

New Testament Survey

Unit 317 – Foundations 3

Week 2 – Session 1
The Gospel According to
Matthew and Mark



A. The Gospel According to Matthew

The New Testament commences with the most Hebrew of the gospels, in this way providing a smooth transition from the history and oracles of Israel in the Old Testament to the wider horizons of the New Testament.

There is an ancient church tradition that Matthew's gospel was first written in Hebrew or rather, Aramaic, which was the language of Palestine in the time of Jesus. Hebrew and Aramaic are very similar languages. There is no evidence available of such a document and the very oldest manuscripts of Matthew are written Greek, the language in which the whole New Testament was originally written.

In the early church, Matthew's account of the gospel was the most read and most valued of the four gospel accounts. This is evident from its position in the New Testament and also by its widespread citation by the early church fathers. It is also the most frequently quoted gospel in Christian literature before 180 A.D. The reason for this is firstly because Matthew was an eyewitness to the life events of Jesus and secondly because he emphasises the teaching of Jesus.

1. Author and date of writing

The gospel does not state who wrote it, and tradition ascribes it to Matthew the tax-collector, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus. It was probably written for Jewish believers in Palestine, which means that it was written before the year 70 AD. In that year the city of Jerusalem was occupied by Roman forces and the Temple destroyed - the remaining Jews fled, and there was never a significant number of Jews in Judea after that, neither Christian nor Judaic.

2. Outline of contents:

Matthew follows the basic outline of the other synoptic gospels (Mark and Luke):

A. The preparation 1:1 - 4:11

Includes the birth narrative, the baptism of Jesus and his temptation in the desert.

B. The Galilean ministry of Jesus 4:12 - 18:35

The stories of most of the miracles and much of the teaching of Jesus.

C. Ministry in of Jesus in Judea and Jerusalem 19:1 - 28:15

Includes his controversial statements concerning the temple and Jerusalem as well as eschatological discourses, his arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection.

D. Jesus instructs his disciples about their commission 28:1-17

3. Characteristics:

This gospel has a number of special characteristics which the author has included to tell the story of Jesus for his particular readership - which was mainly Jewish Christians. These include:

1. A strong emphasis on the **end-times** is detected in this gospel. The end-time teaching of Jesus (chap. 24) is followed by a number of parables illustrating the themes of the second coming of Jesus and the final judgement.
2. Jesus refers continually and emphatically to God as his **Father**.
3. The **kingdom** is highlighted. The term used by Matthew is *Kingdom of Heaven*, since the Jewish people did not like to use the name "God" in their teaching and writing, out of reverence for God's holiness.
4. This gospel emphasises the **royal majesty** and authority of Jesus Christ. He is indicated to be King as well as Messiah. The tale of the Magi (the Wise men) and of Herod's jealousy well illustrates this as early as chapter 2. The term "Son of David" is also unique to Matthew (8 times). As King, Jesus has supreme authority:
 - Over people (4:20,22)
 - Over paralysis and suffering (8:6,13)
 - Over illness and disease (9:22; 14:35,36)
 - Over blindness (9:30)
 - Over leprosy (8:3)
 - Over the wind and the water (8:23-27)
 - Over the temple (12:3-6)
 - Over sin (9:2)
 - Over demons (8:31-32; 15:28)
 - Over nature (21:18-19)
 - Over history (26:64)
 - Over the individual destinies of all human beings (7:21-23)
 - Over his own destiny (16:21; 20:17-19; 26:45-46)
 - Over his mission on earth (10:1)
 - Over space, time, and the future (18:19-20; 28:20)
5. There is an overwhelming interest in **fulfilled prophecy**, particularly in the earlier chapters. This is linked to verses from the Old Testament, quoted word for word. Some of the quotes are:

1:23 2:6 2:15 2:18 2:23 3:3 4:15-16 8:17

12:18-21 13:35 21:5 26: 56

6. The gospel has a strong **Judaic background**. The religion of the Jews, as practised at the time of Christ, underlies the text of the gospel. The concepts of wisdom and foolishness, and of righteousness, are highlighted here as in no other gospel. It deals most radically with the hypocrisy and superficiality of the religion of the Pharisees. In some places Matthew implies that Jesus relived the experiences of the people of Israel in the Old Testament. For example, in the same way that Israel in it's infancy went into Egypt and came out again during the Exodus, so Jesus in His infancy had gone down into Egypt and come out of it. (See Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15).

