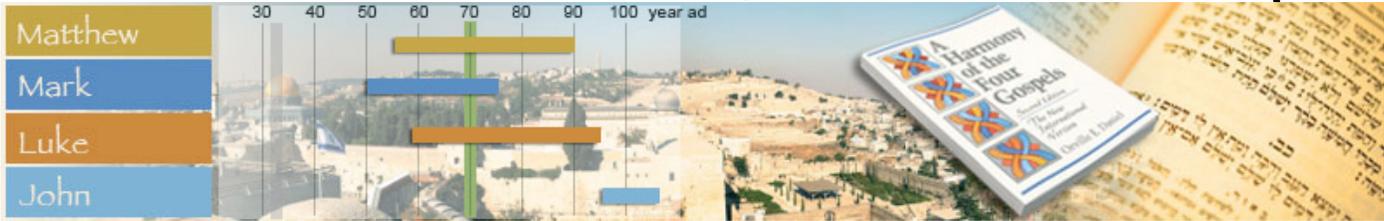
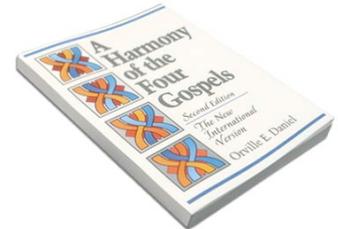


# A Harmony of the Four Gospels



## “Gospel”

A Gospel is about evangelizing or sharing of good news – more of an advertisement or persuasive speech/writing than a historical recounting. Also, the Gospels were written to people who knew Jesus, so there is a significant level of accountability for factual integrity.



## Brief Bible History:

The Bible has been translated into many languages from the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. There are consider certain Greek texts from which all New Testament translations are derived. Foremost amongst these is the Traditional Received Text (Textus Receptus), also called the Byzantine Text or the Majority Text because it is based on the vast majority of manuscripts still in existence. (<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sbs777/vital/kjv/part1-3.html>)

- Very first translation of the Hebrew Bible was into Greek, the **Septuagint** (IPA: /'sɛptuədʒɪnt/) (also called the LXX), which later became the received text of the Old Testament in the church and the basis of its canon.
- The Latin **Vulgate** was based upon the Hebrew for those books of the Bible preserved in the Jewish canon, and on the Greek text for the rest. The Vulgate is an early Fifth Century version of the Bible in Latin, and largely the result of the work of Jerome, who was commissioned by Pope Damasus I in 382 to make a revision of old Latin translations.
- Christian translations tend to be based upon the Hebrew, though some denominations prefer the Septuagint (or may cite variant readings from both).
- The received text of the Christian New Testament is in Greek, and nearly all translations are based upon the Greek text.

### **Received Text (Textus Receptus)** (<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sbs777/vital/kjv/part1-3.html>)

- Textus Receptus is based on the vast majority (90%) of the 5000+ Greek manuscripts in existence. That is why it is also called the Majority Text.
- Textus Receptus is not mutilated with deletions, additions and amendments, as is the Minority Text.
- Textus Receptus agrees with the earliest versions of the Bible: Peshitta (AD150) Old Latin Vulgate (AD157), the Italic Bible (AD157) etc. These Bibles were produced some 200 years before the minority Egyptian codices favoured by the Roman Church. Remember this vital point.
- Textus Receptus agrees with the vast majority of the 86,000+ citations from scripture by the early church fathers.
- Textus Receptus is untainted with Egyptian philosophy and unbelief.
- Textus Receptus strongly upholds the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith: the creation account in Genesis, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, the Saviour's miracles, his bodily resurrection, his literal return and the cleansing power of his blood!
- Textus Receptus was - and still is - the enemy of the Roman Church. This is an important fact to bear in mind.

The Latin Vulgate was dominant in Christianity through the Middle Ages. Since then, the Bible has been translated into many more languages. English Bible translations in particular have a rich and varied history of more than a millennium.

