The
BIBLE
Book by Book
Matthew—Galatians
G. Michael Cocoros
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INTRODUCTION

In the Sunday evening services at the Church of the Open Door, I preached through the Bible one book per evening. In each message I covered the same 5 points: Author, Recipients, Subject, Structure and Purpose. These messages were later edited for release on our daily broadcast called THE OPEN DOOR. This booklet was prepared to help radio listeners study with us on that program.

Volume 5 contains the notes covering the books of Matthew through Galatians. The other books of the Bible are in six other volumes.

The messages, as originally preached at the Church of the Open Door, are available on cassette tapes in convenient albums. Or, you may order individual tapes if you desire. There is an Order Form at the back of this booklet for your convenience which will give you complete information on how to order.

It is my desire that these messages will give you an introduction to the basics of each book of the Bible, and you will then be able to read, study and apply your Bible more intelligently.

--- G. Michael Cocoris
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MATTHEW

Matthew has been called "the most important book in Christendom--the most important book that has ever been written."

I. Author.

Nowhere in the first Gospel is Matthew identified as the author, but the early writers of the church who discuss its authorship credit it to him. When scholars today comment on this early tradition they use words like "undisputed" (Tenney), "uniform" (Boa), "universal" (Luck), "unanimously" (Thiessen).

There are logical arguments which support this tradition. For one thing, Matthew was not conspicuous among the apostles and it would be strange for tradition to assign the Gospel to him if he did not write it. Furthermore, the freedom in the arrangement of great discourses is much more conceivable in the case of an apostle who felt confident of his recollections of events and sayings than a young contemporary who depended upon others for information.

An internal revenue agent wrote a best-seller!

There are two critical questions that need to be addressed.

A. Language.

Was Matthew originally written in Aramaic? Or, is our present Greek...
Gospel the original?

Papias (about 135 A.D.) is quoted by Eusebius as saying that Matthew composed the logia in Hebrew (Aramaic, not Greek). That statement has been interpreted at least five different ways:

(1) Papias was wrong; Matthew wrote in Greek.

But as Toussaint says, "Because the idea of a Hebrew Gospel written by Matthew is confirmed by many of the fathers, a statement of Papias cannot be considered inaccurate. Irenaeus, who died about 155 A.D., confirms this concept." 1

(2) Papias was right; but Matthew wrote a work which contains only the discourses of Christ.

The word "logia" does mean "sayings," but in the four places in which it is used in the New Testament it means "oracles" referring to God's message to man, whether in the form of narrative, discourse, etc. There is nothing in Papias' writings to indicate that he used the word in any other way.

(3) Papias was right, but Matthew later translated his Gospel into Greek.

Walvoord explains that the problem with this view is that Matthew is not a translation, as there are none of the characteristics of a translated work. For instance, the gospel of Matthew uses Aramaic terms which are left without translation. This would be intelligible to Jewish Christians, but if Matthew was translated from Aramaic into Greek for the benefit of Gentile Christians these terms would require an explanation. 2

(4) Papias was right and someone else translated it.

Thiessen has said, "Josephus wrote his Wars of the Jews in Aramaic and secured the help of Greek writers in freely reproducing and improving it in the Greek language. The Greek edition alone has come down to us. We believe that in the same manner, though perhaps without the assistance of Greek writers, Matthew reproduced his Gospel in Greek." 3

I prefer this view.

B. Dependence.

Was the Gospel of Matthew dependent of Mark?

- 2 -
Liberals have pointed out that 92% of Mark appears in Matthew (606 of 661 verses). They then speculate that Matthew is based on Mark and on an unknown document they call "Q" (Q comes from the German word Quelle which means "source"). Did Matthew depend on Mark and on Q when he wrote his Gospel?

No! Matthew was an apostle; Mark was not. Why should an eyewitness who personally experienced life with Christ depend on second-hand information? That simply does not make sense.

Walvoord points out that the early fathers are quite clear in their testimony that Matthew was the first Gospel to be written and was followed in order by Mark, Luke and John (or Luke, Mark, John). Liberals argue that Mark was first.

I I. Recipients.

A. Their date.

None of the Gospels are easy to date. In the case of Matthew, suggestions range from 40-140 A.D.

Often, especially among the critics, the discussion goes like this: Of the 1,068 verses in Matthew, approximately 500 are common to Mark. Something similar can be said about Luke. Therefore, Mark wrote first and Matthew and Luke depended on him. Those following this line of thought generally date Matthew somewhere from 60-70 A.D. or later. Thiesen has said, 'In postulating the priority of Mark, 'a short Gospel for Gentiles as Chapman points out, 'containing only one sermon and short fragments of teaching, was set up as the origin of a Gospel addressed to Jews.' He goes on to say: 'This topsy-turvy theory seems to suggest that the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles and later carried to the Jews, who propagated at Rome and then in Palestine.' This criticism is true, and it reminds us that we must go back to the historical development of the Church and its growing needs for the origin of the Gospels.'

The reasoning of the critics begins at the wrong place and builds on an erroneous foundation. It is more reasonable to begin by pointing out that Matthew is the Jewish Gospel (to a Jewish audience). He quotes or alludes to the Old Testament more frequently than any other evangelist. He also makes use of Hebrew parallelisms, and his thought and outlook are Hebraistic.

The Gospel was to the Jew first; the church was born in Jerusalem and, in the first years, grew only in Jerusalem and Judea. Beginning with 3,000, it shortly increased to 5,000 (Acts 4:4). Later, multitudes were added to the Lord (Acts 5:14). And then, the number of disciples was multiplying (Acts 6:1). Lawson asks; 'Would it be too much to say that there were 20,000 Jews in Jerusalem who
believed that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, King, Priest and Prophet.

The book of Acts continues the story. Opposition soon developed. Peter and John were arrested. Stephen was killed. Persecution was such that "they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1,2). These circumstances suggest a need for a life of Christ which would encourage and confirm these persecuted Jewish believers, and at the same time, refute their opponents and prove to both that the Gospel was not a break with or a contradiction to the teachings of the Old Testament, but a fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham.

Matthew is just such a work. Tradition says that after 15 years of preaching in Palestine, Matthew left for foreign nations, but left behind his Hebrew (Aramaic) Gospel as a kind of compensation for his absence. This would give a date of roughly 45 A.D. for the Aramaic Gospel of Matthew. It is the Aramaic Gospel that Papias refers to.

On the other hand, the Gospel of Matthew was written before 70 A.D. That is obvious because Matthew refers to Jerusalem as "the Holy City" as though it were still standing (4:5; 27:53). He does not mention its destruction, but does refer to Jewish customs continuing "to this day" as though they were uninterrupted and un-

changed (27:8, 28:15).

Thus, Matthew was probably written from Syria, Antioch or Palestine about 45-50 A.D. Walvoord says that it was possibly written as early as 44 A.D. during the persecution of Agrippa I.

B. Their description.

It is immediately obvious that Matthew wrote to Jews and no doubt Jewish believers. He quotes or alludes to the Old Testament more frequently than any other Gospel writer, and he writes to demonstrate that Jesus was the Old Testament Messiah (cf. the Subject below).

There are many indications that these Jewish believers were undergoing persecution (cf. the Purpose).

III. Subject.

The subject of Matthew is Jesus Christ as Messiah, King of Israel. There are many indications of this throughout the book.

(1) The opening genealogy announces: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham."

In the opening verse He is called, "the Son of David," who in turn is described as David the King in verse 6. Joseph, the Lord's legal father, is addressed by an angel as "Joseph, the Son of David" in 1:20.
The magi come seeking Him as one born "King of the Jews" (2:2).