7. There is notable concern for **Gentiles**, despite the fact that it is such a Jewish gospel. The Magi in the 2nd chapter are a prime example, while the notion of the kingdom being taken from Israel, and the specific wording of the Great Commission support this feeling.

8. Matthew is the only gospel which mentions **the church** (Greek: *ecclesia*) directly (16:18; 18:17). However, the term probably refers to the congregation of Israel gathered at the synagogue or temple, rather than to the New Testament community of Christian believers.

9. The **teaching of Jesus** is highlighted. Matthew is concerned with what Jesus said, whereas Mark tends to be more concerned with what Jesus did. Most of Jesus' sayings are divided into five main groupings, each ending 'When Jesus had finished these sayings'. They are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1) The Sermon on the Mount | 5:1 - 7:27 |
| 2) The commissioning of the disciples | 10:5-42 |
| 3) The parables of the kingdom | 13:3-52 |
| 4) Obligations of discipleship | 18:3-35 |
| 5) The end-time teaching | 24:4 - 25:46 |

Another possible structure could be:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Prologue: | Genealogy and birth of the King (Matt. 1-2) |
| Narrative 1 | Preparation of the King (Matt. 3-4) |
| Discourse 1 | Law of the Kingdom (Matt. 5-7) |
| Narrative 2 | Power of the King (Matt. 8-9) <i>10 miracles</i> |
| Discourse 2 | Proclamation of the Kingdom (Matt. 10) |
| Narrative 3 | Rejection of the King (Matt. 11-12) |
| Discourse 3 | Growth of the Kingdom (Matt. 13) |
| Narrative 4 | Mission of the King (Matt. 14-17) |
| Discourse 4 | Fellowship of the Kingdom (Matt. 18) |
| Narrative 5 | The King goes to Jerusalem (Matt. 19-23) |
| Discourse 5 | Consummation of the Kingdom (Matt. 24-25) |
| Narrative 6 | Death & resurrection of the King (Matt. 26:1 – 28:15) |
| Epilogue | Challenge of the Kingdom |

- 10.** The two major divisions in the ministry of Jesus (first in Galilee, then in Judea) each commence: 'From that time ...' thus clearly demarcating their division from the rest of the work.

The 4 Fold purpose of Matthew's writing:

- a. To present Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecy
- b. To present Jesus as the Messiah
- c. To present the Gentiles in a favourable light
- d. To clarify the nature of the Kingdom

Summary:

Matthew presented Jesus' teaching as a new Torah (law). Each discourse with its preceding narrative composes a book, making the gospel a collection of five "books", thus imitating the Old Testament books of Moses. Matthew portrays Jesus as the new Moses. Like Moses, he barely escapes death at birth, He is called out of Egypt by God, He is tested in the wilderness, He proclaims the law of God from a mountain and the new covenant is sealed with blood as was the old.

B. The Gospel According to Mark

An ancient Christian tradition states that Mark wrote down what Peter preached about Jesus, since he acted as Peter's interpreter. He had not been an eye-witness himself, but faithfully recorded Peter's eyewitness accounts.

Mark probably translated Peter's Aramaic sermons to Greek-speaking audiences. He most likely wrote them down after the death of Peter and Paul, therefore probably in Rome. There is a report that Mark was requested by those to whom Peter preached in Rome to write down the stories of Jesus.

1. Author and date of writing:

There is fair consensus that the Mark of this gospel is the John Mark of Acts 12:12. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but left them at Perga to return to Jerusalem (13:13). Barnabas wished to take him on their second journey, but Paul refused, considering Mark to have deserted them (15:17). This led to dissension between the two apostles. Barnabas then travelled with Mark, who, it turns out, was his cousin (Col 4:10). When Paul wrote to Colossians, Mark was again with him, and in the Pastorals it appears that Paul had changed his opinion of the young man (2 Tim 4:11). Peter refers to Mark as 'my son' in 1 Pet 5:13, so the relationship between Peter and Mark is thus attested in the Scriptures.