## Translation Approaches

A variety of linguistic, philological and ideological approaches to translation have been used, including:

- **Functional equivalence** translation (also Dynamic Equivalence) – a thought-for-thought translation. This translation attempts to convey the thought expressed in a source text (if necessary, at the expense of literalness, original word order, the source text's grammatical voice, etc.)
  - *New Living Translation*
  - *Good News Bible*
  - *The Message*
- **Formal equivalence** translation (similar to literal translation) – word-for-word translation. This translation attempts to render the text word-for-word (if necessary, at the expense of natural expression in the target language).
  - *King James Version*
    - *English translation of Christian Bible*
    - *First published by King of England*
  - *New American Standard Bible*
  - *English Standard Version*
  - *Green's Literal Translation*
- Mix of Formal and Functional Equivalence (aiming for the best of both worlds...)
  - *Today's New International Version*
  - *New International Version*
    - *English translation of Christian Bible – Zondervan publisher*
    - *Expressly Protestant*
    - *Was created by a council of Protestants from many denominations, who came together to translate the Bible*
    - *The most commonly used Bible among Protestants*
  - *New Revised Standard Version*

A great deal of debate occurs over which approach most accurately communicates the message of the biblical languages' source texts into target languages. Despite these debates, however, many who study the Bible intellectually or devotionally find that selecting more than one translation approach is useful in interpreting and applying what they read.

## Reformation / Early Modern Period

Blast from the past: At the time of the Protestant reformation, the recent invention of the printing press (mid 1400s) made it possible to distribute written works to the general public – giving Luther the avenue to bring God's word to the common man in a way never done before!

### *Luther Bible*



- In 1521, Martin Luther was placed under the Ban of the Empire, and he retired to the Wartburg Castle, where he translated the New Testament from Greek into German.
- Luther's bible was printed in September 1522.
- The first complete Dutch Bible, partly based on the existing portions of Luther's translation, was printed in 1526.



### *Tyndale Bible*



- 1<sup>st</sup> printed English Bible (Tyndale was contemporary of Luther)
- Tyndale's New Testament translation (1526, revised in 1534, 1535 and 1536) and his translation of the Pentateuch (*The 5 books of Moses – also called the "Torah" (Hebrew: תורה, "teaching" or "instruction," sometimes translated as "Law,")*) (1530, 1534) and the Book of Jonah were met with heavy sanctions given the widespread belief that Tyndale changed the Bible as he attempted to translate it. This was the Tyndale Bible
- The Great Bible was adopted by Henry VIII, and was Tyndale's Bible with some revisions. (Tyndale's original Bible had an incomplete translation of the Old Testament.)

### *Zwingli Bible (or Zurich)*



The Zürich Bible (Zürcher Bibel, also Zwinglibibel) is a Bible translation historically based on the translation by Huldrych Zwingli. Zwingli's translation grew out of the "Prophezey", an exegetical workshop taking place on every weekday, with the participation of all clerics of Zürich, working at a German rendition of Bible texts for the benefit of the congregation. The translation of Martin Luther was used as far as it was already completed. This helped Zwingli to complete the entire translation five years before Luther. At the printing shop of Christoph Froschauer, the New Testament appeared from 1525 to 1529, and later parts of the Old Testament, with a complete translation in a single volume first printed in 1531, with an introduction by Zwingli and summaries of each chapter. This Froschauer Bible, containing more than 200 illustrations, became notable as a masterpiece of printing at the time. The translation is mainly due to Zwingli and his friend Leo Jud, pastor at the St. Peter parish.

### *King James Bible*

The Authorized King James Version is an English translation of the Christian Bible begun in 1604 and first published in 1611 by the Church of England. The Great Bible was the first "authorized version" issued by the Church of England in the reign of King Henry VIII. In January 1604, King James I of England convened the Hampton Court Conference where a new English version was conceived in response to the perceived problems of the earlier translations as detected by the Puritans, a faction within the Church of England.