The prophecy of Micah 5:2 predicting that the great ruler of Israel would be born in Bethlehem is applied to Him (2:6).

He is repeatedly addressed (or obliquely referred to) as the Son of David (cf. 9:27; 12:23 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9,15; 22:45).

Thiessen says he is called the Son of David nine times (cf. 3 in Mark, 3 in Luke and none in John).

There are many references to Christ's fulfillment of specific prophecies.

There are many references to the Kingdom in this book.

In Greek, the term "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs 33 times and the "Kingdom of God" four times.

He is called the King. Matthew 21:5--"Behold your King is coming" Matthew 27:37--"This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Other indications could be listed. For example, in Luke, a certain man made a great supper and had two sons. In Matthew, it was a certain King.

I. Preparation of the King. 1:1-7:29
   A. His Person. 1:1-2:23
   B. His Preparation. 3:1-4:11
   C. His Principle. 4:12-7:29
II. Power of the King. 8:1-11:1
   A. His Miracles. 8:1-9:30
   B. His Mandate. 10:1-11:1
III. Opposition to the King. 11:2-13:53
   A. The Evidence of Rejection. 11:2-30
   B. The Illustration of Opposition. 12:1-58
   C. The Adaptation because of Opposition. 13:1-53
IV. Reaction of the King. 13:54-19:2
   A. Withdrawal. 13:54-16:12
   B. Instruction. 16:13-19:2
V. Rejection of the King. 19:3-26:1
A. Instruction. 19:3-20:34
B. Presentation to the Nation. 21:1-17
C. Rejection by the Nation. 21:18-22:46
D. Rejection by Christ. 23:1-39
E. Prediction by the King. 24:1-26:1
VI. Death and Resurrection of the King. 26:2-28:20
A. Crucifixion of the King. 26:2-27:66
B. Resurrection of the King. 28:1-20

V. Purpose.
A. To explain that since Jesus the Messiah/King, as proven by the Old Testament prophecies, was rejected by the nation of Israel, the Kingdom program was postponed and the church program was inaugurated.

Jewish Christians faced a dilemma concerning the person and work of Christ. The Jewish nation had expected a conquering prince who would set up a great Jewish kingdom. If Jesus were the Messiah, why was He rejected? What happened to the Kingdom? How does the entity, the church, fit into all of this? Was it the spiritual fulfillment of the Old Testament, or had God revoked the promises and covenants of the basis of Israel's rejection?

In short, they needed clarification concerning Christ's relationship to the Old Testament, the Kingdom and to His new purpose to the church.

Matthew meets this need by pointing out again and again that Jesus did fulfill the Old Testament prophecies and promises concerning the Messiah. Christ is the predicted Messiah/King of the Old Testament. He uses more Old Testament quotes and allusions (about 130) than any other book to show that Jesus fulfills the qualifications for Messiah.

But if He is the Messiah, where is the Kingdom? Where is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies to Israel. Matthew deals with the Kingdom issue. He refers to the Kingdom of heaven 33 times (that term is nowhere else in the New Testament). He first shows that the Jews rejected an earthly kingdom when they rejected their King (21:28-22:10,11,16-26). Then He shows that because Israel rejected the King, His Kingdom was postponed. The promises of Israel were not cancelled, they were yet to be fulfilled (19:29; 20:20-23; 23:39; 24:29-31; 25:31-46).

In the meantime, God has inaugurated an entirely new and previously unknown program, that is, the church. Matthew is the only Gospel in which the word "church" occurs. It appears three times (16:18; and twice in 18:17).

Because of the universal character of the church, Matthew also has an emphasis on Gentiles. This can be...
seen in many ways: In his mentioning two Gentile women in Christ's genealogy (1:5); in his story of the wise men (2:1-12); in his reproduction of the sayings that many from the east and west would sit down in the Kingdom of heaven (8:11-12); in his quoting the prophecy that Messiah would proclaim judgment to the Gentiles and that the Gentiles would hope in Him (12:18-21); "The field is the world" (13:38); and the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (28:19).

B. To encourage persecuted Jewish Christians in their faith.

One of the major messages of Matthew is: Christ was rejected, so His followers will be, too. Tidwell has pointed out that Matthew is a Gospel of gloom and despondency. He says,

"There are no songs of joy like those of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna and the Angels recorded in Luke. Nor do we see Jesus popular and wise at the age of twelve. Instead, we have His mother almost repudiated and left in disgrace by Joseph, and only saved by divine intervention. Jerusalem is in trouble. The male children are killed and mothers are weeping for them. The child Jesus is saved only by a flight to Egypt. His whole life after the return from Egypt is covered with oblivion and He is a despised Nazarene. The cross is one of desolation with no penitent thief nor sympathy from anyone, with His enemies reviling, smiting their breaths in passing by. Nor is their much optimism or expectation of success. The disciples are to be rejected and persecuted even as the their Lord; many are to be called, but few are chosen; only a few are to find the narrow way; many are to claim entrance into the Kingdom because they have prophesied in His name, but they will be denied.

Even Matthew himself is despised and rejected publican."

Conclusion:

Matthew presents Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel, who was rejected, who died and arose and then commissioned the church to make disciples among all nations.

Matthew significantly and strategically stands between the Old and New Testament. Ellisen says, "Matthew's presentation looks both backward and forward. It is not only prospective, looking to Christ's new program, but is uniquely retrospective, ever glancing backward to the Old Testament prophecies. It forms, therefore, an essential link between the Old and New Testaments, without which neither of the Testaments can be properly understood. He shows the solid relationship of Christ to the Old Testament prophecies.
and then builds the groundwork for the New Testament structure of the church. The book is thus pivotal in relating the two Testaments.  

1. Author.

As in the other Gospels, the author is not mentioned in the book by name. In the case of Mark, there are relatively few passages that give any hint concerning his interests and personality, to say nothing of his identity.

Church history, however, is different. There is early and unanimous evidence that John Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark. Papias writes that the apostle John said Mark wrote Peter's words. Justin Martyr refers to the Gospel as the memoirs of Peter.

II. The recipients.

A. Their date.

Mark was written before the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. (13:2). Beyond that, little is known. Even tradition disagrees as to whether it was written before or after the martyrdom of Peter. Thiessen says it was written immediately after in 67 or 68 A.D. Ellisen says that it was written before the death of Peter, since tradition holds that Peter sanctioned the composition for reading in the churches. (He dates Mark about 67 A.D.).
Clement of Alexandria says, "Mark was entreated by the Romans to record Peter's preaching. If that is the case, then the Gospel of Mark was probably written during his close association with Peter at Rome between 61 and 67 A.D. (cf. Col. 4:10).

B. Their description.

Mark clearly wrote for Roman readers.

1. It contains little emphasis on Jewish law and custom.

2. Latinisms are often used where Greek terms could have served (4:21; 6:27; 12:14,42; 15:15; 16:39).


4. The style is terse, clear, pointed.

5. In 15:21 he mentions Simon the Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus. If this is the same Rufus as the one mentioned in Romans 16:13, there is a strong indication that Roman Christians are being addressed here.

6. Antiquity is unanimous in affirming that Mark wrote to Roman readers.


III. Subject.

The subject of Mark is Jesus Christ as a servant. Several factors in the book indicate that.

1. It has no genealogy or account of His virgin birth, and no history of His childhood.

   A servant doesn't need a pedigree, but performance. The emphasis in Mark is on works, not words. There are only a few discourses, and only four of the 15 parables of Matthew are given.

