

New Testament Overview – J. Carl Laney

The Life of Jesus Inter-testamental Time Line (430 - 5/4 B.C.)

The period between the Testaments was an age of transition from a predominately Jewish to a predominately Greek culture, language and philosophy in Palestine. This period of change set the stage for the New Testament period.

431 B.C.	Ministry of Malachi
424-331	Persian decline
334	Alexander the Great begins his conquest of Persia
331-167	Greek rule over Palestine
301-198	Ptolemaic rule of Palestine from Alexandria
198	Antiochus III defeated the Ptolemaic forces at Panias and brought Palestine under the Seleucids.
198-167	Seleucid rule of Palestine from Antioch
175-163	Rule of Antiochus Epiphanes
167	Antiochus dedicates the Jerusalem temple to Zeus
167-143	Maccabean revolt and control of Palestine. Revolt led by a priest, Mattathias from Modein, and his sons, including Judas "the Hammer"(Maccabeus).
164	Jerusalem temple cleansed and rededicated. The Jewish feast of Hanukkah or Dedication (Jn. 10:22) commemorates this event.
142-63	Hasmonean rule over Palestine. The priestly descendants from the time of Simon (son of Mattathias), are the "Hasmoneans," apparently due to the family name being "Hasmon."
135-104	John Hyrcanus I conquered Idumea, Samaria and Medaba.

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- 104-103 Aristobulus I conquered Galilee
- 103-76 Alexander Jannaeus expands the kingdom to include most of the land of Israel.
 Appoints Antipater, Herod's father, as governor of Idumea.
- 63 B.C. Pompey captures Jerusalem and Palestine falls under Roman dominion.
- 43 Antipater murdered; Herod and Phasael appointed co-rulers of Judea.
- 40 Parthians invade Syria and sweep into Palestine; Herod escapes to Rome where
 he is appointed by the Senate "king of the Jews."
- 40-37 Herod returns to Palestine, raises an army, captures Jerusalem (37 B.C.) and
 becomes the undisputed ruler of Judea.
- 37-4 Herod gains the favor of the Romans and many regions are added to his
 kingdom. Herod engages in massive building projects: Samaria, Caesarea,
 Masada, Herodium, Jerusalem temple.
- 14-4 Herod plagued with domestic troubles. His ten wives left him with many
 children, all of whom wanted a part of their father's inheritance.
- 5/4* Jesus born in Bethlehem
- 4 Herod died in Jericho (spring). Augustus divided his kingdom among his three
 surviving sons. Archelaus (4 B.C. - A.D. 6) appointed ethnarch of Judea,
 Idumea and Samaria. Antipas (4 B.C. - A.D. 39), given the title tetrarch,
 and granted the territories of Galilee and Perea. Philip (4 B.C.-A.D. 34)
 appointed tetrarch of the regions northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

*The present Christian Era is a dating system invented by Dionysius Exiguus (c. 496-540), a monk of Scythian birth living in Italy, at the request of Pope St. John in A.D. 525. Dionysius modified the Alexandrian system of dating which was based on the reign of Diocletian, a persecutor of the church, and prepared a numbering system from the "incarnation of our Lord Jesus."

Dionysius placed Christ's birth at 753 A.U.C. (anno urbis conditae = from the foundation of the city of Rome) failing to take into account the Gospel record that Jesus was born under King Herod who died in 750 A.U.C. The dating was questioned in the 8th century and was rejected in the 9th century, but has continued to the present day.

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DISTINCTIVES OF THE GOSPELS

DISTINCTIVES	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Addressees	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Mankind
Date of Writing	A.D. 50	A.D. 65-70	A.D. 60	A.D. 85-90
Christ Presented As	King Zech. 9:9	Servant Isa. 42:1	Son of Man Dan. 7:13	Son of God Isa. 40:9
Purpose	To demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah of OT prophecy	To present Christ as God's Servant, attested by His mighty works	To present the events of the life of the Son of Man who came to save lost humanity	To present the orthodox doctrine of the Son of God inspiring faith and life in Him
Theme	"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (27:37)	"The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (10:45)	"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10)	"Belief in Jesus, Messiah and Son of God" (20:31)
Design	Dispensational	Chronological	Historical	Theological
Style	Methodical & Massive	Colloquial & Concise	Artistic & Classical	Abstract & Profound
Emphasis	Discourses	Miracles	Parables	Interviews & Discourses
OT References	129	63	67	43
Prominent Words	"fulfilled"	"immediately"	"Son of Man"	"believe"

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The Synoptic Problem and the Four Source Theory

The Hypothesis

In order to solve the problem of the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to each other B. H. Streeter (The Four Gospels, 1924) posited a four source hypothesis which, though modified, has been regarded by many scholars as the most workable explanation of gospel origins.