The king gave the translators instructions designed to guarantee that the new version would conform to the ecclesiology and reflect the Episcopal structure of the Church of England and its beliefs about an ordained clergy. The translation was by 47 scholars, all of whom were members of the Church of England. In common with most other translations of the period, the New Testament was translated from the Textus Receptus (Received Text) series of the Greek texts. The Old Testament was translated from the Masoretic Hebrew text, while the Apocrypha were translated from the Greek Septuagint (LXX), except for 2 Esdras, which was translated from the Latin Vulgate. (www.wikipedia.com)

# Relationship of Gospels to Each Other

## Synoptic Gospels

Synoptic – from the Greek work meaning “seeing together” or “having a common view”

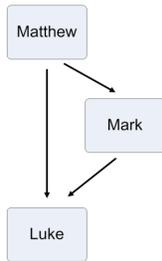


The synoptic gospels (from Greek, συν, syn, together, and ὄψις, opsis, seeing) are the first three gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—found in the New Testament of the Bible. These gospels often recount the same stories about Jesus, generally follow the same sequence and use similar wording. The hows and whys of these books' similarities and differences to each other and to other gospels is known as the synoptic problem. The synoptic gospels are contrasted with the fourth, "maverick" gospel, John.

(www.wikipedia.com)

### 4 hypotheses (www.wikipedia.com)

#### Augustinian hypothesis

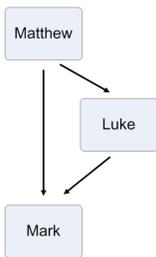


In this view, the gospels were written in order of presentation, but that Mark was Matthew's "lackey and abbreviator" and that Luke drew from both sources.

The hypothesis holds that Matthew was written first. Mark the Evangelist, a disciple of the apostle Simon Peter, wrote the Gospel of Mark second, and used Matthew and the preaching of Peter as sources. Luke the Evangelist, wrote the Gospel of Luke, and was aware of the two Gospels that preceded him.

This hypothesis does not rely on, nor does it argue for, the existence of any document that is not explicitly mentioned in historical testimony. Instead, the hypothesis draws primarily upon historical testimony, rather than textual criticism, as the central line of evidence.

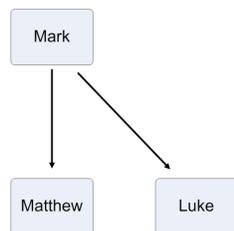
#### Griesbach hypothesis



(also called the 2GH or two-gospel hypothesis)

This hypothesis maintains the primacy of Matthew, but proposes that Luke is directly based on it, while Mark is based on both

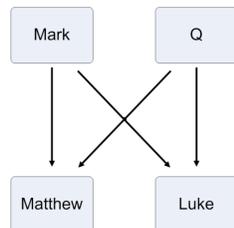
#### Markan Priority



Markan priority is the hypothesis that the Gospel of Mark was the first written of the three Synoptic Gospels, and that the two other synoptic evangelists, Matthew and Luke, used Mark's Gospel as one of their sources.

The theory of Markan priority is today accepted by the majority of New Testament scholars.

#### Two Source Hypothesis



This theory is Markan priority, and holds that Matthew and Luke used a lost source of Jesus's sayings called Q. Their conclusion is largely based upon an analysis of the language and content relationship between the various books. It posits that there are two sources to the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke: the Gospel of Mark and a lost, hypothetical sayings collection (Q).

The 2SH emerged in the 19th century in answer to the synoptic problem. The answer advanced by the 2SH is that Mark was the first gospel to be written, and that Matthew and Luke relied both on it and on a now-lost collection of sayings of Jesus. The strengths of the 2SH are its explanatory power regarding shared and non-shared material in the three gospels, as well as the difficulties with its alternatives; its weaknesses lie in the exceptions to those patterns, and in the hypothetical nature of its proposed collection of Jesus-sayings.

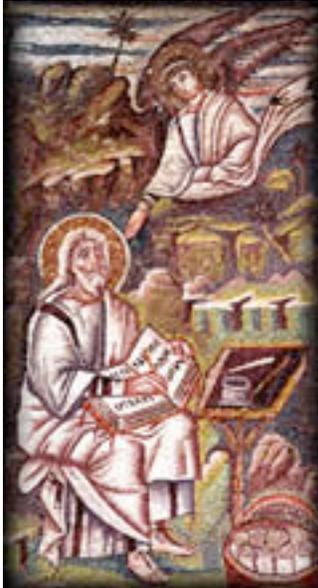
A look at Synoptic Gospels vs John ([www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com))