2. Mark is a book of deeds.

   Jesus is pictured as a strenuous worker hastening from one task to another. The word "straightway" (i.e., "immediately") occurs 41 times in the Westcott-Hort Greek text. It is only used seven times in Matthew and only once in Luke. In Mark's Gospel, 14 of these are used of the personal activity of Christ as compared to two in Matthew and one in Luke.

   Tidwell puts it like this: "It (i.e., "straightway") indicates how with the speed of a racer he rushes along and hereby furnishes us with a breathless narrative which Ferrar says,
makes us "feel like the apostles," who, among the press of the people coming and going, were twice made to say they "had no leisure so much as to eat." It moves as the scenes of a moving picture show."

3. If the key word is "straightway," the key verse is 10:45. At least the dominant theme seems to be summarized in that verse.

Dominant theme is a good term to describe the subject. The major subject does indeed seem to be His servanthood, but that is not to say that other aspects of His person are ignored. For though Mark stresses the servant aspect of His ministry, He by no means is silent concerning Jesus as teacher. Indeed, teaching is part of His work. It is also to be noted that His discourses grew out of His work, not His works out of His discourses. While Mark stresses the servanthood of Christ, that does not mean that he neglects the Sonship of Christ (1:1).

IV. Structure.

Though Mark and Matthew cover much of the same ground, Mark is not nearly as neatly organized as Matthew. There is not a repeated phrase which conveniently divides the book. However, unlike Matthew, the Gospel of Mark is, in the main, chronological.

Apart from the part that it is basically chronological, the only other thing that can be said concerning his overall structure is that it is geographical. As Sweete says, "Even a hasty examination will show that the book deals with two great themes, the Ministry in Galilee (1:14-9:50), and the Last Week at Jerusalem (11:1-16:8)."

Still, the topic of servanthood seems to be present throughout. An outline that captures the topical and geographical aspects is best.

Introduction. 1:1-13

1. The Servant's ministry in Galilee. 1:14-9:50 (to minister)

II. The Servant's ministry in Judah. 10:1-52

III. The Servant's ministry in Jerusalem. 11:1-13:37 (to give His life)

Conclusion: The Servant's death and resurrection. 14-16

Key verse: 10:45: "To minister...to give His life."

V. Purpose.

A. To present Christ as the Son of God who came to serve and to suffer.

If the tradition that the Roman Christians requested that Mark record Peter's preaching concerning Christ is correct, then obviously one of the major purposes of Mark is simply to record the ministry of Christ. Of course, Peter's preaching, and thus Mark's record, presents Christ as the
Son of God who came to give His life in service and suffering.

B. To encourage Roman Christians in their service and suffering.

Why did the Roman Christians want Peter's preaching concerning the life of Christ? If Matthew wrote first, didn't they have his record? (Of course, there is the possibility that Matthew's Gospel had not been published in Rome, or for that matter, had not even been written yet). Whether or not they had Matthew's Gospel was not the issue. Peter's preaching spoke to them not only about Christ, but about them. Let me explain.

After five years of responsible rule (54-59 A.D.), Nero, the emperor of Rome, became the reckless despot, especially over the aristocracy. By heavy taxation on the estate of childless couples, false accusations followed by confiscation of wealth and invitations to suicide at public banquets, he made life a reign of terror for men of wealth.

Then in the summer 64 A.D., a disastrous fire swept through Rome. It began among the clustered shops near the Circus Maximus. But fanned by a strong wind it quickly spread to other wards of the city. After raging out of control for more than a week, it was brought under control only to break out a second time from the estate of Tigellinus, head of the Praetorian Guard. Of the fourteen wards of the city, three were reduced to ashes and rubble, and in seven others many of the oldest buildings and monuments were destroyed or seriously damaged. Only four wards were spared.

The rumors were that the fires were officially started. One ancient author reports that torches were thrown in the fire by men crying that they were acting under orders. Nero helped the homeless and injured. He levied taxes for relief, lowered the price of grain to provide food, cleared the slums, widened the streets, provided new parks and insisted that all new structures consist of fireproof material such as brick or stone. But when none of these measures stopped the rumors and resentment, a scapegoat had to be found. The Christians were then blamed for the fire.

Until this, relatively little attention had been given to the Christians by the government authorities. Their assemblies were no doubt indistinguishable from the vast number of religious societies and guilds found throughout Rome.

First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned. Dressed in wild animal skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight.
The Gospel of Mark spoke to the situation of the Christian community in Nero's Rome. Reduced to a catacomnic existence, they read of the Lord who was driven deep into the wilderness (1:12ff). The detail, recorded only by Mark, that in the wilderness Jesus was with the wild beasts (1:13) was filled with special significance for those called to enter the arena while they stood helpless in the presence of wild beasts. In Mark's Gospel they found nothing that they could suffer from Nero was alien to the experience of Jesus. Like them, He had been misrepresented to the people and falsely labeled (3:21-30). If they knew the experience of betrayal from within the circle of intimate friends, it was sobering to recollect that one of the twelve had been Judas Iscariot who had also betrayed Him (3:19).

Mark records that Jesus says, "and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the Word's sake, immediately they stumble" (4:17). While Jesus promised His followers "houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands", Mark notes that He added the qualification "with persecutions" (10:30). Christ spoke of cross bearing which Tacitus affirms was a literal reality for Mark's readers in Rome. Such had been the literal experience of Jesus preceded by a trial before a Roman magistrate which included scourging and the cruel mockery of the Roman guard (15:15-20). It was the threat of such punishment that could move a man to deny Jesus. The explicit reference to Peter meant that the way was open for restoration for one who had denied the Lord (14:66-72). Here is the basis for forgiveness for those who had denied that they were Christians when brought before the Tribunals of Rome. The situation of the Christians in Rome was too intensely critical for them not to read the Gospel in this way.

Conclusion:

Mark presents Jesus as the Son of God who came to serve and to suffer.

A servant gives his life away. That is what Christ did; that is what we are to do (Eph. 5:24; Phil 2:17).

1Thiessen, p.146.
2Ellisen, p.153.
3Tidwell, p.164.
LUKE

Matthew is the Jewish Gospel; Mark the Roman, Luke wrote to the Greeks.

I. Author.

The author of our third Gospel does not identify himself by name, but from the earliest times, Luke has been universally recognized as the author. Plummer says, "It is manifest that in all parts of the Christian world the Third Gospel had been recognized as authoritative before the middle of the second century, and that it was universally believed to be the work of St. Luke. No one speaks doubtfully on this point. The possibility of questioning its value is mentioned; but not the questioning of its authorship. In the literature of that period it would not be easy to find a stronger case." 11

The internal evidence supports that tradition. Colossians 4:14 calls Luke the 'beloved physician', which means that he was highly educated. The Gospel of Luke was written by a well educated man. Ranan called this "the most literary of the Gospels." His prologue (1:1-4) is the most classic piece of Greek in the New Testament. His content and vocabulary show he had some interest in a physician's viewpoint. The medical language in both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts demonstrates the writer's interest in sickness and the sick, which suggests, of course, the author was a physician.

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

No one knows for certain when the Gospel of Luke was written. It is certain that it was written before the book of Acts (Acts 1:1-3) which was written about 62 A.D. in Rome. Many conservative scholars have concluded that Luke wrote his Gospel about 60 A.D. toward the end of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment. For the two years while Paul was in prison, Luke had opportunity to interview eyewitnesses throughout Palestine.

B. Their description.

Luke addresses his first volume to "most excellent Theophilus" (1:3). The name Theophilus was common among both Jews and Gentiles. The epitaph "most excellent" was an official title (cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3: 26:25). Beyond that, we know nothing of him. He was no doubt a believer who needed instruction and confirmation.

