

Dr. Robert C. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 4, Authorship and Date Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 4, Authorship and Date, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Newman's lecture explores the authorship and dating of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The lecture examines both internal and external evidence to support the traditional authorship of each gospel. **Specific focus is given to the historical evidence suggesting the Synoptic Gospels were written before 70 AD.** Key figures like Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen are cited to provide insight into early church traditions regarding authorship. **The lecture also considers different perspectives on the order in which the Gospels were written, noting both traditional and more contemporary views.** Finally, the discussion addresses the language in which Matthew was originally written and the implications for understanding the Gospels today.

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 4 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Synoptic Gospels).



**Newman_Synoptics
_Session04.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 4, Authorship and Date

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Robert C. Newman's lecture on the authorship and dating of the Synoptic Gospels:

Briefing Document: Authorship and Date of the Synoptic Gospels

Main Themes:

- **Traditional Authorship:** The lecture aims to present evidence supporting the traditional authorship of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and to argue that they were written before 70 AD.
- **Dating the Gospels:** The lecture explores internal and external evidence to establish a timeline for the writing of each gospel, challenging liberal interpretations that post-date them based on fulfilled prophecies.
- **Internal and External Evidence:** Newman emphasizes the importance of both internal (within the texts themselves) and external (early church tradition) evidence in determining authorship and dating.
- **Synoptic Problem Implications:** The lecture acknowledges that any conclusions regarding authorship and dating have implications for understanding the Synoptic Problem (the question of how the Gospels relate to each other).
- **Balancing Tradition and Critical Analysis:** The lecture aims to critically examine traditional views while giving weight to early church testimony and challenging overly skeptical liberal viewpoints.

Key Ideas and Facts:

1. Authorship of Matthew:

- **Internal Evidence:** The Gospel itself is anonymous, but the author in Matthew 10:2-4 calls himself a tax collector, which is not a popular profession, perhaps suggesting humility or a desire to keep the focus on Jesus.
- **External Evidence:Papias (c. 130 AD):** States that "Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, but everyone interpreted him as he was able." There is debate on whether "oracles" refers to the Gospel or a source.

- **Irenaeus (c. 180 AD):** "Matthew also published a book of the gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church."
- **Pantaenus (c. 180 AD):** Heard a story about finding Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew letters in India. (Indirect information)
- **Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 AD):** "Those Gospels that contained the genealogies were written first" referring to Matthew and Luke.
- **Origen (c. 240 AD):** "First there was written a gospel according to Matthew, the one-time publican... who published it in the Hebrew language."
- **Eusebius (c. 325 AD):** "Matthew, who preached earlier to Hebrews, when he was about to go to others, also committed his gospel to writing in his native tongue." Mentions the term "memoirs".
- **Jerome (c. 400 AD):** "Matthew...was the first one in Judea to write a gospel of Christ in Hebrew letters and words for those from the circumcision who believed."
- **Summary:** Tradition unanimously ascribes authorship to Matthew. There is debate on whether the original was in Hebrew/Aramaic, and whether the extant Greek version is a translation.

2. Authorship of Mark:

- **Internal Evidence:** Anonymous text. Some suggest the style reflects Peter's personality. Mark 14:51 (young man losing his sheet) is perhaps a sketch of Mark himself.
- **External Evidence:Papias (c. 130 AD):** "Mark indeed since he was the interpreter of Peter wrote accurately but not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered."
- **Justin Martyr (c. 140-150 AD):** Refers to "memoirs of the apostles" and mentions Peter's name being changed, alluding to Mark 3:16-17.
- **Irenaeus (c. 180 AD):** "After their departure, Mark, Peter's disciple and interpreter, also handed down to us the things preached by Peter in writing." (Ambiguous about whether "departure" means death or leaving Rome.)
- **Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 AD):** States that Mark wrote down Peter's preaching after being requested to do so, and Peter reacted to it later.

- **Tertullian (c. 200 AD):** Refers to Mark as an "apostolic man."
- **Origen (c. 225 AD):** Stated that Mark wrote the Gospel as Peter instructed.
- **Summary:** Tradition unanimously identifies Mark as the author, drawing heavily from Peter's preaching. The connection to Peter is supported by internal evidence.

