

**Notes for NT 550
SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

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I. The Historical Jesus

People have enormously diverse views about Jesus. Some of these are motivated by their religion or world view, others claim to be honest grappling with the historical data. Here we give just a quick tour of influential modern views.

A. Basically Religious Views

The biblical data points to Jesus who is somehow fully God and fully human.

Other religious alternatives divide into two categories:

- Jesus only human, not God in any real sense;
- Jesus divine in some sense, but not biblical sense.

1. Jesus was only human, not God in any real sense.

- a. Atheism - Jesus was at best only human; many atheists claim he was fictional. This was a standard Communist view.
- b. Islam - Jesus was a true prophet, born of a virgin, worked miracles, will one day reign as Messiah, but he is not God, since Allah is strictly one and he has no son. Jesus did not die on the cross, but was snatched to heaven and a substitute was put in his place.
- c. Old Liberalism - The Gospels contain much legendary material since miracles don't happen. God only worked providentially through Jesus, but people misunderstood him and he was deified by the early Gentile Christians. He was some sort of ethical teacher, who had more of God in him than others did. He died on the cross as an example, but his resurrection is only spiritual.
- d. Neo-Orthodoxy - Similar view of Gospels to Old Liberalism, but feel that Jesus of history not nearly so important as the Christ of faith. An attempt to rescue religious value while accepting "scientific" history.

2. Jesus is divine in some sense, but not in the biblical sense.

- a. Jehovah's Witnesses - Jesus is a god, actually some sort of "reincarnation" of the archangel Michael, by whom Jehovah God created all things. He is not the Almighty God and is not to be worshipped. He was born of a virgin, worked miracles, died on the cross. His body dissolved in the tomb, but he will one day return to set up an earthly kingdom for his faithful witnesses.
- b. Mormonism - Though the Book of Mormon is fairly orthodox (more or less Trinitarian), and Jesus is viewed as virgin born, Messiah, miracle-worker, who rose from the dead, their later scriptures indicate that men can become gods like Jesus and the Father did. Jesus was merely a man at the time he was on earth, but unusual in that he was the first-born

soul of his Father and his spiritual mother in heaven. He was sent from heaven when Mary conceived, and since his ascension has become a god. His death only saves us from original sin.

- c. New Age Movement - A very diverse group of views that are characterized by a mixture of western attitudes and ideas with elements (especially reincarnation) borrowed from Hinduism and Buddhism. Generally Jesus is viewed as one of the great (but usually not the greatest) ascended masters, who through spiritual effort and enlightenment have risen far above the level of most humans. You, too, can become a god by one or more techniques. The term Christ is typically used for a level of spiritual enlightenment, and was not an office held uniquely by Jesus.

B. Allegedly Historical Views

The past 200 years have seen numerous attempts to produce the "real, historical" Jesus who is allegedly quite different than the person pictured in the Gospels. These attempts have regularly assumed that miracles do not occur (having been disproved by science), so that the Gospels (filled as they are with miracles) cannot be reliable. Proponents of such views accept some of the Gospel material and reject the rest. We give some examples here characteristic of various philosophical movements since just before 1800. Albert Schweitzer, in his *Quest of the Historical Jesus* discusses over 100 such liberal biographies of Christ.

1. Deism: Reimarus' *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774-78)

Deism sees God as the Creator watchmaker, but one who does not intervene in human affairs.

Hermann Samuel Reimarus' book was published posthumously in fragments; two of these deal w/ Jesus:

- "Concerning the Story of the Resurrection"
- "The Aims of Jesus and his Disciples"

Jesus claimed to be a Jewish-type Messiah, to bring the Jews back to God, to be a military commander to "deliver" them, but made no attempt to found a new religion. He did some psychosomatic healings (not miraculous), tried to start a revolt against Rome, but failed. He was put to death as a revolutionary.

After Jesus' death, his disciples realized he had failed. Out of the habit of working by this time, they decided to start a new religion. They stole Jesus' body, claimed he had risen and sent them out to preach this new religion. They invented a new eschatology with a 2nd coming.

Publication of Reimarus' material created a sensation, destroyed his reputation, and his family discouraged further publication. Yet it opened the way for later liberal recon-

structions which were mostly less drastic. It set a precedent of ignoring the epistles of Paul, Peter, and John; of emphasizing Jesus' eschatological teaching (which Reimarus and most liberals do not like); and of claiming much material in Gospels was the creation of the apostles and the later church rather than going back to Jesus.

2. Rationalism: Paulus' *Leben Jesu* (1828)

Rationalists think revelation unnecessary because moral truth is eternal and can be deduced by good reasoning.

Unlike Reimarus, Heinrich Paulus wrote a "sympathetic" life of Christ. Jesus was a great moral teacher of unusual insight and ability.

Our main interest in Paulus' work is his "rationalistic" treatment of miracles as non-supernatural events misunderstood by the disciples as miracles. Jesus really healed people by some unknown spiritual power which worked on the nervous system, something like ESP or hypnosis. He used natural medicine and diet rather like today's holistic healers and health food people.

His nature miracles are harder to explain, but Paulus suggested that Jesus' walking on water was really on the shore or a sandbar; that Jesus used the little boy's loaves and fish to shame the adults into sharing their hidden lunches; that Jesus' transfiguration was really the sunrise illuminating his hair and clothes from behind; that the resurrections of Lazarus et al was Jesus' recognizing they were in a coma and waking them up.

Jesus' own resurrection was similar. He did not die on the cross, but went into a coma. The cool tomb and aromatic spices revived him. An earthquake opened the tomb, and Jesus appeared to his disciples for a while, but later left them to die. His departure was misunderstood as an ascension, as he walked up the hill into low clouds.

The importance of Paulus' work was to spread such liberal views into "Christian" circles, claiming sympathy for Jesus, but still debunking miracles. Paulus did not lose his job or prestige over the book. His rationalizing approach to miracles, though soon ridiculed by liberals, is still used by them in some cases.

3. Idealism: Strauss' *Leben Jesu* (1835)

Idealism is used here in the philosophical sense: ideas are the basic reality rather than matter.

According to David Friedrich Strauss, the entire life of Christ has been colored by mythological interpretation (not just his birth and resurrection as some had suggested). Myth is here defined as timeless religious truth clothed in historical form, often by using legendary materials. Thus the religious ideas expressed in the events of Jesus' life are true, but the events did not really happen. For example, the deity of Christ is not a historical truth, but a myth expressing the "highest idea ever conceived by man: the unity

of Godhood and manhood" (i.e., we are all divine).

In *Leben Jesu*, Strauss attacks both the orthodox and rationalistic ideas of Jesus, especially mocking Paulus' explanations for the miracles. But he presents few positive explanations of his own for the historical events, probably because he was not greatly concerned with what happened.

