

The Great Difference Between Paul and The Four Gospels

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By Jan Lilleby

(Bible quotes are from Amplified Bible)

I have already in earlier articles mentioned lightly about it, by pointing out that the four gospels must NOT be taken as if it was doctrine of faith to the church.

These are just historical documents telling of the life and ministry of Jesus and His disciples; how they taught the Jews, and it all ending with Jesus crucified, dead and resurrected.

Jesus Himself made it all clear to His listeners/followers that He was sent by God to Israel only, *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"*, Mat. 15:24.

Later on, Paul taught the very same, *"...Christ became a servant and a minister to the **circumcised** (the Jews) in order to show God's truthfulness and honesty by confirming the promises (given) to our fathers..."* Rom. 15:8.

What I have not dealt with so much in my earlier articles/books is the fact that there exists a number of puzzling historical facts, which only goes to underline that *the four gospels* NEVER were anything more than just pure history, and were never meant to be used as doctrine of faith to the church dispensation.

ALL THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY

Please, do not get any sort of fits over this, or other unpleasant reactions...this is nothing but common Bible knowledge at every school/universities which offers Bible Seminars.

Most of the church members inside Christianity have little knowledge of this, but they will have to take much of the blame themselves. They cannot demand that every minister come to them in person to instruct them of Biblical historical facts.

Most Bible Lexica mentions these things and are not trying to hide it or drown it among all the issues found in a Lexicon, the fact that *the gospels were originally entirely anonymous*.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did not appear before the Second Century – and they were added to the writings in

order to make them seem Apostolic and authoritative. They do not purport to have been written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Their titles do not affirm it. They simply imply that they are "according" to the supposed teachings of these Evangelists. This again tells us, that it was all according to the tradition of the apostles.

(Still, however, it is probable that it really was Luke who wrote that Gospel story and the Acts, which we shall deal with shortly).

None of the four claimed to have been eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus. Actually – Luke points to the fact that he based his writings upon the reports which had come from those who were eyewitnesses, as we shall all learn.

Even if it is so that the Gospels were not written by them, we shall be aware of that the stories told are true and not fiction.

It is proven by the texts in the Gospels that they must have been originally written down by those who were eyewitnesses. We are told many details and even quotes from speeches held; from the visit experienced by Mary as the Arch Angel Gabriel came to her and told her she would be mother to Jesus by the Holy Ghost.

The escape to Egypt, and later the event of Jesus as a twelve year boy in the Temple impressing the Scribes with His wisdom; John the Baptist in the Judean wilderness baptizing the Jews in Jordan, and then Jesus comes onto the scene at the age of around thirty, causing great attention and admiration by His multiple miracles and healing wonders. Yes, the Gospels are filled with action – all described obviously by those who had been eyewitnesses to it all.

Why remained the Gospel writers anonymous?

We can only use our imagination. One particular reason for this, I will suggest that they simply were afraid for their lives. Wouldn't we also be afraid, if we had seen Jesus executed on a cross last week, and seeing His followers take cover and refuge to avoid the attention of the murderous Pharisees and the soldiers?

I think we would, certainly.

We can only read the Acts to find out how things developed in Israel and in the Empire in the days of the apostles. Dangers and threats were everywhere. But in spite of this, they managed to come up with a full story telling of Jesus and also of His Apostles after He had ascended into heaven.

And still, this dramatically Bible history cannot – as if by a magical touch – just be taken in as 'Doctrine of Faith' upon which the existence of the Church Dispensation is based.

But certain writings by Paul can! I shall come to this shortly.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHRISTIANITY KEEP
USING THE FOUR GOSPELS, OR PARTS OF THEM,

AS FAITH DOCTRINE TO THE CHURCH?

Well, then happens that which *already* and regrettably have happened: Many – if not all – assemblies with their pastors, preachers, teachers and ministers go using the promises which Jesus gave to His Jewish believers and apostles – such as the *miracle and healing promises* we can read of in Mark 16 and other passages, telling their believers that *we can expect God to fulfill these promises* to them who have need for healing. Wrongly and in total misunderstanding of the Word of God, they think that Mark 16 are spoken/written to the Church Dispensation, and looks past the Biblical facts that *Jesus only spoke such things to His Jewish believers exclusively*, those who heard Him or His apostles.

