnesses definitely do, so they can get rid of the idea of hell and conscious existence between death and the resurrection, etc.

[The] Pharisee and publican [parable] is a sample of pride and humility. The rich fool, a sample of people who make no preparation for the next life. A little bit different, but I would put in the same category the parable of the banquet seats in Luke 14:7-11. A sample of the result of selfishness: a person selfishly tries to grab a great place at the banquet, but it turns out the hostess invited somebody more important than he, and so he gets knocked out by the time all these other seats are taken, and he winds up getting down to the bottom, if you like.

The other one in the same context is the banquet host, Luke 14:16-24, a sample of hospitality. Who do you invite to your banquets? Not all of the rich guys who will pay you back, not all of your friends who will pay you back, but the poor people who can’t pay you back. So what’s going to happen in the end? Well, God will pay you back, and that’s a lot better.

Why is that type of parable unique to Luke? I don’t know. Liberals say various circles of tradition invented different types of parables, different types of materials. But this doesn’t really solve the problem; there is no reason to believe that there were isolated groups in the early church. Perhaps a better model is that Jesus was inventive and used different types, different styles for various audiences. Luke apparently emphasizes material because he especially appreciated it; it’s wealth, and poverty, and things of that sort show up pretty strongly there.

There are some miracles that are unique to Luke; those are miracles usually related to women. Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain, heals the woman bowed down with infirmity, etc. And then one section that’s rather unique, if you like: that’s the narrative of [the] Perean ministry. Perea was largely a Jewish region east of the Jordan River, probably largely populated with Jews after the Babylonian captivity, excuse me, after the return from exile, even after the Maccabean Period, probably.

Well, we give a quick outline of Luke, and now we end our materials on the characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels. Luke has just a short four verse preface, but none
of the other Gospels have it quite like that. Maybe there is an inscription on the front of Mark “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God,” if you like. Luke’s got birth and infancy which parallel, at least in structure and location, that in Matthew, but includes the birth and infancy of John as well. Then the preparation section has got the genealogy in it, whereas Matthew had a genealogy up in the front. Then we have a Galilean ministry and that takes up [the] middle of chapter 4 to about the end of chapter 9. Then Luke has a big section, ten chapters, of the journey to Jerusalem and [the] Perean ministry. The other ones all have about a chapter for the journey to Jerusalem and don’t explicitly mention the Perean ministry. Luke’s got about two chapters on the last week and two chapters on the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion, and one chapter on the resurrection; and those areas parallel the other Synoptic Gospels very strongly.

Well, that’s our quick tour then of the characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels. I think we’ll stop there. Thank you for your attention.