



Understanding the New Testament

Matthew and Luke

Hymn: Blest are They (beginning)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzH-Vo4ocRo>

1. Blest are they, the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blest are they, full of sorrow,
they shall be consoled.

Refrain:

Rejoice and be glad!
Blessed are you; holy are you!
Rejoice and be glad!
Yours is the Kingdom of God!

2. Blest are they, the lowly ones;
they shall inherit the earth.
Blest are they, who hunger and thirst;
they shall have their fill.
(Refrain)

3. Blest are they who show mercy;
mercy shall be theirs.
Blest are they, the pure of heart;
they shall see God!

Opening Prayer

- Day by day,
O dear Lord,
three things I pray:
- to see thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
follow thee more nearly,
day by day. Amen.

-Richard of Chichester, 13th c. / Godspell, 20th c.



What is the Spiritual Purpose of a Gospel?

- Proclaim Jesus
- Subvert the status quo
- Form communities of missional disciples



Four Gospels: Three "Synoptic" Gospels + John



■ Matthew

- demanding but merciful, teaching Son of God
- heartfelt obedience

■ Luke

- compassionate, liberating Son of God
- prophetic witness

■ Mark

- powerful but suffering Son of God
- sacrificial service

■ John (Fourth Gospel)

- incarnate, life-giving Son of God
- abiding and being sent

Four Gospels: Three "Synoptic"* Gospels + John



■ Matthew: Lectionary Year A

■ Luke: Lectionary Year C

■ Mark: Lectionary Year B

■ John



- *synoptic = "seen or seeing together"

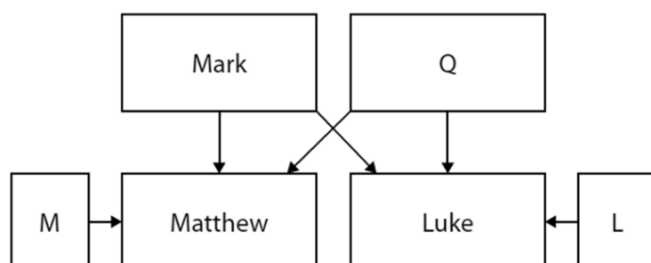
Mark: A Sonnet by Malcolm Guite

A wingèd lion, swift, immediate
 Mark is the gospel of the sudden shift
 From first to last, from grand to intimate,
 From strength to weakness, and from
 debt to gift,
 From a wide deserts haunted emptiness
 To a close city's fervid atmosphere,
 From a voice crying in the wilderness
 To angels in an empty sepulcher.

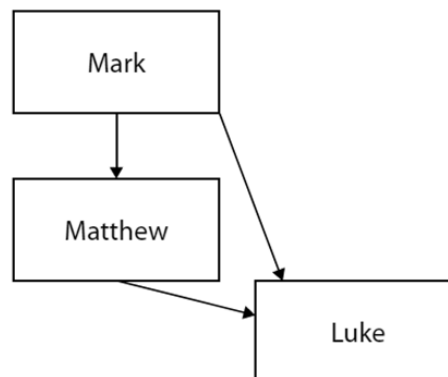
And Christ makes the most sudden
 shift of all;
 From swift action as a strong Messiah
 Casting the very demons back to hell
 To slow pain, and death as a pariah.
 We see our Saviour's life and death
 unmade
 And flee his tomb dumbfounded and
 afraid.

The Synoptic "Puzzle"

- 1. Markan priority + Q
 (Quelle = German for
 "source")



- 2. Markan priority
 but no Q



Synoptic Parallels

■ Similarities and Differences among Matthew, Mark, Luke

Matt 3.13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized,

just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Mark 1.9-11

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee

and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart

and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

11 And a voice came from heaven. "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Luke 3.21-22

Now when all the people were baptized,

and when Jesus also had been baptized

and was praying,

the heaven was opened.

22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The Christmas Pageant



Matthew 4:23—5:12

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [or justice], for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:12-13, 17-26 [plus v. 36]

¹²Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. ¹³And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles....¹⁷[Jesus] came down with them [the twelve] and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

²⁰Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

[¹⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.]

