

# The Gospel of Luke

Context and Characteristics

# Gospel of Luke: Who?

- Tradition: Luke the physician, companion of Paul
- Hellenistic Jew or a Gentile with deep knowledge of Judaism
- Well educated, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christian

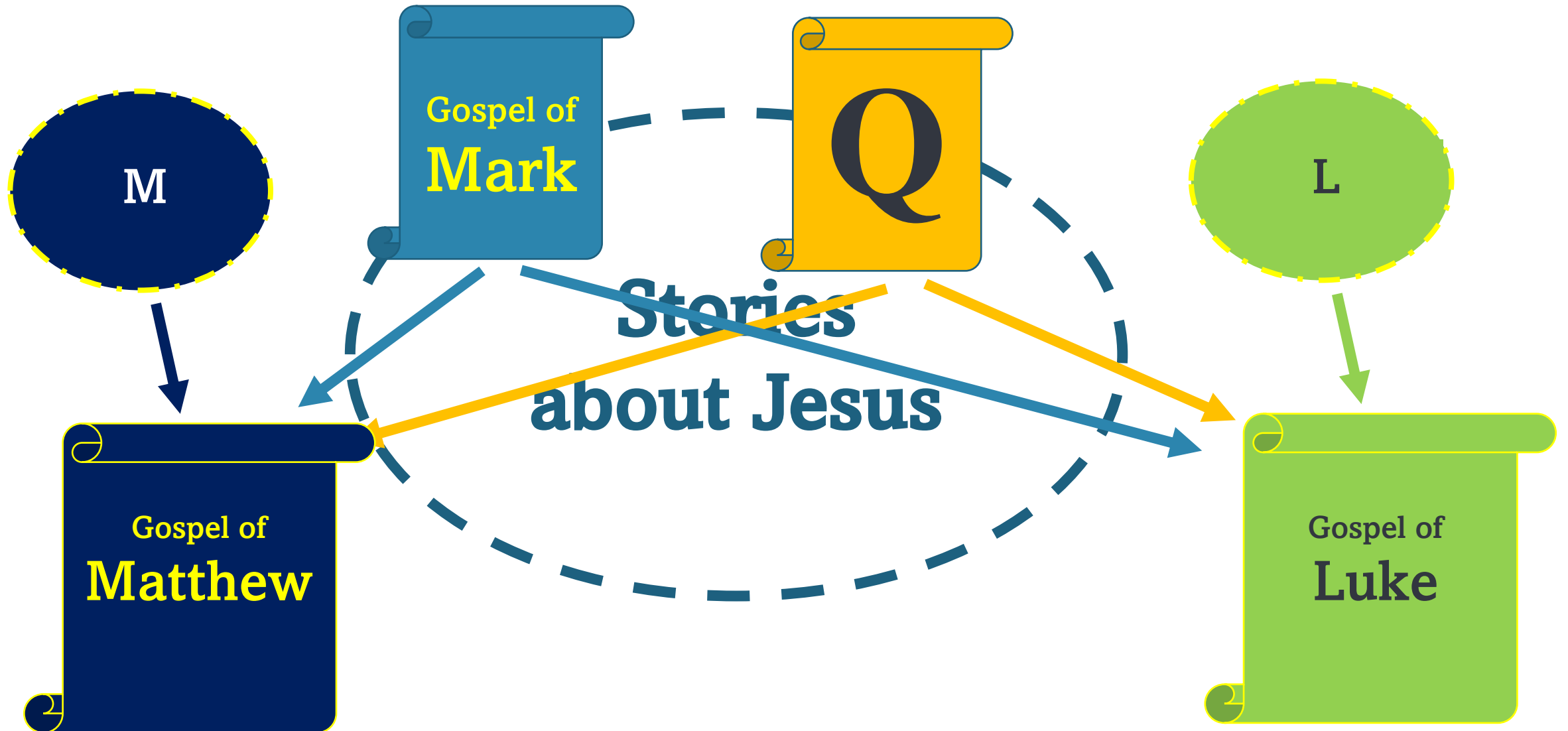
# Gospel of Luke: Where?

- Absolutely no clue, other than probably outside Palestine
- Issue is less critical given Luke's broad (or very narrow) audience

# Gospel of Luke: When?

- Likely after 70 AD (post-destruction of the temple)
- No apparent awareness of Matthew
- No apparent awareness of Paul's letters
- Consensus is sometime in the 80s AD

# The Multiple Source Hypothesis



# Gospel of Luke: Why?

- Desire to provide a definitive account
- Possible desire to establish Christianity as a legitimate religion in order to reduce persecution
- Guide and support Christians wrestling with persecutions, delay in return of Jesus, and diverging doctrine

# Gospel of Luke: What?

- Like Matthew, Luke uses the Gospel of Mark
- Reproduces much less of Mark than Matthew
- Comparatively more unique *L* material (1/2 of Luke, compared to 1/3 of Matthew)
- Also includes large amounts of sayings material believed to be from *Q*
- Uniquely, Luke is the only Gospel with a sequel (the book of Acts)

# Gospel of Luke: A Rough Sourcing Outline

- Chapters 1-2: *L* material
- Chapters 3-5: primarily Mark material
- Chapters 6-7: primarily *Q* material
- Chapters 8-9: primarily Mark
- Chapters 10-17: primarily *Q*
- Chapters 18-24: primarily Mark



## Characteristics: Address

- Addressed to Theophilus (literally, “lover of God”)
- No record of Theophilus being a proper name
- Appears to be a generic address

# Characteristics: Historical Grounding

- Luke dates certain events very specifically
  - Census and birth of Jesus
  - Ministry of John the Baptist
- Clear desire to be understood as history
- Also a desire to ground events within their historical context

# Characteristics: Focus on Jerusalem

- City is the epicenter of Luke's account
- Childhood
  - Dedication in temple
  - Trip in adolescence
- Travel Narrative (9:51 – 19:44)
- Resurrection appearances

# Characteristics: Focus on Worship and Prayer

- Large amounts of Liturgical Material in ch. 1-2
  - Magnificat
  - Benedictus
  - Gloria in Excelsis
  - Nunc Dimittis
- Encouragement and Teaching on Prayer
  - More teaching on prayer than other Gospels combined
  - “Teach us to pray...”
  - Jesus sets example in prayer

# Characteristics: Jesus the Foodie

- 19 meal stories
  - 13 unique to Luke
- Multiple parables about food and banquets
- Metaphor for life
- Concrete setting of early Christian worship
- Relevance for community life

# Characteristics: The Oppressed

- Emphasis on Jesus' ministry to the oppressed, marginalized, and excluded
- Concern for the poor, the reviled (tax collectors, etc.), and Samaritans
- The gospel is not just spiritual, it is social and political as well

# Characteristics: Prominence of Women

- Mary, Elizabeth, Anna
- Mary and Martha
- Ministry supported by women
- Not a feminist, but concerned for those at a disadvantage includes women

# Characteristics: Pneumatology

- Luke emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit much more than Matthew or Mark
- Holy Spirit empowers both Jesus and others
- The Holy Spirit becomes the main character in Acts



# Characteristics: Fulfillment

- Less about fulfilling specific prophecies (a la Matthew)
- More about fulfilling divine will/plan more generally
- Sets up a clash of wills between God and adversaries
- Promises can be trusted because previous promises have been kept