Strauss' book met with strong reaction in his day because it was both anti-Christian and anti-rationalistic. It laid the groundwork for Bultmann and the demythologizing school in the 20th century. He posed three problem areas which have continued to dominate liberal studies on Jesus to this day:

- Miracle vs. myth: Strauss virtually ended the liberal acceptance of miracles in the gospel accounts as historical. Only the healing accounts are accepted by some liberals today, who say Jesus did some psychosomatic healing as faith-healers still do.
- Jesus of history vs. the Christ of faith: Strauss separated historical truth from religious value, favoring a "Christ of faith" approach.
- Gospel of John vs. the Synoptics: Strauss established a widespread rejection of John by attacking its reliability more effectively than Reimarus had done earlier.

4. Romanticism: Renan's *La Vie de Jesus* (1863)

Romanticism a reaction against rationalism's emphasis on reason and logic. Emotions and intuition give insights which you cannot obtain through reason.

As Ernest Renan sees it, the Gospel picture of Jesus doesn't make sense [with the miraculous removed]. So he sorts the materials into three different phases in Jesus' life:

- ethical teacher
- revolutionary
- martyr

Renan claimed that all 3 phases were historical, but they got mixed together chronologically in the gospel accounts. Each facet was a distinct period in his life.

1) Jesus begins as an optimistic, pleasant ethical teacher who learned to preach from John the Baptist. He returns to Galilee as a gentle teacher of love, attracts a devoted following of young men and women, plus large crowds of charmed Galileans. He does no miracles except some psychosomatic healings.

2) When Jesus goes to Jerusalem, he finds the rabbis will not accept him. As a result, he becomes a revolutionary and campaigns to get rid of them. He begins doing faked miracles to attract a larger following.

3) Soon Jesus realizes that his movement does not have enough popular support to beat the rabbis, and that he cannot continue to stage miracles indefinitely without being discovered. He decides to throw off earthly ambitions and become a martyr. Before his death, he starts a religious movement so that his teachings will be preserved. He institutes the simple ceremonies of baptism & Lord's supper to give unity to the group and chooses its leaders (apostles). He allows himself to be caught and dies on the cross.

His strategy works out better than he expected, as Mary Magdelene has a hallucination that Jesus is alive.

Renan's work is important in spreading liberal reconstructions of Jesus' life to the popular educated classes and particularly into Catholicism. He opened the door to the idea that reliability can be judged by aesthetics: "God can't be that way because I don't like it." His idea that the chronological framework of the Gospels is untrustworthy will be picked up later in form criticism.

5. Scepticism: Wrede's *Messianic Secret* (1901)

Sceptics are doubters to a greater degree than the positions above, feeling it is impossible to reconstruct a life of Jesus.

Wilhelm Wrede reacts against reconstructions like those sketched above, arguing that much in these pictures is obtained by "reading between the lines" and ignoring what Jesus has to say about the second coming, judgment, hell, and such.

Wrede does not attempt a full life of Christ, but tries to solve a single problem: why (if Jesus claimed to be Messiah) did he keep telling people to keep this a secret? Wrede's answer is that Mark invented the Messianic Secret because Jesus never claimed to be Messiah but Mark and his circle thought that he was.

Wrede comes to believe that Mark's whole narrative framework is unreliable, so that only some of the individual stories and sayings in his Gospel really happened.

At this point in our narrative of liberal lives of Jesus, notice that liberals have now thrown out all the Gospels: John is late, Matthew and Luke build on Mark, and Mark is unreliable.

This deep scepticism toward the Gospel accounts led to the application of form criticism to the life of Christ by Rudolf Bultmann and others beginning about 1920, and thereafter brought a stop to the writing of liberal lives of Christ until about 1950.

Quests for the historical Jesus were resumed in the 1950's (the so-called second quest) by liberals who were dissatisfied with the particular form of extreme scepticism advocated by Bultmann. We are now generally thought to be in a phase called the Athird quest. @

6. The Present Situation: Considerable Diversity

Renan's observation is correct: Once the miracles are excluded from Jesus' ministry, his person and life do not make sense, and a variety of possibilities can be imagined. Modern theories are often simply various combinations of previously noticed possibilities. We give a fast sketch of some of the views advocated since World War 2.

a. The Post-Bultmannian Paradoxes

Post-Bultmannian is a term for former students of Bultmann, especially:

Gunther Bornkamm
Hans Conzelmann
Klaus Fuchs
Ernst Kasemann
James M. Robinson

Bornkamm is the only one who wrote a life of Christ, *Jesus of Nazareth* (1960); the others wrote encyclopedia and journal articles. All are anti-supernatural, but feel Bultmann went too far in his scepticism. They have more interest in history than he did, and feel that the NT material gives us at least the atmosphere of what people thought about Jesus.

Their historical methodology is very skeptical: ignore the Gospel of John and use the Synoptics; pick out the authentic incidents and sayings of Jesus by using the **method of dissonance**.

Method of Dissonance:

Jesus himself was a Jew and his followers were Christians. Thus any features of Jesus' reported teachings which look Jewish may go back to the Jews, not to Jesus himself. Any material which looks Christian may go back to the early Christians, not to Jesus. Only that which is incompatible with both Judaism and Christianity probably goes back to Jesus. Examine this material to get Jesus' self-understanding.

Dissonance has problems as a methodology: using same on Martin Luther, you would reject any material where he sounds either Catholic or Lutheran!

Some Results:

However, these Post-Bultmannians have deduced some interesting results which do not fit the liberal models well.

(1) Jesus' view of himself.

Kasemann: A very distinct atmosphere is present in the NT. Jesus thought of himself as divinely and uniquely inspired, and that he was greater than a prophet. Jesus made messianic claims.

Bornkamm and Fuchs: Jesus claimed that he could forgive sins.

(2) Jesus' teachings.

Kasemann: Jesus' main messages are that God has come to give men what they don't deserve and to set them free from bondage.

Conzelmann: Jesus spoke of a **future** kingdom which in some sense is confronting us right **now**. This point was regularly lost in old liberalism, which typically sets these two elements in contradiction.

(3) Jesus' conduct.

Bornkamm and Fuchs: Jesus' actions show that he is submitted to God, yet he claims a unique authority (seen in the cleansing of the temple). He also showed great graciousness to outcasts (contrast Jesus' attitude vs. Pharisees' attitude).

The results seem rather minimal, but they are striking. They suggest that Jesus is much more than liberals have granted, and that they should reconsider their scepticism.

b. Schonfield's *Passover Plot* (1966)

Hugh J. Schonfield was a liberal British Jew who worked on the international Dead Sea Scroll committee. Apparently he accepted the claims of Jesus at one point in his career but later gave it up. He is quite familiar with evangelical interpretations of OT prophecy.

According to Schonfield, Jesus' ministry is an elaborate plot to fulfill the OT prophecies regarding the Messiah, especially his death and resurrection.