Mark may have alluded to himself in the gospel, since he alone tells of the young man who escaped the arrestors of Jesus by leaving his coat in their grasp and fleeing naked into the night.

Church tradition refers to him as the 'stump-fingered'. As a Levite he would have been liable for temple service, and some suggest he may have mutilated his fingers to escape this duty. Of course, he may just have had short fingers, too!

If tradition is correct, and the gospel was written around the time of the execution of Paul and Peter, then a date between 50 AD and 70 AD is most likely. Mark's audience was primarily gentile and more specifically Roman.

2. Outline of Content:

A. The preparation 1:1-13

B. Proclamation 1:14 - 8:26

This was primarily Jesus' preaching and teaching and healing in Galilee.

C. The instruction of the disciples 8:27 - 10:52

This includes the prediction of his own death by Jesus.

D. The suffering and crucifixion of Jesus 11:1 - 16:8-20

The events in Judea and Jerusalem, including the arrest, his death, resurrection, etc.

3. Characteristics:

What special elements and features make this gospel unique?

1. The notion of the story of Jesus as '**gospel**' (good news) is strongly reflected in this work.
2. The so-called *Messiasgeheimnis* is highlighted in this gospel. This is the fact that Jesus often instructed those whom he had healed not to tell anyone about the miracle, nor to tell others that he was the Messiah. The probable reason for this was that Jesus did not want the people to force him to adopt an overtly political role as king, since their expectation of the Messiah was that he would deliver Israel from the Romans (see Acts 1:6-7).
3. This gospel emphasises the **vast crowds** that thronged Jesus. The spectacular and the wild acclaim that he receives is in dramatic contrast to the loneliness of Jesus in his last days and hours.
4. The Greek of this work is rather **rough**. This may accord well with its nature as a translation of the original Aramaic of an unschooled man (Peter).
5. The gospel emphasises **action** rather than teaching. An atmosphere of haste is created by repeated use of the Greek *υθυς* - "immediately" - (40 times in total). Mark does, however, often refer to the fact that Jesus taught, although he does not always

report what he said. There is only one recorded discourse: the Olivet discourse (Mark 13).

6. The gospel represents the **dramatic** presentation one would expect from the apostle Peter: the emotions of Jesus are often referred to: compassion, indignation, distress and sorrow, and his sighs.
7. Some emphasis is given to the **Gentiles** in Jesus ministry and teaching.
8. Special attention is given to the **preparation by Jesus of the disciples**. One gains an impression that the perspective in this work is from the inner circle, where Jesus often had to rebuke his followers and attempt to redirect their priorities and methods.
9. More than 40% of the gospel concentrates on Jesus journey to **Jerusalem** and his suffering and death in that city.
10. The gospel represents a high **Christology**, with Jesus proclaimed the Son of God in the first verse, and confirmed as such by the Father, by demons, by Jesus himself, and by the centurion at the cross. (*Christology* normally refers to the titles given to Jesus.
11. In Mark's gospel, Jesus passes **few judgements** on people and He does not judge Capernaum or Jerusalem.
12. Mark has **no record of genealogy** and no gives no detail concerning Jesus' birth and background. This is to emphasise that to a servant, heritage, status and pedigree have no value.
13. Mark does not record the details surrounding the passion narrative that point to Jesus' power and authority (His right to summon 12 legions of angels to His defence, resurrected saints, his promise to the thief or any supernatural events). These absences in Mark show that Jesus' power and authority are in the background while His suffering service is in sharp focus.
14. Many modern translations of the New Testament leave out Mark 16:9-20, since the translators believe that these verses were added only centuries later. If this were true, it leaves the gospel with a rather abrupt ending. Other scholars dispute that the verses are an addition.

Conclusion

"...Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" -Mark 10:43-45

Here Mark clearly reveals the theme of his gospel account and presents Jesus as the ultimate servant. He goes on to define the sacrificial death of Christ as the ultimate act of service. The greatest lesson concerning servanthood from the life and ministry of Jesus is that servanthood is not the pathway to greatness – servanthood is greatness.