Though it is not stated, the book was obviously written for others beyond Theophilus. Leon Morris says that the preface (i.e., 1:1-4) is one excellently rounded sentence in Greek which is right for a literary opening. Then he adds, "and a literary opening, of course, the author was a physician."
meant for circulation."

From the content we can see that it was written for Gentiles in general and for Greeks in particular. The genealogy of Christ is traced to Adam, not Abraham. Gentile words are used in place of Jewish terms, for example, "teacher" for "rabbi," "lawyer" for "scribe," etc. Jewish customs and geography are explained.

III. Subject.

The subject of Luke is Jesus Christ as the Son of Man. The perfect humanity of Christ is seen. Here is the ideal man. Luke does not minimize Christ's deity or redemptive suffering, but he does focus on the humanity of Christ who was the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God. A proper assessment of Christ must include both His divine and human natures.

The particulars paint the picture of Christ's humanity. Luke puts Christ in the context of history. The genealogy traces Christ's lineage to Adam (3:38). Luke alone records Christ's human growth and development (2:40, 51,52). He was subject to his parents (2:52). Throughout the book Christ is seen as having the feelings, sympathies and powers of a man.

IV. Structure.

There is a sense in which Matthew, Mark and Luke have the same structure. Each begins with Christ's temptation and baptism, and then they record Christ's great Galilean ministry. Of course, they all end in Jerusalem with the crucifixion and resurrection. (John is different. He begins with John the Baptist and most of his records center on Christ's activities in Jerusalem and the Upper Room.)

So the literary structure of Luke, like Matthew and Mark, is topical, yet geographical. There is no repeated phrase like Matthew. Luke, however, does have a repeated phrase in at least one section of his book. Matthew and Mark devote much material to the Galilean ministry and only a short space (two chapters in Matthew and one in Mark) for the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. In contrast, Luke spends ten chapters chronicling that trip, the longest part of his story (3:51-19:44). Seven times within this extended section Luke mentions something about the fact that Christ was headed "to Jerusalem" (cf. 9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28, 37).

B. An outline.

Preface. 1:1-4

I. The preparation for the Son of Man. 1:5-4:13
II. The Galilean ministry of the Son of Man. 4:14-9:50
III. The journey to Jerusalem. 9:51-19:20
IV. The Jerusalem ministry.
19:21–21:38

V. The passion and resurrection.
22:1–24:53

V. Purpose.

A. To confirm and verify the true record of the events in the life of Christ, especially to Gentile believers.

Luke 1:1–4 gives the purpose of the book. Luke wrote that Theophilus and other Gentile believers might "know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed." Tenney says, "The initial statement of Luke's preface declares that the Gospel was written to impart to its reader spiritual certainty concerning the things of which he had been orally instructed. The verb 'instructed' is generally used in the New Testament of information which is imparted formally rather than casually." Perhaps this included the stopping of false or spurious rumors.

In confirming the true facts about Christ, He is seen as the Son of God who became the Son of Man. Boa says, "He is the ideal Son of Man who identified with the sorrow and plight of sinful men in order to carry our sorrows and offer us the priceless gift of salvation. Jesus alone fulfills the Greek ideal of human perfection." The Greek ideal of perfect manliness differed from that of the Romans. The Romans felt that it was their mission to govern. The Greeks felt it theirs to educate, elevate and perfect man. The ideal to the Romans was military glory and governmental authority, but the Greek's ideal was wisdom and beauty.

Luke wanted to confirm the record to strengthen their faith, so he wrote about the divine man as the Savior of moral men. The perfect man died for imperfect men (cf. Luke 19:10).

B. To show that Christianity was not a political subversive sect.

The Gospel of Luke is volume one of a two-volume set. When we get to volume two (Acts), we shall see that Luke wrote it to defend Christianity from some political charges. Perhaps that is part of what is going on here.

He records Pilate's acknowledgment of Christ's innocence three times (23:4, 14, 22).

Conclusion:

Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man who came to seek and to save the lost in order to confirm the record and thus the faith of Gentile believers.

The Gospel of John has been praised from ancient times to the present.

Origen says, "The Gospel of John is the consummation of the Gospels as the Gospels are of the Scriptures."

Jerome says, "John excels in the depth of divine mysteries."

A.T. Pierson: "It touches the heart of Christ. If Matthew corresponds to the court of the priests and Luke to the court of the Gentiles, John leads us past the veil into the Holiest of Holies."

A.T. Robertson: "The most beautiful of all books."

Robert Lee says, "The deepest and most profound of all inspired writings."

Erdman says, "The fourth Gospel is the most familiar and the best loved book in the Bible. It is probably the most important document in all the literature of the world."

1. Author.

The author of the fourth Gospel identifies himself, but not by name. In John 21:19-24 he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. So the question is, who was that disciple whom Jesus loved?

The disciple whom Jesus loved (that phrase occurs five times in John; cf. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20) had to have been one of the apostles because 21:20 says that he also was the one who was
leaning on Jesus' breast at supper. That's a reference to the Last Supper in the upper room where only the apostles were present. Now, which apostle was it?

The 'one whom Jesus loved' was part of the inner circle, which consisted of Peter, James and John (cf. Matt. 10:2; 17:1; Gal. 2:9). The one whom Jesus loved cannot be Peter. In the upper room Peter asked the one whom Jesus loved, the one who was leaning on Jesus' breast, a question. Only James and John are left. James was martyred too early to be the author (Acts 12:1-2). So the apostle John must be the author of the fourth Gospel. (John the apostle is never called by name in this book (cf. 1:40; 13:23; 21:20,24) whereas he is in the other Gospels.

That conclusion is confirmed by tradition. Polycarp was a disciple of John who himself had a disciple named Irenaeus (about 185 A.D.). In his book against heresies he says, "John wrote a Gospel." Others also ascribe the book to John.

III. Recipients.

A. Their date.

Conservative scholars usually date John between 85 and 95 A.D. Their basic reason for doing this is that there is no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, they reason that the destruction of Jerusalem must have occurred a good many years before he wrote.

A pre-70 A.D. date has been suggested, however, on the basis of John 5:2, which may indicate that Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed. That verse says, "Which is... [cf. the present tense] in Jerusalem."

B. Their description.

There is an early and consistent tradition that John wrote from Ephesus at the request of the church there for a summary of his oral teachings on the life of Christ.

Eusebius refers to a current opinion that John wrote after the other Evangelists... in order to supply an account of the early period of the Lord's ministry which they omitted."

No particular readers are specified. The book has the whole world in view (cf. 1:9-12; 3:16, 17-18; 21:23). The word 'world' occurs 78 times in the book.

III. Subject.

The subject of the Gospel of John is Jesus Christ presented as the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. All four Gospels have as their subject Jesus Christ, but they all present a different aspect of His person.
Matthew - Messiah, King of Israel.
Mark - Servant.
John - Son of God, Messiah of Israel.

IV. Structure.

The basic structure of John is chronological and geographical. It traces the ministry of Christ from its beginning to its end, at His death, resurrection and appearances.

Beyond that it can be divided into His public and private ministries. From these ministries, John chooses "witnesses" to testify to the deity and Messiahship of Jesus.

