

Harmony of the Gospels



the text of the canonical gospels
arranged in a plausible chronological order

by

Robert C. Long

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Greek - English

Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine Textform - King James Version

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Introduction

The present work is an attempt to arrange in a plausible historical order the events reported in the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The events these gospels report may be grouped into eight periods: (1) birth and youth, (2) ministry before John imprisoned, (3) ministry while John in prison, (4) ministry after John put to death, (5) final tour, (6) week of triumph, (7) passion, and (8) resurrection and events following.

(1) The key to placing the accounts of the birth of Jesus into a plausible historical sequence is to recognize that Matthew does not say, nor does he imply, that Joseph and Mary ever lived in Bethlehem. As for the difference in lineages, I find it plausible that one lineage is that of Joseph and the other of Mary.

(2) Most of the information about the early ministry of Jesus is in the gospel of John, and ordering the material for this period presents no notable difficulties.

(3) Reconciling the accounts of the period while John the Baptist was in prison has proved less than completely satisfactory. For this period I adopted a *rule* which gives first ordering priority to Mark, then to Luke, and last to Matthew. Upon ordering the several events of this period by this rule, I found that while the several gospels agree on the order of many events and event sequences in this period, there are five events or event sequences where they differ in order. For each of these five differences the statements which connect them to their surrounding text was considered, as were dependencies among events. Among the connecting statements and dependencies there is a clue to probable historical order which I considered significant in four cases. In one of these four cases the clue argues for an order different from that specified by the rule, and I considered this clue of sufficient weight to override the rule. This is the case of the healing of the daughter of Jairus and the woman on the way. The remaining events of this period are presented in the order prescribed by the rule. The result is that in this period the proposed historical order differs from Matthew in four events or event sequences, and differs from Mark and Luke in one event sequence.

In this same period the evangelists agree in presenting the event of Lk 6:1ff^{p103} followed immediately by that of Lk 6:6ff^{p105}, and it is easy to suspect that this arrangement is topical rather than historical. But since this arrangement could be historical—the first-presented event may even have spawned the second—and since I have discerned in the several accounts no sufficient clue to a more likely order, I have retained the evangelists' order. Indeed, in all cases where the evangelists agree on order I follow their order.

The only portion of the gospel of John which I place in this period is Jn 5. I find no adequate clue to its proper placement, so I simply assign it what I consider a plausible position.

(4, 5) Ordering the material for the ministry of Jesus after the death of John and the final tour presents no problems since the several accounts agree as to order. But it is well to state my opinion that the events of Lk 10:1^{p253} through 18:14^{p311} occurred at a different time than similar event reported elsewhere in the four gospels. Jesus did and said many similar things.

A portion of John's gospel parallels a portion of the synoptic gospels in the first of these two periods, and is placed accordingly. The remainder of John's gospel which I place in these periods is simply placed, like Jn 5 in the prior period, in a plausible position.

(6, 7) Ordering the events of the week of triumph and of the passion requires paying attention to when each day started and ended. It is also helpful to note that Jesus and his disciples prepared and ate the Passover meal on the days prescribed by the Law of Moses, and essentially everyone else prepared and ate this meal one day later than the Law prescribed.

(8) The key to ordering the events of the resurrection is to realize that Mary separated from the other women, leaving them near the tomb while she ran to the disciples.

There are numerous instances where I have interleaved similar things rather than place them in parallel. Some of the resulting sequences are worthy of complete confidence, such as that formed from Mt 27:49 and Mk 15:36b^{p469}. Others are doubtful, such as the sequence I form from Mt 12:25-37 and Mk 3:23-29^{p129ff}. The degree of confidence appropriate to most sequences of this sort falls somewhere between what is appropriate for these two examples.

Sequential order usually indicates a proposed historical order. At Mk 4:40^{p153}, for instance, the reader is intended to understand that the several statements were each spoken, and in the sequence shown. So in this instance, and including Lk 8:25 and Mt 8:26, Jesus asked about fear twice and faith twice.

But there are exceptions. Concurrent activities provide one class of exceptions. And Mt 22:16^{p357} provides an example of a more common class of exceptions. Mt 22:16 has three clauses which I have lettered a-b-c. Mk 12:14 presents three equivalent clauses in a different order: b-c-a. And Lk 20:21 presents equivalents for two of the three clauses in the order c-a. In such cases as this, unless one of the clauses was a repetition, clause 'a' in this instance, at least one of the sequences cannot be historical. In all such cases, order in the text does not necessarily represent a proposed historical order. Not all such clauses are lettered.