Memory Verse

Mark 10:43-45

“...Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”

New Testament Survey

Unit 317 – Foundations 3

Week 2 – Session 2
The Gospel According to
Luke and the Acts of the Apostles



A. The Gospel According to Luke

The gospel of Luke is the first of a two-volume work, written by the same author, directed to the same reader, Theophilus (friend of God) and today commonly referred to as Luke-Acts. This work is the largest single contribution to the New Testament.

1. Author, intended reader, and date of writing:

The work itself does not state who the author of the work was. The testimony of the ancients was that it was Luke, the physician who travelled with Paul. The gospel first appeared under this name, and the testimony of Acts may be used to support it. The following is clear from the testimony of Acts:

1. The writer was a companion of Paul, an eye-witness to certain events described. Note in particular the sections of Acts where the writer includes himself in the action - the so-called "we" sections (16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16).
2. The writer was a Gentile: he refers to Hebrew names as being *their* language (1:19); he shows a fondness for the city, and knowledge of the sea, neither of which are Jewish traits; Paul lists him separately from his Jewish colleagues in Col 4:14.
3. Some scholars find indications of medical language in Luke-Acts, arguing that its writer was a doctor of medicine. e g he appears to defend his fellow physicians in describing the haemorrhaging women as having an *incurable* condition.

Luke's intended reader is Theophilus, who was probably a patron who sponsored the publication of the work. His wider circle appears to be fellow Gentiles. If written before Acts, and Acts before the death of Paul, both facts being likely, then the gospel must be dated in the early 60's AD.

2. Outline of Contents:

A. Prologue	1:1-4
B. Nativity narratives (the birth of Jesus)	1:5 - 2:52
C. The ministry of John the Baptist	3:1-20
D. The Galilean ministry of Jesus	3:21 - 9:5
E. The ministry of Jesus on the way to Jerusalem	9:51 - 19:27
F. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem	19:28 - 24:53

3. Characteristics:

What makes the gospel of Luke special?

1. The work lays emphasis on the role of the **Holy Spirit** in the gospel account.
 - It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary conceives (1:35).
 - The Holy Spirit fills the lives of Simeon and Anna (2:25).
 - John prophesies that Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire (3:16).
 - After the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descends on him like a dove (3:22).
 - The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tested (4:1).
 - Jesus returns from the wilderness filled with the power of the Holy Spirit (4:14).
 - He instructs His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (24:49).
2. The **temple** in Jerusalem receives special attention. In fact, the story actually commences within its sanctuary.
3. The role of **angels** is emphasised more than in other gospels.
4. The story of the **crucifixion** is more detailed, and is arranged differently to the other gospels.
5. **Jerusalem** (like the temple) receives prominence as the centre in which God's ultimate revelation is given and rejected.
6. The **redemptive aspects** (saving power) of the ministry of Jesus are accentuated, particularly in line with the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Servant of the Lord.
7. Luke is the only evangelist who ties the story of Jesus to **secular history**.
8. Luke includes **unique, detailed material** concerning the birth of Jesus. This includes the birth of John the Baptist, the annunciation (the angel appearing to Mary), the shepherds, the circumcision of Jesus, his presentation at the temple, the visit to Jerusalem at the age of 12. These stories are all very Jewish in their tone, and may even have come from the mother of Jesus herself.
9. Luke's style has a marked **literary character**, making it more like secular classical Greek works than like the simple Greek of the rest of the New Testament.
10. Luke often depicts Jesus as surrounded by **crowds** who are amazed at his deeds.

