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"Arthur Thomas" (1919-1983)

ROBINSON'S REDATED NEW TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

<u>BOOK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>Notation</u>
James	47-48	
1 Thessalonians	50	early
2 Thessalonians	50-51	
1 Corinthians	55	spring
1 Timothy	55	autumn
2 Corinthians	56	early
Galatians	56	later
Romans	57	early
Titus	57	late spring
Philippians	58	spring
Philemon	58	summer
Colossians	58	summer
Ephesians	58	late summer
2 Timothy	58	autumn
Mark	45-60	
Matthew	40-60+	
Luke	-57-60+	
Jude	61-62	
2 Peter	61-62	
Acts	-57-62+	
1 John	60-65	
2 John	60-65	
3 John	60-65	
1 Peter	65	spring
John	-40-65+	
Hebrews	67	
Revelation	68 (-70)	late

The Significance of 70

"One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period - the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism based on the temple - is never once mentioned as a past fact. It is, of course, predicted; and these predictions are, in some cases at least, assumed to be written (or written up) after the event. But the silence is nevertheless as significant as the silence for Sherlock Holmes of the dog that did not bark. S.G.F. Brandon made this oddness the key to his entire interpretation of the New Testament:1 everything from the gospel of Mark onwards was a studied rewriting of history to suppress the truth that Jesus and the earliest Christians were identified with the revolt that failed. But the sympathies of Jesus and the Palestinian church with the Zealot cause are entirely unproven and Brandon's views have won scant scholarly credence.² Yet if the silence is not studied it is very remarkable. As James Moffatt said, We should expect . . . that an event like the fall of Jerusalem would have dented some of the literature of the primitive church, almost as the victory at Salamis has marked the *Perae*. It might be supposed that such an epochal-making crisis would even furnish criteria for determining the dates of some of the NT writings. As a matter of fact, the catastrophe is practically ignored in the extant Christian literature of the first century.³

Similarly C.F.D. Moule :

It is hard to believe that a Judaistic type of Christianity which had itself been closely involved in the cataclysm of the years leading up to AD 70 would not have shown the scars - or, alternatively, would not have made capital out of this signal evidence that they, and not non-Christian Judaism, were the true Israel. But in fact our traditions are silent.⁴

Explanations for this silence have of course been attempted. Yet the simplest explanation of all, that 'perhaps . . . there is extremely little in the New Testament later than AD 70⁵ and that its events are not mentioned because they had not yet occurred, seems to me to demand more attention than it has received in critical circles.

Bo Reicke begins a recent essay⁶ with the words:

An amazing example of uncritical dogmatism in New Testament studies is the belief that the Synoptic Gospels should be dated after the Jewish War of AD 66-70 because they contain prophecies *ex eventu* of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70.

In fact this is too sweeping a statement, because the dominant consensus of scholarly opinion places Mark's gospel, if not before the beginning of the Jewish War, at any rate before the capture of the city.⁷ Indeed one of the arguments to be assessed is that which *distinguishes* between the evidence of Mark on the one hand and that of Matthew and Luke on the other. In what follows I shall start from the presumption of most contemporary scholars that Mark's version is the earliest and was used by Matthew and Luke. As will become clear,⁸ I am by no means satisfied with this as an overall explanation of the synoptic phenomena. I believe that one must be open to the possibility that at points Matthew or Luke may represent the earliest form of the common tradition, which Mark also alters for editorials reasons. I shall therefore concentrate on the differences between the versions without prejudging their priority or dependence. The relative order of the synoptic gospels is in any case of secondary importance for assessing their absolute relation to the events of 70. Whatever their sequence, all or any could have been written before or after the fall of Jerusalem.

Let us start by looking again at the discourse of Mark 13. It begins:

As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples exclaimed, 'Look, Master, what huge stones! What fine buildings!' Jesus said to him, 'You see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives facing the temple he was questioned privately by Peter, James, John, and Andrew. 'Tell us,' they said, 'when will this happen? What will be the sign when the fulfillment of all this is at hand?' (12.1-4)

CE:	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
Matthew		---	-----	-----	---		
Mark		---	-----	-----			
Luke		---	-----	-----	---		
John		---	-----	-----	-----		
Acts		---	-----	-----	-----		
Pauline Epistles				-----			
Hebrews					--		
James			--				
1 Peter					--		
2 Peter					---		
Johannine Epistles					---		
Jude					--		
Revelation					---		
1 Clement					-	--	
The Didache		---	-----	-----			
Barnabas						---	
Shepherd of Hermas						---	-----
CE:	30	40	50	60	70	80	90

http://www.preteristarchive.com/StudyArchive/r/robinson-john_a-t.html
http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/1976_robinson_redating-testament.html
<http://www.katapi.org.uk/RedatingTheNT/Contents.htm>