Jesus, convinced he is the Messiah, gathers disciples, but avoids claiming publicly to be the Messiah for his own safety. Eventually, however, Jesus is rejected in Galilee and realizes that he must "die" and rise again in order to fulfill OT prophecy (Ps.22).

Jesus decides to fake his death rather than trust God for a resurrection. He constructs a plot using several assistants who are only in on parts of the plot. Lazarus' death and resurrection is faked to build tension with the authorities. The colt is arranged for the triumphal entry, forcing the Jewish authorities to take action to avoid a revolt. Jesus controls the timing of his arrest so that he will be crucified for only a few hours. With the code words "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani!" an assistant drugs him with a sponge and Jesus goes into a coma.

The plot, almost perfect, is ruined by the spear thrust from the Roman soldier. Jesus is taken down by Joseph of Arimathea and an unnamed conspirator we'll call "Mr.X." That night he is removed from the tomb, taken to another place, revived. He gives Mr. X a message to carry to his disciples: "Tell them to meet me in Galilee." Jesus dies after Mr. X leaves to deliver the message.

Mr. X tries to tell the women at the tomb; they think he is an angel. He tries to tell some disciples on road to Emmaus; they mistake him for Jesus. The confusion continues. Any appearances where Jesus was not immediately recognized are treated as those of Mr.X. The clear and solid appearances were stories made up later by the church.

Schonfield's story reflects the influence of the discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls, with more emphasis on the Messianic expectation at Jesus' time, and renewed appreciation for the Gospel of John as a source. It is peculiar in its daring treatment of OT Prophecies. It is a classic example of a plot theory.

c. An Aside on Plot Theories

A "plot theory" claims that some set of historical events can better be explained C not by the stated or surface motivations but C by an unstated, hidden, secret, plot. The claim that Kennedy was killed by the CIA, or Lincoln by the Radical Republicans, are examples.

Plots clearly occur in human history, but plot theories face serious methodological problems:

- The better the plot, the more hidden it was (and is), and therefore the less useful our data is. The perfect plot doesn't fit the data at all!
- Therefore it is possible to construct far more plots than could actually happen, so that the chance of any one plot being true is very small.
- It is impossible to prove a plot theory right or wrong before the Last Judgment, but very dangerous to hang one=s world view on a particular plot theory.

d. Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* (1970)

John Marco Allegro was a professor at University of Manchester, England, and another British representative on International DSS team. This book ruined his academic reputation!

Allegro has a super plot theory, more radical than Bultmann or Schonfield. Jesus never existed! Christianity and Judaism never existed (in the 1st century)! Their books and teachings are all expressions of code-words used to disguise a super-secret mushroom fertility cult. Judaism and Christianity do not appear to be such now because the secrets were lost under persecution, and the "front organizations" continued and developed on

their own.

Allegro tries to prove by etymology that the OT and NT are filled with secret codes relating to hallucinogenic mushrooms and sexual orgies. He uses Latin, Greek, Arabic, Persian, Syriac, Hebrew, Aramaic, Sanskrit, Ugaritic, Accadian and Sumerian, enough to snow all but the best linguists.

e. Smith, *The Secret Gospel* (1973); *Jesus the Magician* (1978)

Morton Smith was Professor of Ancient History at Columbia University; studied in Israel 1941-45, Ph.D. Hebrew University; Th.D. Harvard.

Smith claims he discovered C in 1958 at the Mar Saba Greek Orthodox Monastery in Israel C a letter from Clement of Alexandria (fl 200 AD) copied into the back of a Greek book published in the 1700s. The book with letter C if it ever existed C has disappeared. For the text of the letter see pp.14-17 of *Secret Gospel*.

Letter answers some charges made by a gnostic group called the Carpocratians who had a different version of the Gospel of Mark (included lewd materials used to justify their sexual immorality). Clement says he has a secret longer version of Mark (not including lewd material) which the Carpocratians stole, then corrupted for their libertine group.

Smith sides with the Carpocratians in claiming Jesus was really a libertine gnostic magician and that this explains his miracles, personal claims of deity, secrecy and statements about the law (men are not responsible to the law in any way).

This is not a **clumsy** fraud: Clement was interested in these topics. The letter resembles Clement's style. If it is a forgery, the writer knew at least as much as Smith (!) [see recent interesting parallel with clever crook Mark Hoffman in Mormon circles].

7. The Jesus Seminar

A group of radical NT researchers who have been meeting for twenty years or so to produce a scholarly presentation on Jesus that will blow traditional Christianity out of the water. They have been given extensive media publicity every time they meet (about every 6 months), and in 1993 presented their first book-length production:

Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. New York: Macmillan, 1993.

Let us sketch where they are coming from and their results they obtain (numbers in parentheses are pages in *Five Gospels*):

The seven pillars of scholarly wisdom (2-5; their numbering)

1. Jesus of history vs. Christ of faith

2. Jesus of synoptics vs. Jesus of John
3. Priority of Mark
4. Existence of Q
5. Eschatological vs. non-eschatological Jesus
6. Oral culture vs. print culture
7. Gospels assumed non-historical unless proved otherwise

Rules of written evidence (16-25; my numbering)

Clustering and contexting

1. The evangelists frequently group sayings and parables in clusters that did not originate with Jesus.
2. The evangelists frequently relocate sayings and parables or invent new narrative contexts for them.

Revision and commentary

3. The evangelists frequently expand sayings or parables, or provide them with an interpretive overlay or comment.
4. The evangelists often revise or edit sayings to make them conform to their own individual language, style, or viewpoint.

False attribution

5. Words borrowed from the fund of common lore or the Greek scriptures are often put on the lips of Jesus.
6. The evangelists frequently attribute their own statements to Jesus.

Difficult sayings

7. Hard sayings are frequently softened in the process of transmission to adapt them to the conditions of daily living.
8. Variations in difficult sayings often betray the struggle of the early Christian community to interpret or adapt sayings to its own situation.

Christianizing Jesus

9. Sayings and parables expressed in "Christian" language are the creation of the evangelists or their Christian predecessors.
10. Sayings or parables that contrast with the language or viewpoint of the gospel in which they are embedded reflect older tradition (but not necessarily tradition that originated with Jesus).
11. The Christian community develops apologetic statements to defend its claims and sometimes attributes such statements to Jesus.
12. Sayings and narratives that reflect knowledge of events that took place after Jesus' death are the creation of the evangelists or the oral tradition before them.

Rules of oral evidence (25-34; my numbering)

From the gospels to Jesus

1. Only sayings and parables that can be traced back to the oral period, 30-50 CE, can possibly have originated with Jesus.

2. Sayings or parables that are attested in two or more independent sources are older than the sources in which they are imbedded.
3. Sayings or parables that are attested in two different contexts probably circulated independently at an earlier time.
4. The same or similar content attested in two or more different forms has had a life of its own and therefore may stem from an old tradition.
5. Unwritten tradition that is captured by the written gospels relatively late may preserve very old tradition.