Prologue. 1:1-18

I. Witnesses during His public ministry. 1:19-12:50
A. Witnesses during the call and confirmation of the disciples. 1:19-2:11
B. Witnesses during the commencement of His ministry. 2:12-4:54
C. Witnesses during the controversy. 5:1-6:71
D. Witnesses during the conflict. 7:1-10:42
E. Witnesses during the climax. 11:1-12:50

III. Witnesses during His private ministry. 13:1-17:26
A. Witness of the footwashing. 13:1-30
B. Witness of His announced departure. 13:31-14:41
C. Witness of the discourse on relationships. 15:1-16:6
D. Witness of the discourse of why He was leaving. 16:7-33
E. Witness of the Lord's prayer. 17:1-26

III. Witness during the Passion. 18:1-20:31
A. Witnesses during the arrest and trial. 18:1-27
B. Witnesses during the trial before Pilate. 18:28-19:15
C. Witnesses during the crucifixion. 19:16-42
D. Witnesses during His appearance. 20:1-31

Epilogue. 21:1-25

V. Purpose.


A. To prove that Jesus is the Messiah/Son of God.

As Matthew wrote to Jewish Christians to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah, John writes to Gentiles to
show that He is the Son of God. The problem with that is that the Greeks and and the Romans of the day would have readily accepted Him as the Son of Zeus, or some other god (small g). Thus, John has to clarify. He is not announcing the incarnation of a semi-human Greek god. Rather, the true and living God, the God of creation, the God of the Jewish Old Testament with all of His sovereignty and power is the one who becomes the unimpressive figure of a common carpenter. So John adds the word "Messiah." 

B. To provoke faith.

John is not writing to entertain or just to enlighten. He is writing to persuade. He does not want to just communicate, his aim is to convince.

C. To produce eternal life.

The ultimate goal is life--eternal life. That's God's kind of life.

Conclusion:

John presents Jesus as the Messiah/Son of God so that his readers will believe and have eternal life.


ACTS

Acts provides the history of Christianity from the ascension of Christ to Paul's imprisonment in Rome and thus gives the background of Paul and his ministry.

1. Author.

The author's name is not mentioned anywhere in the book, but the first verse refers to the former treatise concerning the words and works of Christ which he wrote and sent to Theophilus. Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus; therefore, he must be the author of Acts.

Internal evidence supports that. The writer's interest in sickness and the sick, as well as medical language, suggests the author was a physician. Tradition ascribes the book to Luke.

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

Luke abruptly ends with Paul awaiting trial in Rome. That must mean that Acts was completed prior to Paul's trial. If it was written after that event, why didn't Luke mention the outcome? Failure to record the resolution of Paul's case seems inexcusable except on the assumption that the book was written before the decision was reached. Since Luke recorded the death of James and of Stephen, it would be strange, indeed, if he cut off his narrative...
without telling of the fate of the man whose story he had been narrating in some detail through more than half of his account. Furthermore, Acts gives no hint of the persecution under Nero which occurred in 64 A.D., Paul's death in 68 A.D., or the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. So since Paul came to Rome, about 60 A.D. and had been there for two years when Acts closes, the book can confidently be dated at 62 A.D.

B. Their description.

Acts was written to Theophilus, a Gentile government official who was also a Christian. Yet this is not just a personal letter to a penpal, it is a formal treatise intended for publication.

III. Subject.

The subject of Acts is the continuing work of Jesus Christ by the person of the Holy Spirit through several of the apostles, namely Peter and Paul (cf. the 'and' in 1:1). Acts records the spread of Christianity under the direction of God from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world through Peter and Paul.

IV. Structure.

There are two major ways to view the structure of Acts. One is geographical and the other is biographical.

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Geographically, Acts 1:8 spells out the structure of the book.

- Jerusalem, 1-7
- Judea/Samaria, 8-12
- Uttermost parts, 13-28

Acts 1-7 takes place exclusively in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1 specifically says they were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judah and Samaria. Then, beginning in chapter 13, Paul commences his missionary journeys to the regions beyond.

Many have pointed out that there is a deliberate structuring of the material around Peter and Paul.

- The acts of Peter, 1-12
- The acts of Paul, 13-28
V. Purpose.

A. Historical.

The aim of Acts is to chronicle the spread of work inaugurated by Jesus which He continued by the Holy Spirit through the apostles from Jerusalem to Rome. This includes several facets.

There was a need for accurate authoritative information concerning the activities of the leading figures like Peter and Paul, and even John and James. God witnessed through them “both with signs and wonders, and with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His will?” (Heb. 2:4). Thus, the Christian church was authenticated and connected with the work of the risen and ascended Christ. These key leaders were united and in agreement concerning the growth and spread of Christianity.

The other feature included in this purpose was the need to show that the Christian movement was one whether the believers were Jewish, proselyte, Samaritans, Gentiles or former followers of John the Baptist. It was especially necessary to show that Jews and Gentiles were one in the church.

B. Polemical.

The other purpose of Acts was the defense of Paul. Paul’s authority was vindicated as it was demonstrated that he did everything Peter did. His experiences and missionary labors, and especially his arrest and imprisonment, must be seen in the right light. Was he a traitor to his people and an apostate from the law, an imposter who deserved all the opposition and persecution which he received? Was he an insurrectionist, or an instrument in the hand of God?

Conclusion:

Luke wrote to Theophilus to inform him of the continuing work of Jesus Christ by the person of the Holy Spirit through the apostles from Jerusalem and the Jews to Rome and the Gentiles. In short, God used Peter and Paul to spread the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.
Great, grand and even glorious things have been said about the book of Romans.

Coldridge: "The profoundest piece of writing in existence."

Luther: "The chief book of the New Testament. It deserves to be known by heart, word for word, by every Christian."

Findlay: "For the purposes of systematic theology, it is the most important book in the Bible. More than any other, it has determined the course of Christian thought."

Calvin: "It opened the door to all the treasures in the Scripture."

1. Author.

Romans 1:1 says Paul was the author. The author not only calls himself Paul (1:1), but he describes himself in such a way as can only mean the apostle Paul.

Tradition says Paul wrote Romans. Thiessen records, "From Ignatius onward the references to Romans are full and complete in all the Church writers; it is uniformly recognized as by Paul and as canonical."

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

Romans was written to Roman believers (1:7). No one knows when the church was founded, or for that matter by whom. When Paul wrote this epistle he had not personally visited Rome, though he had desired to for some time (1:9-13; 15:22-29).

From the Corinthian letters, the content of Romans, and a comment in Acts it is evident that Paul wrote Romans from Corinth on his third missionary journey. When Paul wrote the Corinthian epistles, the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem was being accumulated (1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9). By the time Romans is written, that task has been completed and Paul is about to depart to Jerusalem to deliver it (Rom. 15:25-26). Thus, Romans was written after 2 Corinthians.

So Paul is ready to go to Jerusalem (cf. "But now I go unto Jerusalem"—15:25—implying that he had planned to sail for Palestine directly from Corinth, and Phoebe was about to leave for Rome—16:1, 2. Phoebe was presumably the bearer of the letter). Since all the navigation on the Mediterranean Sea ceased after November 11, and was not resumed again until March 10, Romans was likely written before March 10.
But a plot by the Jews changed his plans. Instead of taking a ship from Corinth, he went by way of Macedonia (Acts 20:3). Romans, therefore, seems to have been written before the discovery of the plot. Paul left for Jerusalem from Philippi immediately after the Easter season (Acts 20:6), but Romans was written from Corinth first (cf. Acts 16:23, which says that Gaius was his host, with 1 Cor. 1:14 which says Gaius lived in Corinth. Cf. also Romans 16:13). All of this points to the time of writing as Paul's stay at Corinth for three months on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:2-3). February, 57 A.D. is probably an accurate date.