The Charismatic/Pentecostal camps in Christianity are holding such views in particular. They have over the decades past been noticed and are actually known for these beliefs. Speaking in tongues, healing the sick, casting out demons, even trying to wake up dead persons – might be the very ‘hallmark’ of these movements. They keep Mark 16 and the message therein as in full operation today, even if Jesus explicitly said in His time that He was ONLY sent to Israel’s house, *“...in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; they will pick up serpents; and (even) if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well.”*

The Church Dispensation had not yet been established (by Paul) when Jesus sent out His apostles with the promises of Mark 16 given them. The Church as we know it, was still a *hidden mystery* in God (Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:25, 26 – 63 A.D.).

It was only 28 A.D. when Jesus sent out His apostles and shortly after ascended into heaven.

18 – 20 years BEFORE any of the four Gospels were issued/made available for reading, (except Luke which was ten years after) we find that Paul had already distributed and taught his fresh new Gospel of free Grace by faith in Christ in the entire Empire (Col. 1:6).

His two Church epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, in which we have the complete Doctrine of Faith and the free Grace Gospel for the Church Dispensation, - we cannot find the least trace of anything which could resemble Mark 16 and miracle-promises. On the contrary! It glitters by its total absence.

There is *nothing* in Paul’s Church epistles that tells us of Paul operating according to Mark 16, neither is there anything mentioned of his co-workers. Total silence on exorcism, miraculous healings, speaking in tongues, great wonders, - not even anything on Holy Communion or confessing of sins. Also baptism is gone. The preaching of the promised Kingdom of God on earth as we find in Acts, and which was

followed by those promised signs and wonders of Mark 16, was ended the very instance as *Israel fell away from God*, as told in Acts 28:25-28. Paul quoted them the final judgement from Is. 6 of their deafness, spiritual blindness and their unbelief and disobedience and lack of repentance (Acts 28:27) – in an ultimate sense. This was the very *end station* for Israel as a nation for God. And shortly thereafter, it happened that God had the Mystery of the Church dispensation revealed to Paul, and the Law of Moses was abolished thereby (Eph. 2:14, 15) and the preaching of the New Covenant to Israel and the coming Kingdom with Jesus as their King, was entirely stopped/suspended until further notice. And just 7 years later, God sent the Roman army against them and destroyed Israel and scattered them in the world as we know.

Ephesians/Colossians is entirely void of anything that could match Mark 16 and the working of miracles and healings. Not a single word that Paul or any of his colleagues practiced Mark 16 and having miracles and healings as part of their ministries Post-Acts.

But in the years that went before Paul had the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9) revealed to him and the Church Dispensation started, he was ministering as an apostle to Israel and to eventual proselytes, preaching the promised Kingdom of God on earth and the immanent coming of Jesus from heaven in their lifetime. Law of Moses was still operative, but if any believer broke any commandment, God's grace in Christ and the New Covenant forgave the sinners if they confessed. The New Covenant came between and they were cleansed in the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. Rom. 3:31 clearly say that the believers in Israel still had the Law during Acts, *"Do we then by faith make the Law of no effect, overthrow it or make it a dead letter? Certainly not! On the contrary, we confirm and establish and uphold the Law."*

In Acts period (28 A.D. – 61-62 A.D.) the messianic kingdom believers under the ministries of the apostles *confirmed, established and upheld* the Law of Moses. But from the year of 62-63 as Paul wrote Ephesians/Colossians, God through Paul declared that the Law was abolished! Quite a big difference don't you think?

During Acts period when the Law was upheld as well as the New Covenant saved them if they sinned against the Law, all the miracles, healings, signs and wonders followed their ministries, even made attestations to prove to the Israeli people that they were sent by God and Christ. Paul was at the peak of his ministry regarding great miracles as he was a long time in Ephesus. Acts 19 reports of miracles and healings, so much as to have the leading class in the city raising persecution against Paul. It tells us that Paul at that time still had not gotten any revelation of the free Grace Gospel, for he was preaching the Kingdom of God on earth to them.

Paul never preached or taught any doctrine that he picked

up from any of the four gospels. They did not exist at that time, but came on the market 18-20 years later. No, Paul preached that which Jesus Christ told him, as He revealed Himself to Paul several times. Paul never 'obeyed' Jesus' commandments in Mark 16, like the twelve apostles did in their time.

Paul summed up for all of us what exactly we shall believe – it is all there written down in Ephesians/Colossians.