The Sources

Description	Origin
Q (uelle)	Material used by Matthew and Luke, but not by Mark. Antioch
M (atthew)	Material found uniquely in Matthew, based on a "Jerusalem sayings document." Jerusalem
L (uke)	Material found uniquely in Luke, based on Caesarean oral tradition. Caesarea
Mark	The Roman gospel upon which Matthew and Luke are based. Rome

The Method

Mark	The priority of Mark is key to the whole hypothesis. The other Synoptic writers depended upon this original work.
Matthew	Matthew used Mark, Q, and his Jerusalem sayings document as his main sources.
Luke	Luke used Mark, Q and his Caesarean tradition which was probably oral in character.

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The Crux

The crux of the issue is whether the similarities observable in the Synoptic gospels can be accounted for only on the basis of literary dependence. To those who adopt this view, it seems inconceivable that the similarities could be accounted for in some other way. However, as Guthrie warns, "...the New Testament investigator must guard against the fallacious assumption that what is inconceivable to him must be false" (New Testament Introduction, p. 132).

The Difficulties

One of the major difficulties with the concept of literary dependence is why Matthew, an apostle, would need to gather material from Mark and Luke, neither of whom were apostles. This hypothesis is also contradicted by the view of the early church that the gospels with the genealogies (Matthew and Luke) were written first (Eusebius Historia Ecclesiastica 6:14).

The Alternatives

There are several alternatives to the hypothesis that the gospel writers depended upon each other and other literary sources for their material.

1) Oral Tradition

Oral tradition may account for the similarities of the gospels. The early teaching of Jesus was passed on by His disciples according to a fixed pattern that the gospel writers were acquainted with.

2) Audience and Purpose

The purpose of the writer and particular needs or interests of his readers may have led the gospel writers to emphasize different things -- to include some material and to omit other data which was deemed non-essential to his aim.

3) Divine Inspiration

The Holy Spirit may have, and in fact did, lead the gospel writers to record the same teachings and narratives, often in the same words (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:20-21, John 14:26, 16:12-14).

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One cannot be dogmatic in suggesting a solution to the Synoptic problem, but the alternatives suggested here must be given careful consideration before unreservedly accepting the tentative hypothesis of the literary dependence of the Synoptic Gospels.

For Further Study Guthrie, Donald, New Testament Introduction. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970, pp. 121-187; Hiebert, D. Edmond. An Introduction to the New Testament. Chicago: Moody Press, 1975, pp. 160-190.



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CHRONOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

5/4 B.C. Birth of Christ	Luke 2:1-7
April 29, A.D. 9 First Passover in Jerusalem	Luke 2:41-51
Summer or Autumn, A.D. 29 Baptism at Bethany beyond Jordan	Matt. 3:13-17
April 7, A.D. 30 First Temple Cleansing	John 2:13-22
January / February, A.D. 31 Ministry in Samaria	John 4:5-42
October 21-28, Feast of Tabernacles A.D. 31 Healing at Bethesda	John 5:1-47
April 13/14, Passover Feeding of A.D. 32 of the Five Thousand Matt. 14	John 6:1-15
September 10-17, Feast of Tabernacles A.D. 32 Visit to Jerusalem	John 7:2-10
December 18, Feast of Dedication A.D. 32 Visit to Jerusalem	John 10:22-39
Saturday, March 28, A.D. 33 Arrival at Bethany	Jn. 11:55-12:1
Monday, March 30, Royal Entry / Second A.D. 33 Temple Cleansing	Matt. 21:1-11 Jn. 12:12-19
Thursday, April 2, Passover Meal / Upper A.D. 33 Room Discourse John 13-17	Matt. 26:20-30
Friday, April 3, Trial of Christ and A.D. 33 His Crucifixion	Matt. 27:1-60 Jn. 18-19
Sunday, April 5, A.D. 33 The Resurrection	Matt. 28:1-15
Thursday, May 14, A.D. 33 The Ascension from	Acts 1:9-12

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If Jesus was born in 4/5 B.C., how old was He when he died? Lk. 3:23 indicates that Jesus was "about thirty" at His baptism. He lived about three years before A.D. 1 and 32 years until A.D. 33. This adds up to thirty-five (perhaps thirty-six) years old at His death.