Orality and memory

6. The oral memory best retains sayings and anecdotes that are short, provocative, memorable and oft repeated.
7. The most frequently recorded words of Jesus in the surviving gospels take the form of aphorisms and parables.
8. The earliest layer of the gospel tradition is made up of single aphorisms and parables that circulated by word of mouth prior to the written gospels.
9. Jesus' disciples remembered the core or gist of his sayings and parables, not his precise words, except in rare cases.

The storyteller's license

10. To express what Jesus is imagined to have said on particular occasions: Jesus says to them, "Let's cross to the other side." (Mk 4:35)
11. To sum up the message of Jesus as Mark understood it: "The time is up. God's imperial rule is closing in. Change your ways and put your trust in the good news." (Mk 1:15)
12. To forecast the outcome of his own gospel story and sum up the gospel then being proclaimed in his community, Mark has Jesus say, "The son of Adam is being turned over to his enemies, and they will end up killing him. And three days after he is killed he will rise!" (Mk 9:31-32)
13. To express Mark's own view of the disciples and others, Mark has Jesus say to the frightened disciples after the squall had died down, "Why are you so cowardly? You still don't trust, do you?" (Mk 4:40)
14. Since Mark links trust with the cure of the sick, he has Jesus say to the woman he has just cured, "Daughter, your trust has cured you." (Mk 5:34) Jesus' remark is underscored by Mark's narrative aside: "He was unable to perform a single miracle there, except that he did cure a few by laying hands on them, though he was always shocked by their lack of trust." (Mk 6:5-6)
15. To justify the later practice of fasting, in spite of the fact that Jesus and his first disciples did not fast: "The days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast, on that day." (Mk 2:20)
16. To elicit the right confession, Mark has Jesus ask, "What are people saying about me?" (Mk 8:27) A little later in the conversation, he asks, "What about you, who do you say I am?" (Mk 8:29) Peter then responds, "You are the Anointed," which is what Christians are supposed to say.

Distinctive discourse

17. Jesus' characteristic talk was distinctive C it can usually be distinguished from

common lore. Otherwise it is futile to search for the authentic words of Jesus.

18. Jesus' sayings and parables cut against the social and religious grain.
19. Jesus' sayings and parables surprise and shock: they characteristically call for a reversal of roles or frustrate ordinary, everyday expectations.
20. Jesus' sayings and parables are often characterized by exaggeration, humor, and paradox.
21. Jesus' images are concrete and vivid, his sayings and parables customarily metaphorical and without explicit application.

The laconic sage

22. Jesus does not as a rule initiate dialogue or debate, nor does he offer to cure people.
23. Jesus rarely makes pronouncements or speaks about himself in the first person.
24. Jesus makes no claim to be the Anointed, the messiah.

The colors in the text (36-37)

Voting Option 1:

- red: I would include this item unequivocally in the database for determining who Jesus was.
- pink: I would include this item with reservations (or modifications) in the database.
- gray: I would not include this item in the database, but I might make use of some of its content in determining who Jesus was.
- black: I would not include this item in the primary database.

Voting Option 2:

- red: Jesus undoubtedly said this or something very like this.
- pink: Jesus probably said something like this.
- gray: Jesus did not say this, but the ideas contained in it are close to his own.
- black: Jesus did not say this; it represents the perspective or content of a later or different tradition.

Scoring:
 red: 1.00
 pink: 0.67
 gray: 0.33
 black: 0.00

Printing:
 red: .7501-1.000
 pink: .5001-.7500
 gray: .2501-.5000
 black: .0000-.2500

Results

An index of red and pink letter sayings lists the ninety sayings scoring .5 or better, with detailed votes for their various versions in the different Gospels (549-553).

According to a remark on page 5, "Eighty-two percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him." So only 18% of the words spoken by Jesus in the Gospels are admitted to be his.

In Mark, only one saying is viewed as authentic (red): "Pay the emperor what belongs to the emperor, and God what belongs to God!" (12:17). Not many even come in as pink

In John, only one saying even makes it to pink: "A prophet gets no respect on his own turf." (4:44)

The Gospel of Thomas is rated ahead of both of these, with several reds and a fair bit of pink, about comparable to Matthew and Luke.

Response

The best book I have seen so far in response to the work of the Jesus Seminar is Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland, eds., *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus* (Zondervan, 1995).

Some Specific Responses to Liberal Lives:

Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 1987 (Inter-Varsity).

Boyd, Gregory A. *Cynic Sage or Son of God? Recovering the Real Jesus in an Age of Revisionist Replies*, 1995 (Bridgepoint).

Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 1994 (Crossway).

McDowell, Josh and Bill Wilson. *He Walked Among Us: Evidence for the Historical Jesus*, 1988 (Here's Life).

Strimple, Robert B. *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Roots of Gospel Criticism*, 1995 (Presbyterian and Reformed).

8. Summary on the liberal "lives of Christ".

- a. The guiding principle of liberal reconstructions is the rejection of the miraculous.
 - This is not a necessary principle to such reconstructions, but it is currently standard.
 - Could use spiritism (Jesus studied under Tibetan guru), but modern scholarship still considers this trash at present.

- 1) So fulfilled prophecy is dismissed as one of the following:
 - Later invention
 - Intentional fulfillment
 - Prophecy was vague
 - Fulfillment was misinterpreted

- 2) Miracle accounts are similarly handled.
 - Later inventions ("myth") - did not actually happen.
 - Staged ("fraud").
 - Misinterpreted natural event (rationalizing).
 - Faith healing (psychosomatic).

- b. The resulting attitude toward Biblical materials is progressive Scepticism.

- c. But the resulting picture of Jesus is an historical enigma:
 - If Jesus never existed (like Paul Bunyan), where did the historical evidence come from?
 - If he existed, but was only a fraud, where did His moral teaching come from?
 - If Jesus was only a gentle teacher of righteousness, why did he receive all the opposition, particularly from the sources pictured?
 - If Jesus was only a revolutionary, where did all the non-revolutionary teaching come from?
 - How can the moral teaching of Jesus be reconciled with his Messianic claims apart from the Biblical explanation?
 - If Jesus is not supernatural, then we must leave out part of the data to construct a consistent personality model for a human-only Jesus.

Note that whenever some aspect of the data is thrown out, we must explain how it got there -- early.

This usually requires the insertion of some secret plot theory into Jesus' life, or of an unknown genius into early Christianity. It presumes that the Gospels are basically unreliable.

But if Jesus is the God-man Messiah, who has also come to demonstrate what sin is and point it out to people, then Jesus' multi-faceted personality and actions make sense. The Gospels are reliable. Craig Blomberg (book listed above) shows that if it is not assumed

in advance that miracles cannot happen, then the Gospels look very impressive indeed.

d. Are the arguments against the miraculous valid?