²²Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

²⁴But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. ²⁶Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

The Beatitudes

Matthew



■ Jesus

—demanding but merciful,
teaching Son of God

■ Discipleship

—heartfelt obedience

Matthew in 300 Words (1)

The Gospel of Matthew appears to have been written in the 70s or 80s, though perhaps earlier, (60s?) primarily for a Jewish-Christian audience (Jews who believed Jesus was the Jewish Messiah). Many scholars believe the Gospel originated in Syria. It contends that Jesus fulfills the Scriptures of Israel and is, in fact, "Emmanuel," or "God with us" (1:23, citing Isa. 7:14; cf. Matt. 28:20).

Mathew's probable use of several sources does not produce a hodgepodge of material but an artfully designed literary whole.



Matthew in 300 Words (2)

Unlike Mark, Matthew begins the story of Jesus with a birth narrative and concludes with resurrection appearances, plus "the Great Commission" to all nations.

The main part of the Gospel is structured, like Mark, in two parts, the first focusing on Jesus' preaching and healing, the second on his suffering and death. It also contains five distinct blocks of teaching material (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount, chs. 5–7) that alternate with miracle stories and other narratives. The evangelist thereby asserts that Jesus is now the Teacher for both Jews and gentiles to follow.



Matthew in 300 Words (3)

To follow this Teacher means to pursue a “greater righteousness”: to take up the yoke of a new law of compassion and mercy rather than sacrifice. It is also, as in Mark, to expect suffering and to attend to the needs of the marginalized, such as the hungry and those in prison. Furthermore, it is explicitly to make disciples of all nations (28:16–20).



Some Key Themes in Matthew

1. Jesus as the Saving Presence of Israel's God
2. Jesus as Son of God, Son of David
3. Jesus as New Moses, New Israel
4. The Kingdom/Reign/Empire of "Heaven"
5. God as "Father"
6. Fulfillment of Scripture
7. Numerical symbolism
8. Mercy
9. Greater righteousness/obedience
10. Disciples' community and mission
11. Pharisees
12. Gentiles



The Structure of Matthew (1)

Four Movements



- 1:1—4:16 The Identity and Preparation of the Messiah
- 4:17*—16:12 The Proclamation of the Kingdom by the Messiah and His Disciples
- 16:21*—25:41 Preparation for the Messiah's Passion
- 26:1—28:20 The Passion and Resurrection of the Messiah, and the Continuation of the Mission

* "From then on"

The Structure of Matthew (2)

Five Discourses



1. 5:1—7:27 (+ 7:28) The Identity and Character of the Disciples (the Sermon on the Mount)
2. 10:5-42 (+ 11:1) The Mission of the Disciples (mission discourse)
3. 13:1-52 (+ 13:53) The Spread of the Kingdom (parable collection)
4. 18:1-35 (+ 19:1) The Community of the Kingdom ("church" discourse)
5. 24:1-25:46 (+ 26:1) The Consummation of the Kingdom (apocalyptic discourse)

The Structure of Matthew (3)



Beginning

Bookends

End

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ■ 1:23 Jesus as God with us | ■ 28:20 with you to end of the age |
| ■ 2:1 ff Magi = Gentile confession | ■ 27:54 Gentile confession;
28:19 mission to Gentiles |
| ■ 2:2 cosmic sign of star | ■ 27:51-52 cosmic sign of earthquake and resurrection |
| ■ 2:2 King of the Jews | ■ 27:37 King of the Jews |

Matthew: Some Unique Features



- Genealogy from Abraham (1:2-17)
- Magi, Herod and babies, flight to Egypt (ch. 2)
- Fulfillment of Torah, “antitheses” (5:17-43)
- Invitation to come, take yoke, find rest (11:28-30)
- Role of Peter, keys of kingdom (16:17-19)
- Last judgment parable of sheep and goats (25:31-46)
- Great Commission (28:16-20)

Sandro
Botticelli,
1478-42



Luke



- **Jesus**
 - liberating Son of God
- **Discipleship**
 - prophetic witness

Luke in 300 Words (1)

The Gospel of Luke is the first volume of a two-volume narrative (Luke-Acts) of God bringing salvation to the whole world through the ministry of God's Son, Jesus, and his followers, empowered by the Spirit. The salvation and "peace on earth" (2:14) offered by God surpass the salvation and the *Pax Romana* (Roman peace) offered by the emperor.