Key Events in the Life of Christ

If you were going to tell the story of your life, what key events would you choose to include. What if the limit was ten. What ten key events would you identify as those which best represent who you are and what you have done?

We are going to be tracing the life of Jesus Christ from His birth in Bethlehem to His ascension from the Mt. of Olives. Here are ten key events to understand and appreciate in your study of the life of Christ. The questions in the notes are intended to help you deepen your study after hearing the lecture.

1. Virgin Birth Matt. 1:16-25

The virgin birth testifies to the uniqueness and sinlessness of Jesus.

What evidences of Mary's virginity do you find in Matt. 1:16-25?

2. Approval at Baptism Matt. 3:13-17

The baptism of Jesus identified Him with the believing remnant of Jewish people who were looking for the coming of their Messiah King.

3. Proven through Temptation Matt. 4:1-11

The temptation sets Jesus forth as the perfect Son of God and settles forever the question of His sinlessness.

What encouragement does Christ's temptation provide for you? See Hebrews 4:15.

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4. Offer of the Kingdom Matt. 4:17

Jesus announced, “The prophesied kingdom of God is at hand! Repent of your faulty views and accept Me as your true King!”

We may define the kingdom of God as “God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule.” It is a spiritual reality that will be ultimately realized in physical form.

What did Isaiah predict about Israel’s future kingdom (see Isa. 2:1-4, 9:7, 11:1-9, 35:5-6)?

5. Authentication by Miracles Matt. 4:23-25

The miracles of Jesus were not designed to merely arrest attention or gain a following.

They served to authenticate that Jesus was the Son of God and brought God’s message to the people of Israel.

His works served to validate the truth of His words (Matt. 4:23).

6. Rejection by Israel Matt. 12:22-32

The religious leaders set the whole nation on the course of rejecting Jesus by saying that He was doing His miracles by the power of Satan. Because of the disastrous results that followed for the Jewish people, the Bible calls this sin “unpardonable.”

Do you think that the unique circumstances of this sin could be replicated today? Why or why not?

7. Taught Through Parables Matt. 13

When Jesus was rejected by the Jewish religious leaders, the disciples wondered what was going to happen to God’s kingdom program. Would it be canceled?

Jesus started answering those questions by teaching His disciples through parables.

The parables disclose some new truths about God’s kingdom as it will be developing in this present age.

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8. Transfiguration Matt. 17:1-13

The transfiguration of Jesus demonstrated to Peter, James and John that His death would not prevent the establishment of the promised Kingdom.

Who appeared on the mountain with Jesus? Why do you suppose they were the two chosen to be there?

9. Royal Entry Into Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-11

Jesus came into Jerusalem on a donkey, in the very way prescribed by Zechariah 9:9 and on the very day prophesied by Daniel 9:24-27 (Luke 19:42).

Why was this a “royal” entry rather than a “triumphal” entry (Revelation 19:11-16)?

10. Death for Sin Matt. 27:45-54

Jesus offered Himself as the perfect Passover Lamb for the sins of the world, satisfying fully God’s wrath on sin.

According to Paul, what happened when Jesus died for us on the cross (Romans 3:24-26)?

11. Resurrection before Witnesses Matt. 28:1-10

Jesus’ resurrection was the final authentication that He was who He claimed to be--the Son of God and Messiah of Israel.

Who was the first to see the resurrected Jesus (Jn. 20:11-18)?

12. Ascension to Heaven Acts 1:9-11

At the end of His earthly ministry God the Father welcomed His Son back into heaven, giving evidence that His holiness was not tarnished during His stay on earth.

Did Jesus retain or lose His humanity when He returned to heaven (1 Timothy 2:5)?

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For Further Study:

What events in the life of Jesus have been omitted that you would want to include in His life story?

What is it about these events that makes them important?

Recommended Readings on Jesus:

J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ (Zondervan).

Joseph Ratzinger, Jesus of Nazareth (Doubleday).

Ann Apangler and Lois Tverberg, Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus (Zondervan).

N. T. Wright, The Challenge of Jesus (IVP).

Brad Young, Jesus the Jewish Theologian (Hendrickson).