This is the primary issue to which NT historicity reduces. If miracles can occur, then the NT gives every evidence of reliable history. If miracles cannot happen, then the NT is unreliable and the liberals may be justified in leaving out whatever NT "data" does not fit.

1) The Deductive Argument (*a priori*).

Newman has not seen this in print formally, but it does color liberal arguments.

a) Form of the Argument:

/1/ A miracle is a violation of natural law.

/2/ To violate natural law is to:

/a/ commit a sin,

/b/ commit a logical fallacy, or

/c/ blunder esthetically.

/3/ God cannot sin, commit fallacies, or blunder esthetically

/4/ Therefore: God cannot do miracles.

b) Discussion:

Note that this argument will not work against Satanic miracles, since he can certainly sin, commit logical fallacies, and may even blunder esthetically!

The logical structure of the argument is sound, but we must examine the content of the propositions.

/1/ Is a miracle necessarily a violation of natural law?

Is lifting a chair a violation of the law of gravity? Depends on our definition of "violation".

However, as /1/ has been used by Christians as a common (though perhaps not accurate) definition of a miracle, we should not fault it heavily.

/2/ There is an ambiguity in the term "law".

--"sin" implies a moral law.

--"fallacy" implies a logical law.

--"blunder" implies an esthetic law.

But are we justified in mixing moral precepts with physical constraints? Does breaking a physical "law" necessarily imply a moral "sin" has occurred?

Also, are these the **only** possibilities for categorizing a violation of natural law? Perhaps there is another, physical law, and we should not limit God to these 3.

So /2/ is an incomplete statement, trading on the ambiguity of "law".

/3/ Even if /1/ and /2/ are granted, it is clear that the Bible contains moral laws which are intended only for man, hence God can "violate" them.

E.g., God can command us to worship Him (because of who He is), but we should not command people to worship us.

Thus the Bible has a precedent for person-dependent laws. What is a violation for us may not be for God, as that law does not apply to Him. It is dangerous to limit or judge God by our standards.

/4/ The deductive argument is not conclusive.

Especially as miracles are connected with God as one of His attributes.

Since we cannot (safely) explore the supernatural on our own, arguing with revelation about it just leaves us in the dark.

Sometimes people will argue that the Biblical picture of God is inferior because it pictures God as needing to "tinker" with his universe. If God were really great, He would have made the natural laws better so that He would not need to infer with them.

However, this assumes that God desired to create a universe which was fully automatic. Perhaps He desired to create a universe which allowed for His self-expression. [e.g., contrast a clock (automatic) with a guitar (input)].

2) Inductive Arguments (*a posteriori*).

a) David Hume. His is the most famous and influential.

/1/ When someone tells us of an event, we tend to accept the report or be skeptical of it in proportion to the degree that it is unusual.

/2/ By definition, a miracle is a very rare and unusual event, and our uniform experience

dictates against the miraculous. Thus we should be very skeptical about any reports of miracles.

/3/ The means by which we know something is our experience in the world. Since miracles go against this and upset our uniform experience, we tend to explain them by some naturalistic means unless that explanation would itself be more unusual than accepting a miracle.

Hume now shifts from an argument to a program:

/4/ Thus when a miracle is reported, we should reject it unless any naturalistic explanation would be even more unusual.

Analysis:

/1/ is certainly true. Our scepticism does increase as one claims to have met X yesterday, as X shifts from Dr. Zimmerman to President Clinton, to Queen Elizabeth, to Martin Luther, to Jesus.

/2a/ is correct: The Bible says that miracles are very rare events. We should tend to be skeptical of reports of them.

/2b/ is incorrect: Hume has shifted the definition of a miracle from a rare event to an impossible event. His conclusion is thus the result of a circular argument.

Whose "uniform experience" is Hume considering? Over what time period? How many individuals is he including? To try to use the "uniform experience" of all humanity would not work as some people report that they have seen miracles.

This is true even in modern times. We have nonsympathetic reports of occult miracles in the literature [e.g, Fatima, spontaneous human combustion].

A more general problem: If we assume that miracles do occur, this methodology tells us to explain it away anyhow.

Thus the argument must be inadequate since it does not include a method to test their possible occurrence.

-- C.S. Lewis responds to the "uniform experience" argument in *Miracles*, pp. 122-124.

--J.W. Montgomery discusses it in *Christianity for the Tough-Minded*, p. 42.

"Uniform experience" is a poor argument, as there may be a whole realm of reality which we cannot sense and which must be revealed to us by revelation (as

a deaf or blind person must depend on revelation for the sense they lack).

b) Adolf Harnack in *What is Christianity?* pp. 24-25 in the Harper Torchbook edition.

We do not need to accept miracles because they are based on primitive ignorance (p 24):

/1/ In NT times, miracles were thought to be commonplace.

Andrew Dickson White argues this at great length in his *History of the Warfare between Science and Theology in Christendom*.

Problem: The reactions of people in the NT accounts show that they did not expect miraculous interventions; they were no ho-hum events.

The disciples did not typically expect Jesus to work a miracle to get them out of a jam: e.g., feeding 5000, storm at sea, etc.

NT people always marvel when miracles occur and they have trouble drawing simple lessons from them. This implies they did not view them as common or even as expected.

Harnack argues from reports in secular literature that miracle accounts were common in the NT period. These reports are not as well-attested nor as clear as the NT accounts, but we should not rule out some of these as the Bible itself allows for miracles by satanic power.

We must be careful when deciding what can or cannot occur on the basis of our preconceptions:

Late 18th century scientists in France and America (including Thomas Jefferson) refused to believe that stones fell from the sky, because only peasants and priests reported seeing them.

The "sky does not contain rocks" principle proved to be inaccurate.

/2/ NT people did not know enough science to recognize a miracle when they saw one (p 25):

This appeals to our pride in high technology. Much of our advanced technology does look miraculous to "primitives" (radio, telephone, computers, etc.).

However, can we now explain away Jesus' miracles by means of high technology? (Walking on water? raising dead?).

NT people knew which diseases did not heal suddenly (blindness, death, leprosy, crippled limbs, etc.).

People today still cannot explain these miracles with technology.

Consider Mark 6:47-52 - walking on water
7:31-37 - deaf & mute healed
8:1-20 - feeding 4000

It is impressive that Jesus did just those types of miracles which still stump us in the 20th century!

e. What does acceptance of the miraculous do to scientific history or to science in general?

Many historians and scientists are scared of miracle because they think that then the whole bottom drops out of their work: "My job is to explain reality, and this would introduce a whole new realm."

Scientific historians feel there should be no miraculous interventions needed to explain history.

Adding miracles does add a new dimension to reality for many people.