3. Authorship of Luke:

- **Internal Evidence:** The prologue of Acts links it to Luke. The prologues of Luke and Acts both mention Theophilus. The vocabularies of Luke and Acts are similar.
- **External Evidence: Muratorian Canon (c. 180 AD):** "The third book of the gospel is that according to Luke...after the ascension of Christ when Paul had taken him with him as a companion of his traveling...wrote in his own name."
- **Irenaeus (c. 180 AD):** "Luke, also the follower of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by that one."
- **Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 AD):** Mentions Luke and Matthew were written first.
- **Tertullian (c. 215 AD):** Refers to Luke as an "apostolic man."
- **Origen (c. 225 AD):** Says that Luke's gospel was praised by Paul.
- **Eusebius (c. 330 AD):** "Luke...since he had been very much with Paul...left us examples of the therapy of souls...in two inspired books."
- **Summary:** Luke is identified as a follower of Paul and a physician. The connection to Paul and the author's medical vocabulary support this claim.

4. Dating of Matthew:

- **Internal Evidence:** Matthew 28:8 and Matthew 28:15 imply a time interval between the events and the writing. Liberal interpretations post-date it due to fulfilled prophecies.
- **External Evidence:** Papyri P64, P67, and P77 (c. 200 AD) show it was written before 200 AD.
- Epistle of Barnabas (c. 132 AD) cites Matthew 22:14 as scripture.
- Tradition places it within Matthew's lifetime (no later than 100 AD).

- Irenaeus dates it to 61-68 AD.
- **Newman's Suggestion:** The original was a Hebrew gospel in the 40s/early 50s, with a Greek edition in the 60s.

5. Dating of Mark:

- **Internal Evidence:** Nothing direct. Liberals post-date based on interpretation of fulfilled prophecies.
- **External Evidence:** The Church Fathers. Mark was considerably less popular than Matthew in the early Church.
- **Dating Schemes:Concordant Dating:** Dates it in the 60s, before Peter's death.
- **Liberal View:** After 68 AD, perhaps in the early 70s.
- **Conservative View:** 50s, predating Matthew and Luke.
- **Newman's Suggestion:** Favors the concordant view.

6. Dating of Luke:

- **Internal Evidence:** Acts 1:1 presupposes Luke. Liberal view dates it after AD 70.
- **External Evidence:** Acts dates to the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment (63-64 AD).
- **Newman's Suggestion:** Luke was written 58-60 AD, before Acts in 63-64 AD. Argues that Luke had the opportunity to research and write the Gospel during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea.

Quotes:

- **Papias on Matthew:** "Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, but everyone interpreted him as he was able."
- **Irenaeus on Matthew:** "Matthew also published a book of the gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church."
- **Papias on Mark:** "Mark indeed since he was the interpreter of Peter wrote accurately but not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he remembered."

- **Irenaeus on Mark:** "After their departure, Mark, Peter's disciple and interpreter, also handed down to us the things preached by Peter in writing."
- **Muratorian Canon on Luke:** "The third book of the gospel is that according to Luke...after the ascension of Christ when Paul had taken him with him as a companion of his traveling...wrote in his own name."
- **Newman on the lack of alternative authorship claims:** "And you ask yourself, would these be the authors that people would naturally have gravitated to? And I think the answer would be, well, John maybe, but Mark and Luke, not. And Matthew is not a major character among the apostles. This is really a major thing he's noted for. So, my suggestion is this really does go back to real knowledge, and that's seen in the lack of disagreement on these things."

Conclusion:

Dr. Newman's lecture provides a comprehensive overview of the evidence surrounding the authorship and dating of the Synoptic Gospels. He argues for the traditional authorship, advocates for pre-70 AD dates, and emphasizes the importance of considering both internal and external evidence while acknowledging the complexities of the Synoptic Problem. He presents his own suggestions for dating based on a synthesis of the available evidence and critiques alternative interpretations.

4. Study Guide: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 4, Authorship and Date

Synoptic Gospels: Authorship and Date Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the significance of Matthew identifying himself as a tax collector in his apostolic list (Matthew 10:2-4)?
2. According to Papias, in what language did Matthew write his Gospel, and what did he call it?
3. What is Irenaeus's contribution to the understanding of Matthew's authorship and date?
4. What does Clement of Alexandria say regarding the order of the Gospels and who wrote them first?
5. How does the internal evidence of the Gospel of Mark suggest a connection to Peter?
6. What does Papias say about Mark's writing in relation to Peter's teachings?
7. According to the Muratorian Canon, who was Luke a companion of and how did this inform his Gospel?
8. What internal features of the Gospels suggest a pre-70 AD date for their composition?
9. What evidence suggests that Matthew was written in Hebrew or Aramaic?
10. How does the book of Acts connect to the dating of the Gospel of Luke?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Matthew's self-identification as a tax collector, a despised profession, may suggest humility. It might also be a reason why all the Gospels are anonymous, to keep the focus on Jesus.
2. Papias states that Matthew wrote "the oracles" (revelations from God) in the Hebrew dialect, which may refer to Hebrew or Aramaic.

