

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

COMPARISONS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
PORTRAITS OF JESUS	The Prophesied King	The Obedient Servant	The Perfect Man	The Divine Son
PROMINENT WORDS	"fulfilled"	"straightway"	"Son of man"	"believe"
CULTURES OF THE ORIGINAL READERS	Jews (Jesus, Son of Abraham)	Romans (Action: no genealogy)	Greeks (Jesus, Son of Adam)	World (Jesus, Son of God)
OUTLOOK AND STYLE OF THE WRITERS	Teacher	Preacher	Litterateur	Theologian
OUTSTANDING SECTIONS	Sermons	Miracles	Parables	Doctrines
PROMINENT IDEAS	Law	Power	Grace	Glory
BROAD DIVISION	<p>"SYNOPTIC GOSPELS" —stressing the humanity of Christ, from the outward, earthly side</p>			<p>"FOURTH GOSPEL" —stressing the deity of Christ</p>

THE FOUR GOSPELS

A study of the four gospels will immediately reveal that they fall into two groups. The first three form one group called the Synopics, while the fourth stands alone. A brief chart, which is the result of Bishop Westcott's study, indicates the reason for this division. In it, he points out the material, both peculiar and common, to the Four Gospels:

	<u>Peculiar</u>	<u>Common</u>
Matthew.....	42%	58%
Mark.....	7%	93%
Luke.....	59%	41%
John.....	92%	8%

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THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

The Synoptics derive their name from the Greek word, "synoptikos," which means "seeing the whole together", taking a comprehensive view. Although the resemblances in these books have bound them together as a unit, yet the very marked differences among them have raised problems as to their origin, sources, reliability, and necessity for having three at all. This problem, seemingly, increases when we learn that "not only the subject-matter and the vocabulary (differes) but also the order in which the materials are introduced."

Why three gospels with so much material common to all, and at the same time so much peculiar to each? A writer in the I. S. B. E. says that "no more complex problem ever was set to literary criticism..." Many solutions have been proposed, but few real conclusions have been reached by critics.

THE SOLUTION

This avowedly "complex problem" should be no problem at all the Spirit-taught believer. If we believe that "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God," we immediately have a reason for the differences: They are there, because God wanted the record given in just that manner and with just such differences. The solution lies in not trying to harmonize the differences, but in understanding the differences as they served the purpose of each Spirit-moved writer.

THE PURPOSE OF THE WRITERS

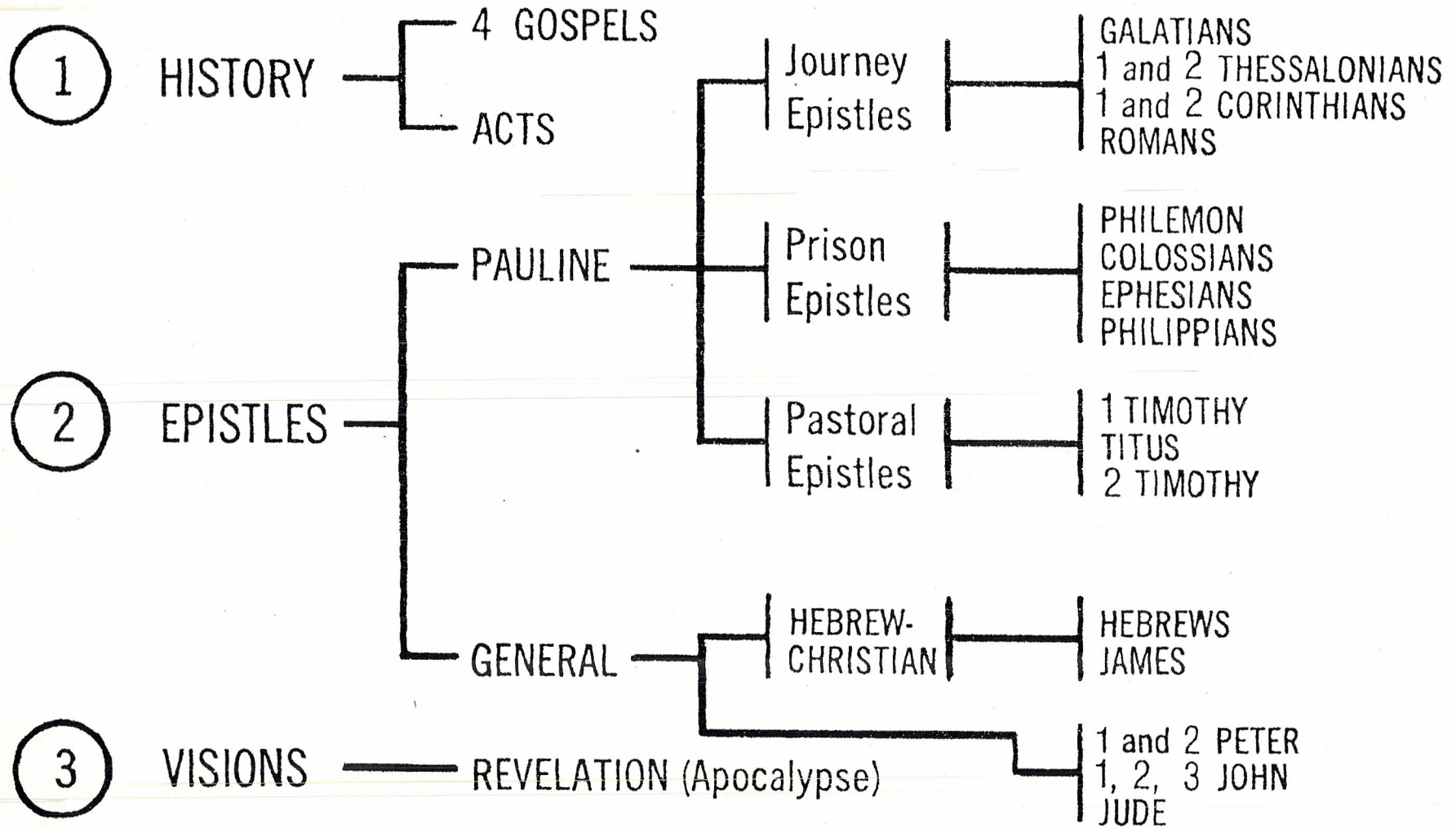
The purpose was to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ in the peculiar way in which God led them to do it. None claimed to write a complete biography, but rather they each did their part to reveal "a complete Personality." C.I. Scofield has said "that we may not, through them know everything that He did, but we may know the Doer... The evangelists never describe Christ--they set Him forth. They tell us almost nothing of what they thought about Him, they let Him speak and act for Himself."

THE PLAN OF THE WRITERS

The plan which the Gospel writers followed is only one illustration of the great system and design that is everywhere evident in Scripture. Here we must include the Gospel of John for a complete record of the plan.

We further see a plan in the progress of their teaching, for Matthew closes with the Resurrection; Mark closes with the Ascension; Luke closes with the promise of the Spirit; and John closes with Christ breathing the Spirit upon His disciples and speaking of His second coming.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



MAIN SUBJECTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