In some of the cases where the King James Version reflects a minority reading I provide the Greek from Scrivener, as at Lk 7:31^{p122}, or provide a translation of the majority text as at Lk 8:3^{p127}. I attach no special significance to these cases.

Typography conventions:

Text blocks in this size and typeface are in proposed historical order and in biblical order.

Text blocks in this size and typeface are in proposed historical order but not in biblical order; these text blocks are further distinguished by their verse numbers being set in *Italic* type.

Text blocks in any smaller type face are not in proposed historical order.

Underlined text marks a geographic location or other detail of special interest.

{Curly braces} delimit comments inserted into the text.

Dot • may start statements which are probably separate, or both different and essentially concurrent.

Bent arrows (↗ ↘ ↙ ↚) indicate biblical order when the continuing passage is close by.

1 2 3 4 are used to suggest a sequence where text position is not adequate to this purpose.

-RCL

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| Mt 12: | Mk 2: | Lk 6: | J |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>3 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς</p> <p>Οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπείνασεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ</p> <p>4 πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ</p> <p>καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔφαγεν</p> <p>οὓς οὐκ ἔξδν ἦν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν οὐδὲ τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν μόνοις</p> <p>5 ἡ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι τοῖς σάββασιν οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τὸ σάββατον βεβηλοῦσιν καὶ ἀναίτιοί εἰσιν</p> <p>6 λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζον ἐστὶν ὧδε</p> <p>7 εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκετε τί ἐστίν Ἔλεον θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν οὐκ ἂν κατεδικάσατε τοὺς ἀναιτίους</p> <p>8 κύριος γάρ ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου</p> | <p>25 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς</p> <p>Οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε χρειαῖν ἔσχεν καὶ ἐπείνασεν αὐτός καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ</p> <p>26 πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἀβιαθάρ ἀρχιερέως καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔφαγεν</p> <p><i>cf. below</i></p> <p>οὓς οὐκ ἔξεστιν φαγεῖν</p> <p>εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν καὶ ἔδωκεν καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ οὖσιν</p> <p>27 καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς Τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον</p> <p>28 ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου</p> | <p>3 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς Οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀνέγνωτε ὃ ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅποτε ἐπείνασεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες</p> <p>4 ὥς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ</p> <p>καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔλαβεν καὶ ἔφαγεν καὶ ἔδωκεν καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ οὓς οὐκ ἔξεστιν φαγεῖν</p> <p>εἰ μὴ μόνοις τοὺς ἱερεῖς <i>cf. above</i></p> <p>5 καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι Κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου</p> | |

Teaching about the Sabbath and healing.

| Mt 12: | Mk 3: | Lk 6: | J |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>9 Καὶ μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν</p> <p>10 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος ἦν τὴν χεῖρα ἔχων ξηράν καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες Εἰ ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεύειν</p> <p>ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ</p> | <p>1 Καὶ εἰσῆλθεν πάλιν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπος ἐξηραμμένην ἔχων τὴν χεῖρα</p> <p>2 καὶ παρετήρουν αὐτὸν</p> <p>εἰ τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεύσει αὐτὸν ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ</p> | <p>6 Ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ σαββάτῳ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν καὶ διδάσκειν καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ ἡ δεξιὰ ἦν ξηρά</p> <p>7 παρετήρουν δὲ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι εἰ ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ θεραπεύσει ἵνα εὖρωσιν κατηγορίαν αὐτοῦ</p> | |

| Mt 12: | Mk 2: | Lk 6: | J |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>3 But he said unto them,</p> <p>Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;</p> <p>4 How he entered into the house of God,</p> <p>and did eat the shewbread,</p> <p>which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?</p> | <p>25 And he said unto them,</p> <p>Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?</p> <p>26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread,</p> <p><i>cf. below</i></p> <p>which is not lawful to eat</p> <p>but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?</p> | <p>3 And Jesus answering them said,</p> <p>Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;</p> <p>4 How he went into the house of God,</p> <p>and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat</p> <p>but for the priests alone?</p> <p><i>cf. above</i></p> | |
| <p>5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?</p> <p>6 But I say unto you, That in this place is <i>one</i> greater than the temple.</p> <p>7 But if ye had known what <i>this</i> meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.</p> | | | |
| <p>9:13⁹³ But go ye and learn what <i>that</i> meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.</p> | | | |
| <p>27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:</p> | | | |
| <p>8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.</p> | | | |
| <p>28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.</p> | | | |
| <p>5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.</p> | | | |

Teaching about the Sabbath and healing.