B. Their description.

Not much is said about the recipients. It is evident that one segment was Gentile (1:13; 11:13; 15:14, 16) and one segment was Jewish (2:17; 4:1; and ch. 16 which includes the names of several who were Jewish). Williams concludes, "In reading these passages, this writer is left with the impression that the majority of the church were Gentile, yet with a sizable Jewish minority, but that view is less than certain. It is not debatable, however, that the church included both Gentiles and Jews, whichever may have been in the majority." 2

III. Subject.

The subject of Romans is the righteousness of God. The word "justification" means "to declare righteous." Witmer has said, "In the simplest and most general terms it is 'the Gospel' (1:16). More specifically it is a righteousness from God which 'is revealed' in that Gospel and is understood and appropriated 'by faith from first to last' (1:17)." 3

IV. Structure.

A. The literary structure.

On the surface, it does not appear that any internal problem was the occasion of the epistle. However, there is some indication that the believers at Rome needed to be exhorted to live in harmony (see Purpose below).
B. An outline.

Salutation. 1:1-7
Thanksgiving and Prayer. 1:8-17

I. Righteousness needed. 1:18-3:20
A. The Gentiles are under condemnation. 1:18-32
B. The Jews are under condemnation. 2:1-3:8
C. Conclusion: All are condemned. 3:9-20

II. Righteousness imputed. 3:21-5:21
A. Justification by faith explained. 3:21-31
B. Justification by faith illustrated. 4:1-25
C. Justification by faith enjoyed. 5:1-11
D. Conclusion: All can be declared and made righteous. 5:12-21

III. Righteousness imparted. 6:1-8:39
A. Objection #1. 6:1-14
B. Objection #2. 6:15-7:6
C. Objection #3. 7:7-25
D. The way of sanctification. 8:1-39

IV. Righteousness vindicated. 9:1-11:36
A. Israel past: election. 9:1-29
B. Israel present: rejection. 9:30-10:21

V. Righteousness practiced. 12:1-15:13
A. In the church. 12:1-8
B. In society. 12:9-21
C. Toward government. 13:1-14
D. Toward other believers. 14:1-15:13
Paul's plans. 15:14-33
Personal greetings, admonition and greeting. 16:1-27

C. Israel future: salvation. 11:1-36

V. Purpose.

The purpose of Romans has received a great deal of attention. The problem with determining the purpose, simply put, is this: From the content it seems to have a general didactic aim, but all of Paul's other letters spring from some particular occasion and have a definite purpose. On the other hand, to assign a special practical purpose to the book seems to contradict the general character of its contents.

All in all, it seems best to conclude that there are three purposes for Romans.

A. Personal: to prepare for Paul's journey to Rome and beyond to Spain.

The immediate occasion for this letter was Paul's plan to visit Rome and beyond Rome to Spain (1:10-13; 15:23-25, esp. :24). He clearly
suggests that he expects assistance from them in his endeavor to carry the Gospel to Rome (15:24). Harrison says, "in the opening up of a new field, it will be of immense advantage to have the whole-hearted co-operation of the important Roman church, which may become to him in the West what Antioch has been to him in the East."

Harrison says, "11 In the opening up of a new field, it will be of immense advantage to have the whole-hearted co-operation of the important Roman church, which may become to him in the West what Antioch has been to him in the East."

But if that were the only purpose, why not send a brief note through Phoebe with a promise of more elaborate communication when he arrived? There was clearly more in mind.

B. Educational: to teach that a sovereign God justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies Jews and Gentiles by grace.

Romans is clearly Paul's most elaborate theological epistle. It is the longest surviving letter he wrote. Romans is Paul's comprehensive presentation of salvation by faith with all of its ramifications for Jews and Gentiles as well as for practical living. Witmer says, "... for Romans certainly is a very full and logical presentation of the Triune Godhead's plan of salvation for human beings from its beginning in man's condemnation and sin to its consummation in their sharing eternity in God's presence conformed to the image of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ."5

C. Pastoral: to exhort Jewish and Gentile believers to live in harmony.

Yet there is a purpose beyond all of that. The Roman church consisted of Gentiles and Jews. Evidently, there was some tension between them; if not specifically in the church at Rome, certainly in the church at large. Thus, all the way through, Paul deals with the Gentile/Jewish problem. Since there is only one God, He is the God of both the Jews and the Gentiles (3:29,30a). Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin (3:9). Both are saved by faith (3:30). Granted, the Jews have an advantage (3:1,2; 9:4,5), but God has temporarily halted His program for Israel since that nation through its official leaders and as a whole rejected Christ as the Messiah (cf. 9-11). This Jewish/Gentile undertone surfaces most clearly in chapters 14 and 15 where Paul deals with the practical aspects of the two living together in one body.

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Roman church to prepare for his journey to them to teach them that a sovereign God is righteous to justify, sanctify and glorify Jews and Gentiles by grace, and to exhort both Jews and Gentiles to live harmoniously with each other.

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1Thiessen, p.220.
1 CORINTHIANS

This epistle presents a striking picture of what Farrar calls the "turbulent, conceited, party-shaken, clever, restless, backsliding Church of Corinth." 1

I. Author.

Paul wrote I Corinthians. The first verse of the first chapter says so. Beyond that, the writer calls himself Paul a number of times (cf. 16:21 and also 1:12-17; 3:4; 6:22).

There is a strong and very early witness to the Pauline authorship of I Corinthians. In 95 A.D. Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthian church and cited Paul's epistle in regard to their continuing problem of division.

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

1 Corinthians 16:8 tells us Paul wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus. He was planning to stay there until Pentecost and then visit them after passing through Macedonia. From Corinth he was planning to go to Jerusalem with the offering which he was raising from the saints there (16:3,4). Thus, it is generally agreed that this epistle was written in the spring of the last year of Paul's ministry at Ephesus.

- 50 -
B. Their description.


While Paul was at Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he received reports from the household of Chloe concerning quarrels in the church of Corinth (1:11). The church sent a delegation of three men (16:17) who apparently brought a letter requesting Paul's opinion on several issues (7:1).

From all this it is obvious that:
1. there were factions among the believers at Corinth;
2. there was gross immorality in the church, even incest;
3. they were taking each other to court;
4. there were many practical matters that troubled them.

III. Subject.

The unifying subject of I Corinthians is something like "errors" (Luck), "correction of irregularities" (White). Perhaps the word that best describes the subject of I Corinthians is "disorders."

IV. Structure.

I Corinthians is an ancient letter. The standard format of an ancient letter consisted of a salutation, thanksgiving, prayer, body, personal greetings and benediction. I Corinthians follows that formula.

The body corresponds to the report from Chloe's household (1:10), the common report (1:5) and their letter (1:7).

An outline.

Salutation. 1:1-3
Thanksgiving. 1:4-9
I. Reaction to Chloe's report (divisions). 1:10-4:21
II. Response to common report (discipline). 5:1-6:20
   A. Incest. 5:1-13
   B. Lawsuits. 6:1-11
   C. Fornication. 6:12-20
III. Reply to Corinthian letter (difficulty). 7:1-16:24
   A. Marriage. 7:1-40
   B. Meats offered to idols. 8:1-11:1
   C. Veiling of women. 11:2-16
   D. The Lord's table. 11:17-34
   E. Spiritual gifts. 12:1-14:40
   F. The resurrection. 15:1-58
   G. The collection. 16:1-24
Personal plans. 16:5-12
Personal greetings, admonition and benediction. 16:13-24
V. Purpose.

A. To correct the disorders existing in the church.

A number of major disorders existed in the Corinthian church such as divisions, incest, lawsuits and fornication. Paul had heard about the divisions from the household of Chloe. The rest was commonly reported. He wrote the letter and the corrective response to the news of their disorders among them. It was designed to refute improper attitudes and conduct and to promote unity and purity.