Item	Matthew, Mark, Luke	John
First event mentioned	Jesus' birth (baptism in Mark)	Creation of the world
Authors: according to conservative Christians	Apostle Matthew; Mark and Luke, co-workers of Paul	Apostle John
Authors: according to liberal Christians	Unknown authors	2 or more unknown authors
Virgin birth	Mentioned in Matt, Luke	Some interpret John 1:14 as denying the virgin birth
Jesus as Son of God...	From the time of his birth or baptism	From the time that the universe was created
Description of Jesus	Jesus' humanity emphasized	Jesus' deity emphasized
Jesus baptism	Described	Not mentioned
Preaching style	Brief one-liners; parables	Essay format
Jesus teaches as:	A sage (wise man – Shaman or Priest)	A philosopher and mystic
Exorcism	A main function of his ministry	None performed
True parables	Many	None
Theme of his teaching:	Kingdom of God	Jesus himself. Kingdom of God is a background theme.
Jesus' theology	Deviated little from 1st century CE liberal Judaism. Similar to beliefs taught by Hillel.	Largely independent of Judaism and in opposition to much of its teaching.
Response expected from the reader	Respond to God's will as expressed in the Mosaic law	Respond to Jesus as the definitive expression of God's will or revelation
Exorcism of demons	Many	None
Involvement with the poor and suffering	Focus of his ministry	Rarely mentioned
Involvement with Scribes (Jewish teachers)	26 references to scribes, who are puzzled and angered by Jesus' teachings	No references at all.
Miracles performed by Jesus	Many "nature miracles," healings, and exorcisms	Few; all "nature miracles"
Jesus references to himself	Rare	Focus of the gospel, including the many "I am" sayings
Basis of personal salvation	Good works, helping the poor, sick, imprisoned, and needy (? – Sarah's)	Belief in Jesus as the Son of God.
Duration of ministry	1 year	3 years
Location of ministry	Mainly Galilee	Mainly Judea, near Jerusalem
Clearing of the money-changers from the Temple	Near the end of his ministry	Near the start of his ministry
Date of the Last Supper	Passover eve	Night before Passover eve
Ceremonial event at the Last Supper:	Communal meal	Foot washing
Who carried the cross?	Simon	Jesus
Visitors to the tomb on Sunday with Mary Magdalene?	One or more additional women	None; Mary Magdalene went alone
Who was present in the tomb?	One angel or two men	Two angels
Burial shroud	A single piece of cloth	Multiple pieces of cloth, as was the Jewish practice at the time. (John 20:5-7)
Jesus' first post-resurrection appearance to disciples	At Emmaus or Galilee	Jerusalem

# Matthew: a tax collector - Synoptic Gospel

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<b>Purpose:</b>	To prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the eternal King and Savior
<b>Audience:</b>	Audience: Specifically to the Jews Specifically written to the Jews – focus on Jewish prophecy and how Jesus fulfilled the many prophecies
<b>Unique Qualities:</b>	Matthew had a perspective that focused his writings on tying the old testament prophecies to the works of Jesus. He was writing to convince the Jews that Jesus was the one who fulfilled the Old Testament Prophecies. ( source: Life Application Bible Studies)



The angel is the symbol for the gospel of Matthew

One of the first disciples, Matthew was an eye-witness to Jesus' teachings, and focuses on God's heavenly kingdom, recording the entire Sermon on the Mount.

Time of writing - early as 55 to as late as 90 (multiple sources) - recent conclusions place Matthew closer to the year 55 AD.

- "Matthew is a contraction of Mattathias, ("gift of Jehovah or Yahweh").
- He was a Jew, the son of a man named Alphaeus. His original name was Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27).
- It is not known whether his father was the same as the Alphaeus named as the father of James the Less; he was probably another. This gospel was incontestably written by the apostle Matthew.
- As a tax collector under the Romans at Capernaum who was a hated publican, it is unthinkable that his name would have been attached to the first gospel had he not been the actual writer."  
[www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