| Mt 12: | Mk 3: | Lk 6: | J |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>9 And <u>when he was departed thence</u>, he went <u>into their synagogue</u>:</p> <p>10 And, behold, there was a man which had <i>his</i> hand withered.</p> <p>And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?</p> | <p>1 And he entered again <u>into the synagogue</u>; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.</p> <p>2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.</p> | <p>6 And it came to pass also on <u>another sabbath</u>, that he entered <u>into the synagogue</u> and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.</p> <p>7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.</p> | |
| <p>that they might accuse him.</p> | | | |

| M | M | L | Jn 13: |
|---|--|---|--------|
| 10.24 ¹⁶⁸ Οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητὴς ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον οὐδὲ δοῦλος ὑπὲρ τὸν κύριον αὐτοῦ 25 ἀρκετὸν τῷ μαθητῇ ἵνα γένηται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ δοῦλος ὡς ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ | 6.40 ¹¹² οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητὴς ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον αὐτοῦ κατηρτισμένος δὲ πᾶς ἔσται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ | 16 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν οὐκ ἔστιν δοῦλος μείζων τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ ἀπόστολος μείζων τοῦ πέμψαντος αὐτόν | |
| | 17 εἰ ταῦτα οἴδατε μακάριοί ἐστε ἐὰν ποιῇτε αὐτά 18 οὐ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν λέγω ἐγὼ οἶδα οὓς ἐξελεξάμην ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ Ὁ τρώγων μετ' ἐμοῦ τὸν ἄρτον ἐπήρην ἐπ' ἐμέ τὴν πτέρυναν αὐτοῦ 19 ἀπ' ἄρτι λέγω ὑμῖν πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι ἵνα ὅταν γένηται πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι | | |
| 10.40 ¹⁷⁰ Ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ δέχεται καὶ ὁ ἐμὲ δεχόμενος δέχεται τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με | 10.16 ²⁵⁶ Ὁ ἀκούων ὑμῶν ἐμοῦ ἀκούει καὶ ὁ ἀθετῶν ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ ἀθετεῖ ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ ἀθετῶν ἀθετεῖ τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με | 20 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὁ λαμβάνων ἐάν τινα πέμψω ἐμὲ λαμβάνει ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ λαμβάνων λαμβάνει τὸν πέμψαντά με | |

Jesus says one of the twelve will betray him.

| Mt 26: | Mk 14: | L | Jn 13: |
|---|---|--|--------|
| 21 καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν εἶπεν Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με | 18 καὶ ἀνακειμένων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσθιόντων εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με ὁ ἐσθίων μετ' ἐμοῦ | 21 Ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν καὶ εἶπεν Ἄμην ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με 22 ἔβλεπον οὖν εἰς ἀλλήλους οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀπορούμενοι περὶ τίνος λέγει | |
| 22 καὶ λυπούμενοι σφόδρα ἤρξαντο λέγειν αὐτῷ ἕκαστος αὐτῶν Μῆτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριε 23 ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Ὁ ἐμβάψας μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ τρυβλίῳ τὴν χεῖρα οὗτός με παραδώσει 24 ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι' οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος 25 ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδίδους αὐτὸν εἶπεν Μῆτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ῥαββί λέγει αὐτῷ Σὺ εἶπας | 19 οἱ δὲ ἤρξαντο λυπεῖσθαι καὶ λέγειν αὐτῷ εἷς καθ' εἷς Μῆτι ἐγὼ καὶ ἄλλος μῆτι ἐγὼ 20 ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Εἷς ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα ὁ ἐμβαπτόμενος μετ' ἐμοῦ εἷς τὸ τρύβλιον 21 ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι' οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος | | |

Mt 26:21-25 — Mk 14:18-21 — Lk 22:18^ — Jn 13:16-22

| M | M | L | J 13: |
|--|---|---|---|
| 10:24 ¹⁶⁹ The disciple is not above <i>his</i> master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. | | 6:40 ¹¹³ The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. | 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. |
| | 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. 18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am <i>he</i> . | | |
| 10:40 ¹⁷¹ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. | | 10:16 ²⁵⁷ He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. | 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. |

Jesus says one of the twelve will betray him.

| Mt 26: | Mk 14: | L | Jn 13: |
|--|---|---|--|
| 21 And <u>as they did eat</u> , he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. | 18 And <u>as they sat</u> <u>and did eat</u> , Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. | | 21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. |
| 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? 23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth <i>his</i> hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. 25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. | 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another <i>said</i> , Is it I? 20 And he answered and said unto them, <i>It is</i> one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. | | |