The letter included a correction of the misunderstanding from a previous letter (5:9). Paul also intended to teach a doctrine rejected by some (cf. 1 Cor. 15).

B. To answer questions they had submitted to him.

The Corinthians wrote Paul asking him a number of questions dealing with such things as marriage, meats offered to idols, the veiling of women, the Lord's table, spiritual gifts, the resurrection and the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. He methodically and systematically addresses such issues by instructing, rebuking, condemning and amending them.

Conclusion:

In response to a report from Chloe's household, rumors and a request from them, Paul wrote to the Corinthians to correct disorders and to answer their questions on a variety of subjects.

II Corinthians

II Corinthians has repeatedly been called Paul’s most personal epistle.

Hiebert says, "II Corinthians is the most autobiographical of all of Paul’s epistles. In it he bares his heart and life as in none of his other writings."

Thiessen puts it like this: "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is the most autobiographical of all of Paul’s Epistles. Findlay...points out that it is neither doctrinal nor practical in the strict sense of the term, but 'intensely personal'..."

Tidwell concurs: "It is the least systematic of all Paul’s epistles, is full of digressions in subject and difficult of analysis. It is not calm and clear and definite like I Corinthians, but abounds in emotions, showing mingled joy, grief and indignation. It is intensely personal, telling us of his vision of the third heaven (12:1-4) and of the thorn in the flesh (12:7-9) and many other personal matters so that from it we, therefore, learn more of his life and character than from any other source."


1. Author.

Like I Corinthians, II Corinthians begins by identifying the author as Paul (1:1). As a matter of fact, the author twice calls himself Paul (cf. also 2:1).

Tradition supports Pauline authorship. Clement of Rome, who quotes I Corinthians in 95 A.D., does not quote from II Corinthians, but Polycarp does. He quotes 4:14 and 8:21 in his epistle to the Philippians. Polycarp lived about 150 A.D. Other early authors quote II Corinthians.

11. Recipients.

A. Their date.

To determine the date of II Corinthians, one must start with the date of I Corinthians. Paul wrote I Corinthians during the last year of his ministry at Ephesus on his third missionary journey which was probably in the early spring of 56 A.D. Now from both I and II Corinthians, it is evident that several things happened between the writing of these letters (e.g., several visits and even another letter).

Thiessen says, "It was apparently written shortly after..."
I Corinthians. Seven or eight months would suffice for all the events between the two epistles to take place. Thus, the date of II Corinthians is probably the fall of 56 A.D.

B. Their description.

It is immediately obvious from I Corinthians that the church at Corinth had a number of disorders. Paul had written at least two letters to correct these problems (i.e., the letter mentioned in I Corinthians 5:9 and our I Corinthians).

At the end of I Corinthians Paul says he is anticipating sending Timothy to them (I Corinthians 16:10-11). It is reasonable to assume that Timothy made that trip. If he had not, an explanation and apology would be in II Corinthians. Paul felt it necessary to defend his change of plans in visiting Corinth to answer the charge of fickleness. Thus, if the expected visit of Timothy had not taken place, Paul would have had to explain. Timothy, no doubt, returned with disappointing news concerning the situation at Corinth. Boa says that at this point Paul made a "brief and painful visit to Corinth" not recorded in Acts. (cf. II Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2).5

When Paul returned to Ephesus, he wrote a severe letter sending it to them by Titus (2:3,4,9; 7:8-12). N.B.: This was III Corinthians making out II Corinthians IV Corinthians.

Some have held that our I Corinthians was this letter, but Paul could not have regretted writing anything found in that epistle. Others have said that that letter is II Corinthians 10-13, but Bernard has "successfully disproved this theory and shown that the Epistle is a unity." Besides, as A.T. Robertson points out, could such an interpolation have taken place without leaving so much as a ripple upon the stream of textual traditions?

Paul anxiously awaited the return of Titus and his report concerning the effects of his last letter. Meanwhile, serious difficulties arose at Ephesus so he left ahead of schedule (Acts 20:1). He stopped at Troas and found an opportunity for the Gospel (II Cor. 2:12) and for an offering (8:1-5). Since he did not find Titus and since he was still eager to hear about the Corinthians, he hastened on to Macedonia (II Cor. 2:13). Thiessen says, "the superscription of [II Corinthians ] in manuscript B and in the Peshitta, Markelian, Syriac and Coptic versions, saying that the city was Philippi, is certainly early and may be correct." There, Paul found Titus.

Titus gave him the report which, on the whole, was encouraging (II Cor. 2:14; 7:5-7). The majority had been won back to Paul and had ministered severe punishment to the offender (2:5-11), but there was still a rebellious minority (10-13). Paul's rejoicing over the repentance of the
majority, his concern over the collection and grief over the continual opposition of the minority evoked this letter.

III. Subject.

The content of II Corinthians is diverse. In the first seven chapters, Paul discusses the ministry. Then he discusses money, more specifically, the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, and then he begins to defend himself.

Robert Lee says, "It is almost impossible to analyse this letter, as it is the least systematic of Paul's writings. It resembles an African river. For a time it flows smoothly on, and one is hopeful of a satisfactory analysis, then suddenly there comes a mighty cataract and a terrific upheaval, when the great depths of his heart are broken up." 8

In this, II Corinthians is vastly different from I Corinthians:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Corinthians</th>
<th>II Corinthians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>systematic</td>
<td>not systematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective and practical</td>
<td>subjective and personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives insight into the character and condition of the church</td>
<td>gives insight into the character of Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliberate</td>
<td>impasioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warns against pagan influences</td>
<td>warns against Judaism</td>
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</table>

The subject of II Corinthians is the true minister and ministry.
IV. Structure.

11 Corinthians, like its predecessor 1 Corinthians, is a letter. Thus, the literary structure is that of an ancient letter consisting of a salutation, thanksgiving (prayer), body, personal greeting and benediction.

Salutation. 1:1-2
Thanksgiving. 1:3-11

I. Consolation (comfort in the ministry). 1:12-7:16
A. The conduct of Paul. 1:12-2:11
B. The character of the ministry. 2:12-6:10
C. The appeal to the Corinthians. 6:11-7:16

II. Consolation (the ministry of giving). 8:1-9:15
A. Arrangements for a prepared gift. 8:1-9:5
B. Arguments for a generous gift. 9:6-15

III. Vindication (vindication of Paul's ministry). 10:1-13:10
A. Readiness to correct. 10:1-12:18
B. Reluctance to correct. 12:19-13:10

Personal greetings, admonition and benediction. 13:11-14

V. Purpose.

A. The minor purposes.

There are several minor purposes Paul had in mind when he wrote this epistle. For one thing, he wanted to offer to the church some needed instruction regarding the penitent offender (11 Cor. 2:5-11). There is a debate as to who this person was. He was probably the fellow mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5 rather than someone else.

A second minor matter concerned further instruction regarding the offering they were collecting for the poor saints in Jerusalem (9:1-5). He also says he writes because he wants to show his care for them (7:12).

B. The major purpose.

While there are clearly several minor aims, there is no doubt that the major motive and purpose was to defend and vindicate his apostolic authority.