Luke in 300 Words (2)

In addition to its emphasis on the Spirit and on universal salvation, Luke's Gospel highlights Jesus' ministry to the poor and oppressed, the role of women, and prayer. The special L material includes some of the Synoptics' best-known texts, such as the parables of the good Samaritan (10:25–37) and of the prodigal son (15:11–32). Like the other Synoptics, Luke also assumes that Jesus' followers, who must share his mission of compassion and liberation (4:16–30), will be persecuted, and it encourages faithful witness in spite of such suffering.



Luke in 300 Words (3)

The authorship and provenance of this Gospel cannot be determined with surety. The audience is almost certainly gentile and probably urban; the evangelist may have been Paul's traveling companion, but many scholars question that traditional identification. He is certainly a careful historian as well as an artistic writer.



Luke's Gospel is usually dated to the 70s or 80s, though it may be earlier.

The Structure of Luke

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| I. 1:1—4:13 | The Announcement and Arrival of Jesus the Prophetic Lord |
| II. 4:14—9:50 | The Galilean Ministry of Jesus the Prophetic Lord |
| III. 9:51—19:27 | The Journey to Jerusalem of Jesus the Prophetic Lord |
| IV. 19:28—23:56 | The Passion and Death of Jesus the Prophetic Lord in Jerusalem |
| V. 24:1-53 | The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus the Prophetic Lord |



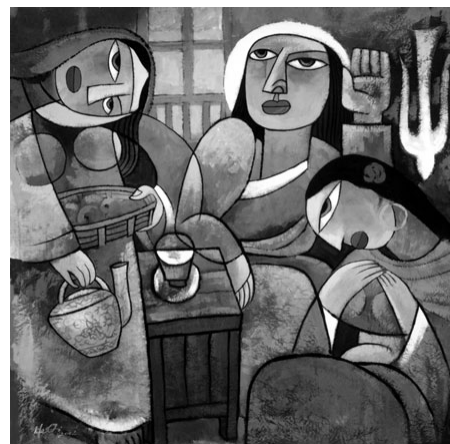
Some Key Themes in Luke



1. Jesus as anointed but rejected prophet, Lord, Savior
2. Promise and fulfillment
3. Salvation
4. Peace
5. Jesus' shocking concern for outcasts (poor, sinners, etc.)
6. Jesus' mercy and compassion
7. Reversal
8. Women
9. Prayer
10. The Holy Spirit
11. Emotions, esp. joy, awe
12. Repentance
13. Table fellowship/food
14. Discipleship = obedience, witness
15. Money and possessions
16. Jerusalem

Luke: Some Unique Features

- Annunciation, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, birth of Baptist; Magnificat, shepherds, manger; presentation in Temple; visit to Jerusalem at 12 (chs. 1-2)
- Genealogy from Adam (3:23-38)
- Nazareth inaugural sermon (4:14-30)
- Widow's son raised (7:11-17), women supporters (8:1-3), Mary and Martha (10:38-42), crippled woman (13:10-17)
- Parables: Good Samaritan, friend at midnight, lost coin, lost sons (prodigal son), rich man and Lazarus, 10 lepers, Pharisee and tax collector
- Zacchaeus (19:1-10)
- Emmaus, ascension (ch. 24)
- Longest NT book; excellent Greek; only Gospel with a sequel



He Qui,
20th/21st c.



Caravaggio,
1601/2

Hymn: Blest are They (cont'd.)

4. Blest are they who seek peace;
they are the children of God.
Blest are they who suffer in faith,
the glory of God is theirs.

Refrain:

Rejoice and be glad!
Blessed are you; holy are you!
Rejoice and be glad!
Yours is the Kingdom of God!

5. Blest are you who suffer
hate
all because of me.
Rejoice and be glad, yours is
the kingdom,
shine for all to see.

(Refrain)