11. Prominence is given to certain **groups**: the poor, the rich, women, outcasts, sinners.
12. **Concepts highlighted** by Luke are: prayer, praise, joy, peace, forgiveness, weeping, love, friendship, wisdom and understanding, authority, spirit.
13. Luke writes more **biographically** than the other evangelists. He gives information about Jesus' ancestors, his relatives and parents, the circumstances of his birth, of his boyhood, the freedom with which he mingled socially, his temptation, and his frequent prayer. In typically Greek style, this gospel tells us about Jesus the Man.
14. Jesus is depicted as **healer** of men's bodies as well as deliverer from sin. Luke alone calls him Saviour. He also refers to the Kingship of Jesus almost as much as does Matthew.
15. Luke's use of the Old Testament is more **general and indirect** than Matthew's. He does not quote the verses, and is more interested in the broad connection between the prophetic verses and the life of Jesus.
16. Luke has written a very **versatile history**, commencing in the temple in Jerusalem and ending in the Roman forum.
17. Luke's **genealogy** traces all the way back to **Adam**, emphasising the humanity of Jesus.
18. **Unique parables and anecdotes** highlight Jesus' concern for the oppressed.
 - Two debtors (7:41-43)
 - Persistent friend at night (11:5-8)
 - Barren fig tree (13:6-9)
 - Unrighteous steward (16:1-12)
 - The ten Minas (19:13-17)
 - Good Samaritan (10:30-37)
 - Rich fool (12:16-21)
 - The lost coin and the prodigal son (15:3-32)
 - Rich fool and Lazarus (16:19-31)
 - Judge, Pharisee, Tax collector (18:2-14)

Conclusion

Luke's intention in writing his Gospel is to produce an orderly, chronological and biographical record of the life and ministry of Jesus with special reference to the humanity of Jesus and emphasis on his ability as Saviour of the world to identify and with human beings in their humanity. Our response to Luke's Gospel should be to follow the example of our Lord and Saviour who willingly became like us as well as coming to us in order to save and heal us. The incarnational model of Jesus' ministry is the pattern for all truly transformational ministry.

SUMMARY SHEET – OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS

GOSPEL	MATHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
AUDIENCE	Jewish believers	Roman believers	Gentile believers	Greek believers
DATE	Before 70 AD	50-65 AD	Before 70 AD	80-95 AD
KEY WORD	Fulfil	Immediately	Joy	Light, life and truth
STRUCTURE	Five “books”	Miracles	Journey to Jerusalem	Festivals
GENEALOGY	Son of David (Joseph)	None	Son of Adam (Mary)	Son of God (Heavenly)
FOCUS	Teaching and fulfilment	Servanthood and suffering	Holy Spirit; Humanity	Deity
SYMBOL (Ezekiel 1:10)	Lion: King	Ox: Servant	Man: Perfect man	Eagle: Son of God
RESPONSE	Submit	Serve	Identify	Worship

**COMPARING THE TEXT: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (MATTHEW 5:1-12) AND
THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN (LUKE 6:17-23)**

Matthew 5: 1-12

1. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.
2. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:
3. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
5. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.
6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.
7. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
9. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
10. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.
12. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Luke 6: 17-23

17. And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases,
18. as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed.
19. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.
20. Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
21. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
22. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake.
23. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.”

B. The Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles is generally accepted today as the second volume in the complete work of a single author, referred to as Luke-Acts.

Not only is the Acts a pivotal book in that it provides the story of how the commission of Jesus to his disciples was discharged, but it is coming to be seen more and more as integral and indispensable to the understanding of the Christian ethos and message. In its pages we gain a glimpse of a group of everyday human beings who nevertheless turned the world upside down because of their dynamic witness. There is a perception of power and conviction based on real knowledge-by-experience that pervades the atmosphere of Acts.

1. Background, author, date and purpose

The first verse links the volume to the gospel of Luke. It shows that the two volumes have the same author and destination, and also the same aim - to represent in a reliable fashion the work of Jesus Christ. The gospel recounts this until the ascension, and the Acts from the ascension until the arrival of the apostle to the Gentiles in Rome.

The author of the work was apparently a companion of Paul. There are a number of sections in which the first person plural form of the verb is used - the so-called "travel diary" or "we-sections" (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1 -28:16). The identification of the author of the gospel as Luke the physician makes it easy to apply this name to the book of Acts as well.

The date of writing is most likely around 63 AD. Luke might well have completed and published the work while Paul was awaiting trial during his first imprisonment in Rome. This best explains why the outcome of the trial is not mentioned.