History has thus been "explained" without miracles. But we don't know if these explanations are true since we can't check them.

1) It makes an enormous difference on the scale of ultimate explanations.

If there is a God who intervenes, then history will be affected on a large scale.

God and other supernatural beings introduce the possibilities of new purposes and goals.

2) What difference it makes on a small scale depends on the actual frequency of miracles at that time and place.

May be points in history when miracles were happening but they were not important historically.

Regeneration is miraculous and does effect history.

There may be points in history where miracles are extremely important for understanding the events.

- 3) It adds another variable for use in constructing models, but it doesn't follow that this variable must be invoked at every gap, any more than any other mode of explanation.

There already are plenty of difficult-to-assess variables in understanding history: Individual personalities, backgrounds, motivations, economics, etc.

We do not have to evoke a miracle whenever an event occurs which we cannot explain.

- 4) From the Biblical perspective, the miraculous is not irrational because it is the action of a rational being and, in God's case, is accompanied by revelation.

Some people object that miracles add an irrational element to history. By this they mean it adds an element which they can not predict what it will do.

This destroys the historian's dream of being able to predict the future.

The Christian realizes that something irrational is **not** being added. Another mind is involved, but God's mind is logical and rational.

Through revelation, God explains what He is doing in His miracles before and/or after the event.

Satan may or may not tell what he is doing. He is not trustworthy in any case.

Sin and sinful minds are irrational, but God is not.

Thus Satanic miracles may be irrational, but in dealing with the motivations of (sinful) humans, we already have plenty of the irrational in history.

- 5) In fact, the miraculous itself is a revelation of the unseen supernatural person (e.g. of God) just as human activity is a revelation of the unseen inner man.

Note the parallel activities of God and man.

Miracles reveal an unseen supernatural person, just as human activity reveals the unseen inner man.

There is already an [irrational] hidden element in history since man and his motivations can not be mathematically explained or absolutely foreseen.

Miracles are not the only item that keeps historians from being able to predict the

future: People also mess them up.

- 6) The miraculous surely solves a lot of problems in Biblical history, as well as in natural pre-history.

Liberals have not been able to make sense of Jesus without miracles.

With miracles, Jesus and rest of Scripture makes sense:

- How the disciples came to believe in the Resurrection;
- Where the elaborate ritual, moral, and legal code of the Pentateuch came from (Liberals had to spread its evolution over 1000 years);
- Fulfilled prophecies, especially of coming of Jesus.

Also natural pre-history is explained: Origins of life, earth, universe, etc.

f. What are we to make of liberal reconstructions?

- 1) They are Satan's work.

see C.S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, pp.105-109, Macmillan paperback; pp.116-118 hardcover edition.

Screwtape describes how to keep people distracted from the real Jesus: Have them search for the "historical Jesus" and write a new life of Jesus every year.

Such work is called "brilliant" in literary circles, but is based on the type of guesswork which would be ruinous in business, betting on horses, etc.

This distraction from the real Jesus is a modern form of idolatry, since they make up their own Jesus.

- 2) Why does God permit this?

Deut. 13:1-5 discusses why the LORD would allow false prophets to arise (parallel to liberals):

Test for people to see if they love the God who exists in comparison with gods of human invention who often look more attractive, or more tolerant of their sin.

The world (and its history) is a testing ground to demonstrate that humans are as bad as God says they are and that only His mercy can save us.

A nice discussion of the reality of miracles from an evangelical perspective is given in R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas, eds. *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*. Intervarsity, 1997.

II. Jewish Background to the New Testament

To understand the New Testament, especially the Gospels, it is helpful to know a good deal about the Old Testament. It is also helpful to know something of what went on during the four centuries that separate the end of the OT narrative from the beginning of the NT narrative. It is this latter we wish to look at here, called in Christian circles the intertestament period, and in Jewish circles the second temple period.

A. Ancient Sources of Information on the InterTestament Period

1. Predictive Passages in the Old Testament

Daniel gives an overview of the period and some details

2. OT Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha

Religious writings of Jews, mostly during IT period

Give insight into culture, religious ideas, sects, biblical interpretation during period

3. Philo (c20 BC-40+ AD)

Jew who studied Greek philosophy, tried to combine OT with selected ideas from Greek philosophy

Shows partial accommodation to Hellenism

4. Josephus (AD 37-100+)

Jew who was involved on both sides of Jewish war 66-73

Wrote *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*

5. Dead Sea Scrolls

Literature written/copied by Qumran sect (probably some sort of Essenes)

6. Rabbinic Literature

Oral traditions of rabbis

Midrash, Mishnah, Talmuds

B. Daniel's Overview of the Period

1. Nebuchadnezzar's Image (Daniel chapter 2)

a. Image pictured (vv 32-35)

(0) Statue & action

- (1) Head of Gold (32)
- (2) Breast & Arms of Silver (32)
- (3) Belly & Sides of Bronze (32)
- (4) Legs of Iron (33)
- (5) Feet, part Iron, part Clay (33)
- (6) Stone smashes image, grows to fill earth (34-35)

b. Image explained (vv 38-45)

- (0) What will happen hereafter (45)
- (1) Nebuchadnezzar's universal rule (38)
- (2) Another kingdom inferior [?] to Neb's (39)
- (3) 3rd kingdom to rule over all the earth (39)
- (4) 4th kingdom strong as iron, breaking (40)
- (5) The same [?], part strong, part broken (41-43)
- (6) God will set up a permanent kingdom (44)

2. Daniel's Four Wild Animals (Daniel chapter 7)

a. Animals pictured (3-14, more details in 19, 21-23)

- (0) Diverse beasts from sea (3)
- (1) lion w/ eagle's wings; plucked, lifted, heart (4)
- (2) bear raised on one side; 3 ribs in mouth (5)
- (3) leopard, 4 wings, 4 heads (6)
- (4) dreadful, terrible, iron teeth, bronze claws; 10 horns, 11th horn rises, wars w/ saints (7-8, 19,21-22)
- (5) 4th destroyed, dominion given to son of man (9-14)

b. Animals explained (17-26)

- (0-4) 4 kings who will arise from earth (17)
- (4) 4th kingdom, diverse from others; horns = kings; wears out saints for 3-1/2 times (23-26)
- (5) Saints take kingdom & possess it forever (18)

The Kingdoms	The Image (Dan 2)	The Beasts (Dan 7)
Babylon: 609-539 BC	Gold Head	Lion w/ wings
Medo-Persia: 539-331 BC	Silver Arms & Breast	Bear eating ribs
Greece: 331-30 BC	Bronze Abdomen	Leopard w/ 4 heads
Rome: 30 BC- 476 AD	Iron Legs	Terrible 10-horned

C. Palestine under Persia (539-331 BC)

1. Rise of Cyrus

Cyrus (559) inherits small kingdom of Anshan (Persia)
 Cyrus defeats Medes (550); Nabonidus cancels support!
 Cyrus takes Asia Minor (546), then Babylon (539)