Paul's opponents had made a three-fold assault on him. They attacked his person (10:10; 11:6), his character (1:11-17; 12:16-19) and his teaching (2:17; 11:4). Paul, of course, answers each of these charges on his person (10:7; 13:4), on his character (4:1-2; 1:15-24; 12:14-18; 7:2; 5:13).
Scroggie summarized the data like this: 'He was accused of fickleness (1:17,18,23), of pride and boasting (3:1; 5:12), of obscurity in preaching (4:3), of weakness (10:10), of rudeness of speech (11:6), of being contemptible in person (4:7-10; 6:4-10; 10:10; 12:7-10), of being dishonest (12:16-19), of being hardly sound of mind (5:13; 11:16-19; 12:6), and of being no apostle (11:5; 12:12), and this letter is largely in answer to these charges.'

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Corinthians to give them some further instruction, to demonstrate his care and concern for them, and to vindicate his authority.

2Thiessen, p. 206.
3Tidwell, p. 192.
4Thiessen, p. 209.
5Cf. Boa, p. 84.
6Thiessen, p. 208.
7Thiessen, p. 209.

9Scroggie, pp. 141-142.
GALATIANS

Galatians has been called:

"The Magna Carta of spiritual emancipation."

"The charter of Christian liberty."

"The most profound, condensed and powerful argument ever expressed in writing."

"There is nothing in ancient or modern language to be compared with this epistle. All the power of Paul's soul shines forth in its few pages. Broad and luminous views, keen logic, biting irony, everything that is most forcible in argument, vehement in indignation, ardent and tender in affection is found here combined and poured forth in a single strand forming a work of irresistible power." 1

Martin Luther said of it, "The epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. I have betrothed myself to it. It is my wife."

Galatians is the only Pauline epistle that is specifically addressed to a group of churches.

I. Author.

Twice the author of Galatians calls himself Paul (1:1; 5:2). Furthermore, there are numerous historical references in the book, all of which are capable of being harmonized with what is known concerning Paul from the book of Acts. Tradition uniformly supports the Pauline authorship.

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

The authorship and unity of Galatians may not be a problem, but the identity of the recipients is. Identity determines date.

There are two theories: (1) the North Galatia Theory; and (2) the South Galatia Theory. The problem is that the term "Galatia" was used in two different senses: (1) geographically of old Galatia in the northern part of the central plateau of Asia Minor where the Gauls lived; (2) politically of the Roman province of Galatia which was south of that central plateau. The question is, in which sense did Paul and Luke use the term?

The North Galatian Theory holds that Paul used the term in the geographical sense. According to this view, Paul did not visit Galatia on his first missionary journey. Rather, he visited them for the first time on his second missionary journey, evidently on his way to Troas (Acts 16:6), and on his third missionary journey he revisited them (Acts 18:23). He wrote Galatians, then, either in Ephesus (53-56 A.D.) or Macedonia (56 A.D.). The North Galatian Theory is supported by the church fathers, but that is..."
probably because of the exclusive use of the geographical sense of Galatia by the 2nd Century.

The South Galatian Theory contends that Paul used "Galatia" in the political sense as the Province of Rome. Thus, the churches he had in mind were the cities he evangelized on the first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:13-14:23). According to this view, Galatians was written in Syrian Antioch in 49 A.D.

The South Galatian Theory is supported by a number of arguments including:

1. Paul consistently referred to geographical locations by using the political designation.

   In 1 Corinthians 16:1 Paul spoke of "the churches of Galatia" whom he had asked for a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem. In the same context, he refers to Macedonia (16:5), to Achaia (16:15) and to Asia (16:19). Since these last three names refer to Roman provinces, it seems probable that Galatia, in this context, should mean the province as a whole.

2. There is no reference to the authoritative decree of the Jerusalem Council.

   If the Jerusalem Council had been held, as the North Theory must conclude, then it is very odd that Paul does not refer to it to bolster his argument.

   Tenney puts it like this: "If Galatians were not written until after Paul toured the Galatian territory on his second or third journey, and consequently long after the council of Jerusalem, it is difficult to explain why he made no appeal to the decision of that council in settling the controversy of law versus grace." 2

3. Barnabas is mentioned in Galatians.

   Barnabas is mentioned three times in Galatians 2. He accompanied Paul on his first journey and would have been familiar to the south Galatian churches. He did not, however, accompany Paul on his second missionary journey when the churches in north Galatia were supposedly established.

There is more, much more. But frankly, neither theory can be proven conclusively. Fortunately, this theory is a matter of background and not interpretation.

I have personally concluded that Galatians was written from Syrian Antioch in 49 A.D. before the Jerusalem Council.
B. Their description.

The churches of Galatia, then, were the churches of south Galatia which Paul visited on his first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13:14, the cities of Antioch of Bisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe). Thus, Paul founded them (4:19), confirmed them (4:19) and had visited them at least twice (4:13). Shortly after (1:6) his last visit, Judaizers came saying Paul received his information from the apostles and perverted their teaching. These Judaizers taught that the Galatians must keep the law, including the observance of days (4:10) and circumcision (5:1-12; 6:11-15).

The Galatians then started keeping the law (4:9-10), and were about to be circumcised (5:2; 6:12).

III. Subject.

The subject of Galatia is liberty, meaning, of course, freedom from the law. One does not have to keep the law to have a right standing before God.

Galatians was written to distinguish between Judaism and Christianity, to set forth grace in contrast to the law, and faith in contrast to works. As a saying and sanctifying principle, law-keeping and faith were mutually exclusive.

IV. Galatians is in the form of an ancient letter with one significant exception. Letters in the 1st Century contained five major parts: Salutation, Thanksgiving, Body, Personal Greetings and Benediction. In the case of Galatians, Paul omitted the Thanksgiving. That is highly unusual for him. By so doing, he is in a subtle way saying, "I'm not thanking God for those who would move away from the Gospel." By the way, he did thank God for the Corinthians.

Salutation. 1:1-5
Situation. 1:6-10

I. Personal. (Paul got his Gospel from God) 1:11-2:21
A. Origin of the Gospel. 1:11-24
B. Confirmation of the Gospel. 2:1-10
C. Content of the Gospel. 2:11-21

II. Doctrinal. (The Gospel is free from the Law) 3:1-4:31
A. Proven from the experience of the Galatians. 3:1-5
B. Proven from the example of Abraham. 3:6-9
C. Proven from the nature of the Law. 3:10-14
D. Proven from the priority of the promise. 3:15-18
E. Proven from the purpose of the Law. 3:19-29
F. Proven from the adoption of sons. 4:1-11
G. Personal appeal. 4:12-20
H. An allegory. 4:21-31

III. Practical. (Stand in liberty and love) 5:1-6:10
A. Stand in freedom. 5:1-12

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B. Love by walking in the Spirit. 5:13-26
C. Restore fallen brethren. 6:1-5
D. Give and do good works. 6:6-10

Personal greetings, admonition and benediction. 6:11-18

V. Purpose.

A. To refute the Judaizers.

The situation in Galatians was really rather simple. Paul led them to Christ and started churches (4:19). Shortly after his departure (he visited them twice), the Judaizers came in insisting that the Galatian Christians must keep the Law, including the observance of days (4:10) and circumcision (5:1-12; 6:11-15). In the process of doing that, they questioned Paul's authority. Thus, Paul wrote primarily to refute the Judaizers and to keep the Galatians from getting circumcized. In order to do that he had to defend his authority.

B. To exhort the Galatians to stand in their liberty.

The positive side was to exhort the believers to stand fast in the liberty from the Law (Gal. 5:1) which of course means living by faith and not by law (Gal. 5:4, 5, 18).

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Galatians insisting that since the Gospel of justification by faith apart from the law is directly from God and in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures, they should stand in the freedom from the law and not be circumcized.

1 Scroggie, p. 151.
2 Tenney, p. 281.
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