Luke's purpose in writing was probably at least threefold:

- (i) to **record the growth** of the Christian church, in terms of its dynamic spread from Jerusalem to the centre of the Empire;
- (ii) **apologetic** - to defend Christianity against the accusation of the Jewish leaders that it entailed insurrection against the Roman authorities. Time and again these are shown to reject this charge (as did Pilate the charge against Jesus), and view the gospel and the Jewish dissent as a purely religious matter;
- (iii) **polemic** - an attack against the Jews, showing how they continually rejected the gospel, which was continually offered to them first.

2. Characteristics

What can we say about the nature of this work?

- (i) The Book of Acts serves as a **bridge between the gospels and the epistles**. The gospels anticipate the *ecclesia* (the church), the epistles presuppose it. The Acts tells how it came into existence.
- (ii) The **theme** of the work is the ongoing work of Jesus Christ on earth.
- (iii) The **scheme** is the powerful movement of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. In this sense the dual volume of Luke-Acts is an extremely versatile history, beginning as it does in the heart of the temple in Jerusalem, and ending in the capital of the Roman empire.

Under the **theme**, we note the following:

- (i) This work is primarily a **missionary document**. It aims at not only telling a story, but at communicating a vision. Its vocabulary is peppered with words such as preach, witness, go, believe, baptise, etc.
- (ii) The **Holy Spirit** is the key to the success of the mission. He is the source of effective speaking (4:8), of miraculous power (13:9-11), of wisdom in the councils of the church (15:28), of administrative authority (5:3, 13:2) and of guidance (10:19, 16:6-10). Some believe the title should be understood as "the Acts of the Holy Spirit". Certainly the presence and power of the Holy Spirit could not be left out of the work without destroying its meaning and eradicating all meaningful content.
- (iii) The Holy Spirit was active in **all believers**. This is implicit in the events at Pentecost, and obvious in the ministry of men such as Philip the deacon, Stephen, Agabus and Ananias of Damascus. This underlies the Pauline concept of *ecclesia* (church) as *soma* (body) in I Cor 12-14, and the notion of the priesthood of all believers, which permeated the practice of the early church.
- (iv) In line with the emphasis upon commission and proclamation, many **sermons and speeches** are recorded in the Acts. These are of four main types: evangelistic (Acts 2), deliberative (Acts 15), apologetic (eg Acts 7), and hortatory (Acts 20). The central emphasis in the evangelistic addresses is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which the apostles claim to be witnesses in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Under the **scheme** we note the following:

- (i) Two centres of witness are focussed upon, along with the two figures who used them as their home bases. The narrative concerning Peter, who was based in **Jerusalem**, dominates the first 12 chapters of the work. That concerning Paul, who was based in **Antioch**, dominates the rest of the work.

- (ii) The account is necessarily **selective and condensed**. The original scheme is given in Acts 1:8, and the story unfolds along these lines. Sometimes a wealth of detail is included, at others only a summary is provided. Outside of this geographical scheme nothing is included.

3. Structure and content

1) Jesus' final words on earth	1:1-11
2) Proclamation of the gospel in Jerusalem and Judea	1:12-7:60
3) Proclamation in Samaria	8:1-40
4) Proclamation to the Gentiles	9:1-28:31
(a) The conversion of Paul	9:1-31
(b) Peter and the Gentiles	9:32-11:18
(c) Outreach to the Hellenes by the Hellenists	11:19-30
(d) Persecution in Jerusalem	12:1-23
(e) Paul's 1st missionary journey	12:24-14:28
(f) The Apostolic council	15:1-35
(g) 2nd missionary journey	15:36-18:22
(h) 3rd missionary journey	18:23-20:2
(i) Paul's journey to Jerusalem	20:3-21:25
(j) Arrest of Paul and witness as a prisoner	21:26-26:32
(k) The journey to Rome	27:1-28:16
(l) Paul's witness in Rome	28:17-31

Conclusion

The Acts of the Apostles is a record of the birth and beginning stages of the early church. As such it constitutes both history and heritage. As present-day followers of Jesus we have received the baton from those who have gone before us and Acts encourages us to run our leg of the race with faith and courage in the spirit and intent of the very first follower of Christ. The story continues...

Memory Verse

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.