2. Return of the Jews (under Cyrus 1: 539-530)

Cyrus tries to avoid offending other religions
 Ends deportation policy, so Jews can return (Ezra 1:2-4)

3. Rebuilding of the (2nd) Temple (Darius 1: 521-486)

Cyrus initially allowed rebuilding to start, but stopped it due to opposition of neighbors
 (Ezr 6:3-5; Ezr 4)
 Jews allowed to rebuild temple after showing loyalty at accession of Darius as king of Persia
 Temple completed 515 under leadership of prophets Haggai & Zechariah, governor Zerubbabel & high priest Jeshua

4. Revival in Judah & Rebuilding Walls of Jerusalem (Artaxerxes 1: 465-423)

Ezra (c458) comes from Babylonia, restores people to observance of law, w/ permission of Persian king
 Nehemiah (445) sent by Persian king as governor to rebuild walls

5. The Aramaic Language

a. Old Language of Syria (upper Euphrates)

b. Becomes Diplomatic Language of the Ancient Near East

c. Adopted by the Jews

apparently during Babylonian exile (see Neh 8:7-8)
 oral translations of OT called Targums
 still in use at time of Christ
 used in rabbinic Talmud, c550 AD

6. Rise of the Synagogue

- place of worship for those unable to attend temple
- features prayer & Bible study but no sacrifice
- date of origin obscure
- continued alongside 2nd temple (515 BC - AD 70)
- only place of Jewish worship after destruction of 2nd temple

7. The Intertestament Temples

- Second (Jerusalem) Temple (515 BC - AD 70)
 - orthodox, continuation of Mosaic regulations
- Samaritan (Mt. Gerizim) Temple (450/330 - 128 BC)
 - Samaritans, w/ help from renegade priests
 - destroyed by Hasmonians (Maccabees)
 - still a holy site in NT times (see John 4:20) & today
- Elephantine (Egyptian) Temple (c525-c390 BC)
 - Jewish mercenaries lived here, possibly refugees from Manasseh
 - polytheistic? cp Jer 44:15-19: "Queen of Heaven"
- (Later) Leontopolis Temple (c160 BC - AD 72)
 - built in Maccabean period by refugee high priest Onias 3
 - destroyed by Romans after Jewish War

D. Palestine under the Greeks (331-c160 BC)

1. Alexander (336-323 BC)

- succeeds assassinated father Philip at age 20 (336 BC)
- invades Asia Minor (334) w/ 35,000 men
- victories at
 - Granicus River (334) - opens Asia Minor
 - Issus (333) - opens Syria, Palestine, Egypt
 - Gaugamela (331) - destroys Persian empire
- continues eastward to India, turning back at demand of his soldiers
- dies in Babylon at age 33
- his agenda includes mixing East & West; Hellenism, spread of Greek language

2. The Struggle for Succession (323-301 BC)

- Alex's son still baby at Alex's death; Alex's brother incompetent
- generals keeping throne for son fall to fighting
- eventually empire broken into several pieces: usually counted as four
 - Lysimachus ruling Thrace
 - Cassander ruling Macedonia

Seleucus ruling Asia Minor, Mesopotamia
Ptolemy ruling Egypt & Syria
only latter two important for Jewish background

3. The Ptolemaic Dynasty (to 30 BC; over Palestine 301-198 BC)
Ptolemy grabbed off Palestine while others defeating Antigonus
reasonably favorable treatment of Jews both in Palestine, Egypt
(a large number settle in Alexandria)
4. The Seleucid Dynasty (to 63 BC; controls Pal 198-c160 BC)
in long series of wars finally got Palestine from Ptolemies
Seleucid ruler Antiochus 4 favors Hellenistic Jews, allowing them to establish Jerusalem
as Hellenistic city
Ant 4 later attempts to abolish Judaism (168), leading to Maccabean revolt (167)
5. Hellenism

From Greek word for Greece, *ἡλλάς*; “hellenistos” meaning Greek-like
name for Greek culture as it developed in East after Alexander
influenced Judaism and somewhat influenced by it
includes religious mixing (syncretism)
various schools of philosophy
(Epicurean, Stoic, Platonic)
political benefits of citizenship

6. The Septuagint Translation of the Old Testament

- a. Origin of the Version (c250 BC)
acc to *Letter of Aristeas*: 72 Jewish elders come to Egypt, translate Law at
request of Ptolemy 2
later additions to story:
translation covers whole OT;
identical translations produced by translators working in pairs
general opinion of story today
translation into Greek made at Alexandria
Pentateuch translated as a unit about 250 BC
scrolls from Jerusalem (possibly translators, too)
Ptolemy 2 allowed work, may have given aid
- b. Importance of Version
 - 1) Longest translation of any ancient writing known in antiquity
 - 2) Gives text of OT a century or so before oldest Heb texts for most of OT
 - 3) Set pattern for Greek theological terms used in OT & NT
 - 4) Put OT in universal language of Mediterranean

5) Became OT of early church

E. Jewish Independence under the Hasmoneans (160-63 BC)

1. Antiochus 4 Epiphanes & the Abomination of Desolation

usurps throne from under-age nephew (175 BC)

tries to unify diverse empire via Hellenism

favors Hellenistic Jews, who refound Jerusalem as "Antiochia"

deposes orthodox high priest Onias 3 for Hellenistic brother Jason, then Jason for Menelaus (who bribes him to get office)

fuming from defeat in Egypt (168) and rebellion in Israel, Ant 4 tries to destroy Judaism, forbidding circumcision & kosher, destroying Scripture, rededicating temple to Zeus (Ant considered himself a manifestation of Zeus)

2. The Maccabean Revolt (167-134 BC)

a. Origin

Seleucids go through towns of Judea, enforcing A4's decrees and commanding pagan sacrifice

At village of Modin, aged priest Mattathias kills Jew who tries to sacrifice, then kills official & his troops

Mattathias & 5 sons call for armed resistance, flee to mountains

b. Judah the Maccabee (166-160 BC)

3rd son of Matt, military nickname "hammer" or "hammerer"

JM leads guerilla campaign, destroying several Seleucid armies

JM's forces grow w/ success, matching Seleucid escalation of forces

Macc's take Jerusalem (exc citadel), cleanse & rededicate temple (Dec 164; origin of Jewish festival of Hannukah)

Meanwhile Antiochus 4 dies (163), Lysias (regent) offers peace terms acceptable to Hasidim but not Macc's, splitting opposition

JM, heavily outnumbered, killed in battle (160)

c. Jonathan (160-142 BC) and Simon (142-134 BC)

surviving brothers of Judah

Seleucid empire weakened with division, so J & S able by diplomacy to gain strength until Judea becomes virtually independent

both murdered by opponents, but not before Simon gains hereditary priesthood and rule for family