## Mark: Peter's "son" (at least spiritually) - Synoptic Gospel

<b>Purpose:</b>	To preserve the story of Jesus after the passing of first-generation Christians, and encourage loyal discipleship in the face of persecution.
<b>Audience:</b>	Gentile Christians (so he explains Jewish customs in detail. Gentile audience may also explain why he doesn't include Jesus' genealogy.
<b>Unique Qualities:</b>	Mark uses a collection of stories (parables) and the Messianic Secret to carefully uncover the hidden identity of Jesus. The Messianic Secret refers to Jesus having commanded his followers not to reveal to others that he is the Messiah, in certain passages of the New Testament, notably in the Gospel of Mark. New Testament scholars have made various attempts to explain why this should be so. (www.wikipedia.com) ( source: Shepherd's Notes - Mark)



The lion is the symbol for the gospel of Mark

Written as early as 50, as late as 75 or 80 (multiple sources)

Mark, it is widely held, wrote (or was responsible for the writing) the gospel based largely on Peter's eyewitness accounts and experiences, so the book of Mark is mostly Peter's experience, written through Mark's perspective.

- (likely, according to majority of scholars) – the 1st Gospel written and is the first real narrative of Jesus' life.
  - Mark is telling the story with a focus on the death/resurrection - an must have believed this was the primary point of importance - they key to Jesus' identity as the Messiah.
  - He, and the other authors, were crafting their message from the standpoint of being early theologians, rather than just "reporters", so their presentations are crafted to reinforce their message, not just record events.
  - Mark writes in a way that enforces over and over that the disciples kept being unable to recognize what the "outcasts" of society saw - that he was more than just a miracle worker (something common in Jesus' times). The disciples had trouble really "getting it" so to speak.
  - Could have been written shortly after the war between Rome and Judea (post 70 AD) that destroyed the temple (L. Michael White), which would explain the focus on extreme persecution.
- Jesus' ministry begins in Galilee and ends in Jerusalem according to Mark.
  - Mark provides the basic plot (sets the stage) for Matthew and Luke, who were both familiar with Mark's gospel before telling their own stories (so these 3 are more similar, thus "synoptic").

Messianic Secret Discussion: (www.wikipedia.com)

- William Wrede, in his groundbreaking 1901 study, proposed that the secrecy theme was not original to Jesus's ministry, but rather it was a theological addition added by the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Wrede's argument, still influential today in religious studies, states that the Gospel of Mark had to come up with a convincing explanation for why Jesus did not seem like a messiah during the course of his life. By emphasizing secrecy in his gospel, Mark could simultaneously claim that Jesus was the messiah and that nobody knew it until after he had died, and that his messiahship was revealed only through his resurrection.
- Conservative interpreters of Mark's gospel reacted negatively to such a suggestion. They believed instead that Mark's portrayal of Jesus was largely historical, as 19th century scholarship had previously held. Scholarship was strictly divided for a time, with neither side considering the other's views at all valid.

# Luke: a physician - Synoptic Gospel

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<b>Purpose:</b>	To present an accurate account of the life of Christ and to present Christ as the perfect human and savior.
<b>Audience:</b>	Theophilus (intro addresses the person), Gentiles and people everywhere (Various people have been known by the name Theophilus or Theophilos, which means "Friend of God" in Greek, and is thus similar to the Latin word Amadeus – wikipedia.com)
<b>Unique Qualities:</b>	Luke is the most comprehensive Gospel. The Language and vocabulary indicate an educated author. Lots of references to illnesses and diagnoses. Stresses Jesus' relationships with people.

( source: Life Application Bible Studies)



The ox is the symbol for the gospel of Luke

Written as early as 59, as late as 95 (multiple sources), with recent publications trending more towards the year 59 AD.

Luke interviewed eye-witnesses (was not an eye-witness himself), and collated his findings in the book of Luke. He was Paul's coworker. Luke also likely knew of and used the Gospel of Mark as a starting point.