LUKES INTRODUCTION ADDRESSED TO THEOPHILUS

The introduction words of Luke's gospel, addressed to Theophilus contributes to the thought that Luke actually was the one writing both that gospel story and the Acts story.

In Acts we find both Peter's ministry early on, and later comes Paul on the scene – from Acts 7 and on. And in Paul's epistles we find that it must have been Luke who wrote Acts since he was the one who followed Paul on his journeys in the Empire. Thus Luke wrote the story of Acts.

Neither Paul nor other important persons mentioned Luke as an Evangelist or a preacher holding 'revival campaigns'. Paul spoke of Luke as – *..the beloved physician..*.

Paul was the preacher/teacher and Luke was the doctor who gave most of his time to report exactly what happened in Paul's ministry, detail by detail.

The epistle to the Colossians was the last epistle Paul ever wrote before he died. He listed up a number of co-workers and fellow believers, and Luke was one of them. He was with Paul until the very end (Col. 4:14). Colossians was written around 63 A.D.

Luke went with Paul almost all of the time with few exceptions. In 2 Tim. 4:11 we find that it was ONLY Luke who stayed with Paul! This tells us something.

In the opening phrases of Acts Luke tells Theophilus he had written 'The first book' (some translations say *In my former account*) – pointing to his gospel story – *..dealing with all the things which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day when He ascended, after He through the Holy Spirit had instructed and commanded the apostles whom He had chosen.* (Acts 1:1, 2).

This conforms to Luke 24:51-53 and Luke ending his Gospel story with the ascension of Jesus. Knowing this, we can regard Acts as 'The second book' in relation to Luke's Gospel which was the first one. To be able to write such a story as Acts, one must have been present most of the time in the midst of the happenings if not in all of it. Luke was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry or His disciples following Him before the crucifixion. But he certainly was an eyewitness to that which is reported in Acts. First he observed Peter and the eleven, and later on he went with Paul, as I mentioned.

In Luke 1:1-4 we are learning that Theophilus had earlier been taught by him in these things,

"Since many have undertaken to put in order and draw up a narrative of the surely established deeds which have been accomplished and fulfilled in and among us. Exactly as they were handed down to us by those, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word. It seemed good and desirable to me also after having searched out diligently and followed all things closely and traced accurately the course from the highest to the minutest detail from the very first, to write an orderly for you, most excellent Theophilus. That you may know the full truth and understand with certainty and security against error the accounts and doctrines of the faith of which you have been informed and in which you have been orally instructed."

Here we learn of Bible facts we should not overlook.

Luke pointed to the fact that MANY and not few already had made efforts to write down a story telling of Jesus' life and ministry – and these writers had been eyewitnesses to it all and they also had been ministers of the Word. In other words: The apostles.

We can only make guesses on how many these were. But Luke at least says MANY. It had to be at least twelve (minus those who eventually had been murdered by their persecutors, the Pharisees?).

So, knowing this – and in spite of being aware of an already existing story which already had been written down, he took upon himself this enterprise of first making a thorough scrutiny and investigative effort to make sure that his story would be absolutely and irreproachably correct and faultless.

Knowing these things, we clearly learn that Luke's gospel is actually an epistle/letter addressed to a believer, Theophilus. Luke anticipated that Theophilus would distribute his story in the Empire as well as to the Jewish public. Why else would Luke put down so much work and efforts in this?

It is held for correct in Theological circles that Theophilus probably was an official governmental Roman minister, and as such he had a vast number of people under him – a substantial network so to speak, through whom he could successfully have spread the Gospel story.

Luke's using the honorable expression 'Most excellent Theophilus' gives away that he must have been a man of high rank in the Roman rule. Such words of salute were used, not of common people, but only if they had a high rank and status.

Thus Luke made extra efforts to ascertain that his story would be entirely accurate and faultless. It all hung on the observation made by those who had been EYEWITNESSES.

The apostles.

And so, saying this, Luke admitted that he was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry.

PAUL – THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES



It can be no doubt about Paul's writings, since he names himself in the introduction/greeting. He gives us his name and the name of the eventual fellow believer who is with him. His opening greetings are almost repetitive.

Paul's epistles are filled with 'Doctrine of Faith' combined often with his warnings against false teachers and heretical doctrine. They are written to assemblies and to certain ministers, and shall not be considered as history. IMAGE: *Colossians*, a page of an original...lightly damaged as we see.