3. Irenaeus affirms that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, dating it to the early 60s AD.
4. Clement of Alexandria says that those Gospels that contained genealogies (Matthew and Luke) were written first, before Mark.
5. The Gospel of Mark contains many details, including Jesus' emotions, looks and gestures, and Peter's own thoughts, suggesting a close connection with Peter.
6. Papias states that Mark, as Peter's interpreter, accurately wrote down what Peter preached, though not necessarily in order.
7. The Muratorian Canon states that Luke was a physician and companion of Paul, and he investigated and wrote his Gospel in his own name after the ascension of Christ.
8. The absence of explicit references to the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD in some Gospels suggests a pre-70 AD date. Also, Jesus predicting those events shows it was written after 70 AD.
9. Several early Church fathers, including Papias, Irenaeus, and Origen, state that Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic.
10. Acts 1:1 connects Acts to the Gospel of Luke, and the dating of Acts to the early 60s AD, before the persecution under Nero, suggests a similar dating for Luke.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the external evidence for the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew, including the contributions of Papias, Irenaeus, and Origen. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this evidence.
2. Compare and contrast the internal and external evidence for the authorship of the Gospel of Mark. How does the tradition linking Mark to Peter influence our understanding of the Gospel?
3. Analyze the arguments for and against a late (post-70 AD) date for the Gospel of Matthew. How do theological perspectives influence the interpretation of internal evidence related to the destruction of Jerusalem?

4. Examine the various dating schemes proposed for the Gospel of Luke. How do these dates impact our understanding of the relationship between Luke and Acts, as well as the broader historical context of early Christianity?
5. Assess the significance of the Muratorian Canon for understanding the authorship and dating of the Gospels. What does this document reveal about the early Church's views on the New Testament canon?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Autograph:** The original manuscript of a document written by the author.
- **Catechetical School:** An early Christian educational institution, notably in Alexandria, Egypt, that provided instruction in Christian doctrine.
- **Concordant Dating Scheme:** An approach to dating the Gospels that seeks to harmonize the testimony of the Church Fathers and minimize contradictions.
- **Dialect:** A regional or social variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.
- **Eusebius of Caesarea:** A 4th-century bishop and historian known for his work, *Church History*, which provides valuable information about the early Church.
- **Exegesis:** Critical interpretation or explanation of a text, particularly of scripture.
- **External Evidence:** Information about a text derived from sources outside the text itself, such as the writings of early Church Fathers.
- **Hebrew/Aramaic:** Ancient Semitic languages spoken in Palestine during the time of Jesus.
- **Internal Evidence:** Information about a text derived from the text itself, such as its style, vocabulary, and explicit statements.
- **Irenaeus:** A 2nd-century bishop of Lyon who wrote against heresies and provided early testimony regarding the authorship and dating of the Gospels.
- **Jerome:** A 4th-century scholar who translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate) and wrote about the lives of illustrious men.
- **Muratorian Canon:** The oldest known list of New Testament books, dating from the late 2nd century.

- **Origen:** A 3rd-century theologian and scholar who succeeded Clement of Alexandria and wrote extensively on scripture.
- **Pantaenus:** A 2nd-century Christian teacher from Alexandria who reportedly found a Hebrew version of Matthew's Gospel in India.
- **Papias:** A 2nd-century bishop of Hierapolis who provided early testimony regarding the authorship of Matthew and Mark.
- **Presbyter:** An elder or leader in the early Church.
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, so-called because they share a similar structure, content, and perspective.
- **Synoptic Problem:** The question of the literary relationship between the Synoptic Gospels and how to account for their similarities and differences.
- **Theophilus:** The person to whom the Gospels of Luke and Acts are addressed.
- **Two-Document Theory:** A hypothesis explaining the synoptic problem suggesting that Mark and Q (Quelle) were the two sources for the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

5. FAQs on Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 4, Authorship and Date, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Authorship and Dating of the Synoptic Gospels: A Frequently Asked Questions Guide