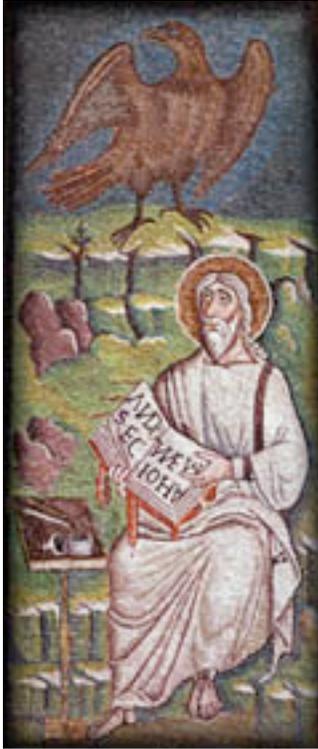
- "Luke is the evangelist and [most likely] the author of the gospel bearing his name and the **Acts** of the Apostles. The materials found in Scripture referring to the life of Luke are scanty and seem to yield the following results:
- Luke was of Gentile origin, and of Greek ancestry. This is inferred from the fact that he is not reckoned among those "who are from the circumcision" (Colossians 4:11; cf. v. 14). When and how he became a physician is not known.
- He was not one of the "eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (Luke 1:2).
- On the supposition of Luke's being the author of the Acts we gather from those passages in which the first person we is employed that he joined Paul's company at Troas and sailed with them to Macedonia (Acts 16:10-11).
- He accompanied Paul as far as Philippi (Acts 16:25-17:1) but did not share his persecution or leave the city, for here the third person *theywe* does not reappear until Paul comes to Philippi at

- the end of his third journey (Acts 20:6), from which it is inferred that Luke spent the intervening time—a period of seven or eight years—in the city or neighborhood; and as the we continues to the end of the book, that Luke remained with Paul during his journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:6-21:18), was that apostle's companion to Rome (Acts 27:1), sharing his shipwreck (Acts 28:2), and reaching the imperial city by way of Syracuse and Puteoli (Acts 28:12-16).
- According to the epistles he continued to be one of Paul's "fellow workers" till the end of his first imprisonment (Philemon 24; Colossians 4:14).
  - The last glimpse of the "beloved physician" discovers him to be faithful amid general defection (2 Timothy 4:11).
  - Tradition since the time of Gregory of Nazianzus makes Luke a martyr, yet not unanimously, since accounts of a natural death slip in. Where he died remains a question; certainly not in Rome with Paul, for his writings are far later (Meyer, Com., on Luke, in introduction)." www.bible.org

## John: a fisherman

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<b>Purpose:</b>	To prove that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life
<b>Audience:</b>	New Christians and searching Non-Christians
<b>Unique Qualities:</b>	John is the “different” or non-synoptic gospel. John records 6 unique miracles (not in other Gospels). There is no genealogy, no record of Jesus’ birth, childhood, temptation, transfiguration, appointment of disciples, no talk of Jesus’ parables, ascension or the great commission. ( source: Life Application Bible Studies)



The eagle is the symbol for the gospel of John.

Written last of 4 Gospels, likely around or shortly after 95

"(“Jehovah is gracious”). The son of Zebedee, a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, (Mark 1:19-20; Luke 5:10), and Salome (Matthew 27:56; cf. Mark 15:40). We have no information respecting the religious character or personal participation of Zebedee in the events of the gospel history, but John’s mother was one of the women who followed Jesus even to His crucifixion." [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

- John differs significantly from the synoptic gospels in theme, content, time duration, order of events, and style. ([wikipedia.com](http://wikipedia.com))
- Written probably about 95, or a little later (per Dr. L. Michael White), but difficult to know exact date of the gospel's creation.
- John was an eyewitness, and one of the first disciples of Jesus. ([www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org))
- John lived to be older than any of the other writers, and therefore was likely familiar with their accounts, which may have influenced what he chose to expand upon in his book. ([www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org))
- "Internal evidence that the author is “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” who also leaned on His breast at supper (John 21:20, cf. 21:7), and that this is the apostle John, is supported by numerous lines of evidence.
- He was a contemporary of the events described. The writer was known to the high priest and entered the high priest’s residence in company with Jesus (John 18:15). He alone narrates the fact that it was the high priest’s servant whose ear Peter cut off (John 18:10).
- Peter is distinguished from the author by name, as in John 1:41-42;

13:6, 8, and James had suffered martyrdom long before the writing of the gospel (Acts 12:2). He characteristically introduces himself (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). These general facts make it difficult to escape the conclusion that John the apostle wrote the fourth gospel."

[www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)