His epistles of faith doctrine can be classified into two categories:

His early epistles (written in the same time that Acts are reporting of) from 33 A.D. to 62-63 A.D. were written to Messianic believers of Israel, Jews and proselytes, and the doctrine Paul taught them was The new Covenant to Israel in the blood of Jesus. These epistles were written while the Law of Moses still was in effect and should be obeyed. The new Covenant came to the believer's spiritual rescue in cases where believers had broken any commandment or ordinance of the Law. We learn from these epistles that the teaching promised them *God's Kingdom on earth* with Jesus as the King of kings, Lord of lords, at His coming from heaven. He was expected to come back in the life time of the apostles, as God first wanted Israel to repent and believe on Jesus Christ – the entire nation.

The second category concerns the epistles which Paul wrote Post-Acts. For in them we find that a **new Free Grace Gospel** for the entire mankind was introduced. And a new hope of salvation was introduced as well: The hope of heaven up where Christ now sit at His Father's right hand (Greek, *Epiouranos*).

The Kingdom gospel offered to Israel had the hope of the prophesied millennial Kingdom in Israel. But the Free Grace Gospel of Paul revealed in Ephesians and Colossians had the hope of heaven up above.

We often call the present dispensation the 'Church

Dispensation' for only the Church has heaven up above as hope of salvation. It's a fact.

Only Ephesians and Colossians have the complete doctrinal teaching of the Free Grace Gospel. It cannot be found in any other writings whatsoever.

Thus we find that the Church did not come into existence before Paul had the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9 and Col. 1: 25, 26) revealed to him, which is the Free Grace Gospel to the entire world. Thus it follows that the 'wall of partition' (Eph. 2:14, 15) was torn down and Jews and Gentiles in the faith sat on equal level before God. No longer 'Jews first, then Greek'. Law of Moses was abolished.

Israel had fallen from God as His nation. And that is what we can learn in Acts 28:25-28 as we see that Paul's message of Jesus Christ was denied and opposed against by the majority of the Jewish leadership at Rome. So Paul quotes God's judgement upon them finally, from Is. 6 of their deafness, blindness and lack of understanding and repentance, declaring that the gospel of Christ was now sent to the Gentiles, and they would listen (and receive it).

But as I first mentioned – both these categories of epistles **were signed by Paul** as he wrote them. Let me list some of these below:

Romans: *From Paul, a bond servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle set apart to preach the Gospel of and from God.*

Corinthians: *Paul, summoned by the will and purpose of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes.*

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth...

Galatians: *Paul, an apostle not from men nor by or through any man, but by and through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead.*

Ephesians: *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the divine will of God to the saints at Ephesus who are also faithful and loyal and steadfast in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians: *Paul and Timothy, bond servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*

Colossians: *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...*

HEBREWS – It is still disputed some in Theological circles whether Hebrew was written by Paul. It has no typical opening greeting such as we find in the epistles listed above. However, the writer does refer to Timothy who was his near and familiar minister in the faith. Heb. 13:23 say, *Notice that our brother Timothy has been released from prison. If he comes here soon, I will see you along with him.*

1 Tim. 1:1, 2 let us learn that Timothy was in a very familiar relation as Paul characterized him as someone

higher than just a 'brother',
Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by appointment and commandment by God our Savior and of Christ Jesus, our hope. To Timothy, my true son in the faith: Grace, Mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The same kind of greetings we also find in 2 Tim.
Also in Titus Paul says same greeting in verses 1-4.

Philemon: Paul, as prisoner of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy, to Philemon our dearly beloved sharer with us in our work.

PAUL HAD ESTABLISHED THE FREE GRACE GOSPEL
LONG BEFORE THE FOUR GOSPELS WERE PUBLISHED

This Biblical fact I have dealt with in my article-series on the *Great Commission*, and you can look it up here on my site to read it!

Matthew came in 80 A.D., Mark in 82-83 A.D., John around 93 A.D. and Luke, the oldest of them, came around 73 A.D. shortly after the destruction of Israel.

It is held probable that Paul died before Israel was destroyed in 70 A.D. But his death is not mentioned in any portion of the Bible and it is therefore left to our guesses. Catholic legends want to suggest that he died in 67 A.D. by execution at Rome. But there is absolutely no evidence of such a theory anywhere.

The use of the four Gospels as if they are doctrine of faith to the Church Dispensation, is probably be traced back to the so-called Church Fathers and the early Catholic church with its bishops.

See also my recent article on Colossians here in my site.