- **Question 1: What is the traditional authorship of the Synoptic Gospels, and what evidence supports this?**
- The Synoptic Gospels are traditionally attributed to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. For Matthew, the internal evidence is scant, except for his self-identification as a tax collector in his apostle list, suggesting humility and a focus on Jesus. External evidence includes early church fathers like Papias (c. 130 AD), who stated Matthew wrote the "oracles" in the Hebrew dialect, and Irenaeus (c. 180 AD), who identified it as the Gospel of Matthew written in Hebrew while Peter and Paul were in Rome. For Mark, internal evidence suggests a style reflecting Peter's personality, with vivid details and emotional descriptions. External evidence comes from Papias, who described Mark as Peter's "interpreter," accurately writing down Peter's recollections. For Luke, internal evidence lies in the prologue of Luke and Acts, linked by the mention of Theophilus and similar vocabulary indicating a well-educated author and companion of Paul. External evidence includes the Muratorian Canon (c. 180 AD) which identifies Luke as a physician and companion of Paul.
- **Question 2: Is there any evidence that Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, and what are the implications of this?**
- Yes, early church fathers like Papias and Irenaeus mention that Matthew wrote his gospel in the "Hebrew dialect," which could refer to either Hebrew or Aramaic. This suggests that the original Matthew was in one of these languages and later translated into Greek. If the Greek version we have today is indeed a translation, it raises questions about who made the translation and whether it maintains the original inspiration. However, the text notes that the Church has been without the bible in its original language for long periods of time in its history and therefore, inspiration would not be jeopardized.

- **Question 3: How does the lecture reconcile the different accounts in early traditions about the order in which the Gospels were written?**
- The lecture notes the varying traditions regarding the order of the Gospels. Clement of Alexandria places Matthew and Luke before Mark due to their genealogies. The lecture suggests resolving apparent contradictions in the tradition regarding the date of Mark and the time of writing relative to Luke as the term 'departure' may refer to Peter and Paul leaving Rome alive rather than their death, and Mark may have arrived first in the west while Luke arrived first in the east.
- **Question 4: What is the significance of Papias's testimony regarding the authorship of Mark, and how does it connect Mark's Gospel to Peter?**
- Papias's testimony is crucial because it identifies Mark as the "interpreter" of Peter, accurately recording Peter's teachings and recollections. While Mark may not have personally followed Jesus, he meticulously documented Peter's experiences. This suggests that Mark's Gospel is essentially Peter's preaching put into written form.
- **Question 5: What is the proposed dating for each of the Synoptic Gospels, and what factors influence these dates?**
- The proposed dates are: Matthew (early 40s to mid-50s AD, with a possible Greek edition in the 60s), Luke (late 50s AD), and Mark (early to mid-60s AD). These dates are influenced by internal evidence, external traditions, and the proposed solutions to the Synoptic Problem. Liberal scholars tend to date the Gospels later, after 70 AD, to post-date Jesus's predictions of the Temple's destruction.
- **Question 6: How does the date of Acts influence the dating of Luke's Gospel?**
- Since Acts 1:1 refers to a "previous account" addressed to Theophilus, Luke's Gospel must have been written before Acts. Given that Acts seems to end abruptly with Paul's first Roman imprisonment around 63-64 AD, without mentioning the outcome of his imprisonment or the Neronian persecution, it is argued that Acts was likely written around that time. This places Luke's Gospel in the late 50s AD, providing Luke had an opportunity to research and write the Gospel during Paul's two-year imprisonment in Caesarea.

- **Question 7: What is the "Synoptic Problem," and how does the dating of the Gospels relate to it?**
- The Synoptic Problem refers to the question of how to account for the similarities and differences between the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). The dating of the Gospels is crucial to this problem because it influences which Gospel is considered to be the earliest and therefore a possible source for the others. Different views on the Synoptic Problem (e.g., the two-document theory) often lead to different proposals for the dating of the Gospels.
- **Question 8: The lecture mentions internal and external evidence for authorship and dating. What are examples of each, and why are both types important?**
- Internal evidence refers to clues within the texts themselves. Examples for authorship include Matthew's self-identification as a tax collector, Mark's vivid details that seem to reflect Peter's personality, and Luke's medical vocabulary. Examples for dating include references to "to this day" which suggest a lapse in time.
- External evidence refers to information from outside the Gospels. Examples for authorship include the testimonies of early church fathers like Papias and Irenaeus, and the titles ascribed to the gospels by the early church. Examples for dating include early manuscripts like the Muratorian Canon.
- Both types of evidence are important because they provide complementary perspectives. Internal evidence helps to understand the authors' perspectives and the historical context. External evidence provides independent confirmation from other sources.