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Synoptic Gospels Bi-103
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Assignment 13

1. What makeup of people did Luke write to?
Predominately Hellenistic Gentile Christians

2. Who was the recipient of the Book of Acts? Explain in detail.

Theophilus, believed to be a high ranking government official, due to Luke's reference to him as "most excellent", was the recipient of the Book of Acts. There is the possibility that in providing a member of the upper echelon of the Roman government with these writings, Luke could clear up any misunderstandings about the nature and intent of the Christian movement.

3. What sources did Luke use to compile his Gospel? Explain in detail.

Luke used as his sources, the Gospel of Mark, the saying collections called "Q" Source, and a collection of material called the "L". Luke follows the outline of events as they are recorded in the Gospel of Mark. However, he does not follow Mark's narrative as closely as Matthew. Occasionally, he leaves out some material and substitutes it for his own. Luke includes a considerable number of Jesus teachings that are not included in the other Gospels. It is believed that Matthew and Luke shared the "Q" source, however, it is evident that Luke more material from it than Matthew.

4. Luke omitted some words that Mark used, such as Iscariot, abba, etc. What does this tell us about the audience he was writing to?

Luke's style of writing suggest that his audience was an educated Greek speaking audience.

5. What material in Luke is considered “Q”?

Most of the material Luke took from “Q” is concentrated in two large sections, Luke 6:20-8:3 and 9:51-18:14. The latter section is, of course the bulk of Luke’s expanded version of the journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem.

6. What material in Luke is considered L?

Scholars frequently refer to all the special traditions that are found only in the Gospel of Luke with the symbol “L”.

7. Discuss in detail (according to the text) the three divisions of salvation history in the Book of Luke. What period did Luke’s community live in?

Luke conceived of salvation history as divided into three major epochs: the period of Israel, the period of Jesus, and the period of the church. Luke’s community was living in the third period, the period of the church.

The period of Israel was in the remote past. It stretched all the way back to creation. The second period, the period of Jesus, extended from the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him until the return of the spirit to God at Jesus’ crucifixion. It was the time of fulfillment of the promises anticipated in the first period and frequently in between. The third period, the period of the church, is the epoch of the church. The first and second periods were in the distant past. The period of the church embraces the recent past, the present and the future. It began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on believers at Pentecost and extends to the second coming of Jesus and the end of this age.

8. What about Luke’s character tells us that he was a Hellenistic Christian? What does this mean?

It is thought that the writer of the Third Gospel and Acts was a Hellenistic Christian who was well educated. According to the preface of the first volume in his two-volume work he considered himself to belong to the third stage of Christianity.

9. When did Luke write his Gospel? Explain.

Since Luke used the Gospel of Mark as one source, he had to have the knowledge of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple

in 70 C.E. Therefore it was probably composed after those events. Stress between Christianity and imperial Rome intensified during the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96 C.E.), a likely period to date the composition of Luke-Acts. That would make this two volume work roughly contemporaneous with the Gospel of Matthew - which was written c. 85-90 C.E.

10. Why did Luke write the Gospel? Explain in detail.

Luke wrote his Gospel to address the faith needs of his community. They had been using the Gospel of Mark for a while and had found it very helpful. But some of the issues that Mark had addressed in his Gospel to aid his Christian community were simply not that crucial to Luke's community. On the other hand, problems that were greatly troubling Luke's people had not even occurred to Mark, or at least were not all that important when he was writing. So Luke modified, revised and expanded Mark's story, making adjustments to deemphasize irrelevancies and to speak more specifically to his community's concerns.