3. The Hasmonean Dynasty (134-63 BC)

a. John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC)

greatly expands Judean territory:

coastal cities, Idumea, Samaria
 rise of Pharisees & Sadducees

- b. Aristobolus (103 BC)
 after killing several brothers, taking title "king," dies within a year from fear,
 drink, disease
- c. Alexander Jannaeus (102-76 BC)
 Aristobolus' brother, released from prison & married to A's wife
 continues expansion of kingdom until nearly as big as David & Solomon's
 Pharisees revolt, call for Syrians to help; AJ about to lose when Phar's defect; AJ
 wins, crucifies many Pharisees
- d. Salome Alexandria (75-67 BC)
 wife of Arist & Alex J, succeeds at AJ's death
 2 sons: Hyrcanus 2 - made high priest
 Aristobolus 2 - given military command
- e. End of Hasmonean Independence (66-63 BC)
 Salome dies, succeeded by H2 (& Phar's), but A2 (supported by Sadd's) takes
 throne from him
 H2 flees, opens civil war, calls on Romans for help

4. Pharisees, Sadducees & Essenes
 origins rather obscure, but all 3 app arise in this period; Phar's & Essenes app from
 Hasidim
 theology:

Essenes	Pharisees	Sadducees
<i>hasid</i> - faithful	<i>parash</i> - separate	<i>tsedek</i> - righteous
super Pharisees, abandoned temple	ritual purity, hedge around Law	more pragmatic, compromising
Calvinistic	Calvinistic	Arminian
OT + secret books	OT + oral tradition	OT only
Immortal souls?	Resurrected bodies	No survival
Emphasis on angels	Belief in angels	No angels
Emphasis on eschatology.	Last judgment	No judgment

influence & survival:

Few, withdrawn	Popular, not large	Few richest
Withdrawn from politics	Dominant religiously	Dominant politically
Wrote or copied Dead Sea Scrolls	Rabbinic literature by heirs	No known writings survive
Qumran destroyed 68, some survived	Survive AD 70 to dominate Judaism	Destroyed w/ temple

F. Palestine under the Romans (63 BC-135 AD & beyond)

1. The End of the Hasmonean Dynasty (63 BC)

Romans intervene in dispute between H2 and A2

Judea loses much of its conquered territories

Hyrchanus 2 made "ethnarch" of Judea (including Idumea, Perea, Galilee), demoted from "king"

2. The *Pax Romana* (c30 BC-c170 AD)

2 centuries of peace over Roman Empire beginning w/ Augustus

Great growth in prosperity, reaches peak in 2nd cen AD

Pax Romana important for early spread of Christianity

Other features important for spread of Xy:

-- Roman roads

-- lack of national boundaries

3. The Herod Family

a. Antipater, Herod's father

Idumean advisor to Hyrchanus 2, power behind throne

Made Procurator of Judea for aiding Julius Caesar

Made own sons Phasael & Herod administrators

Assassinated 43 BC

b. Herod the Great (37-4 BC)

Appointed joint tetrarch w/ brother Phasael (42)

Brother killed by Parthians invading, Herod flees to Rome (40)

Senate appoints him King of Jews (40)

Herod returns with army, takes Jerusalem (37)

Throne insecure til Anthony & Cleopatra die (31)

Terrible family troubles:

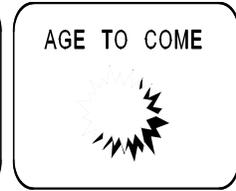
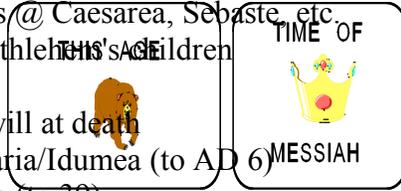
kills favorite wife, Mariamne, 3 sons, etc.

His Accomplishments:

ruled large territory
 refurbishes Jerusalem Temple (19 BC-66 AD)
 building projects @ Caesarea, Sebaste, etc.
 killing of the Bethlehem's children

c. Herod's Sons - ruled by his will at death

Archelaus - Judea/Samaria/Idumea (to AD 6)
 Antipas - Galilee/Peraea (to 39)
 Philip - Iturea/Trachonitis (to 34)



d. Herod's Descendants - by Mariamne (royal blood)

Herod Agrippa 1 - King of Jews, AD 41-44
 Herod Agrippa 2 - King (but not of Jews) dies about AD 100

G. Messianic Expectation at the End of the I.T. Period

1. Messianic Fervor

strong in 1st cen AD, infl in Jewish revolt
 (see my "Time of the Messiah," *Evidence of Prophecy*)

2. The Person of the Messiah

Views change w/ time:
 early extra-Biblical materials see Messiah as more than human, though no clear view of his deity
 later rabbinic material tends to minimize Messiah
 OT data posed various paradoxes re/ office, activity, type of coming, type of being; these solved by NT and Jesus (see my "NT Model of Messiah," *Evid of Prophecy*)

3. Various Views of the Messianic Period

- a. Messianic period only (Millennium, on earth)
- b. Eschaton only (Eternal State, heaven or paradise)
- c. Both Messianic period and Eschaton (M.P. 1st, naturally)
 most common

4. The Order of Events (acc to view 3c)

- a. Signs preceding end
 - moral decay, calamities, signs in heaven, forerunner
- b. Messianic kingdom established
 - Return of Israel from exile
 - Punishment of nations
 - Messiah Rules (role in conquest varies)
- c. The Days of the Messiah ("Millennium" in Christian theology)
 - Variable features (e.g., place of nations), but usually marvelous
 - Length uncertain (40 yr to over 1000)
 - Ends w/ rebellion of Gog & Magog
- d. The Age to Come ("Eternal State" in Xn theol)
 - Resurrection
 - Judgment
 - Eternal state of punishment/reward

H. The End of the Jewish State

- 1. The Roman Procurators (AD 6-66)
 - Began with replacement of Archelaus, deposed (at Jewish request) for misgovernment
 - Revolt of Zealots at census of AD 6 a sign of things to come; Zealots grow stronger as Roman-Jewish relations deteriorate
 - Roman emperor Gaius (Caligula) orders own statue erected in Jerusalem Temple (41), but dies before order carried out
 - Procurators continue (except for 41-44, when Herod Agrippa I rules) until outbreak of Jewish revolt
 - In general, procurators did not understand Jews, were frequently antagonistic, aggravating conditions and so strengthening Zealots; last two (Albinus, Florus) especially wicked
- 2. The (First) Jewish Revolt (AD 66-73)
 - Started by incident between Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea, spread and fanned by procurator & Zealots to enflame whole country
 - Moderate Jews able to take leadership at first, but gradually lost out to more radical Zealots
 - Ended in destruction of Jerusalem, its temple (AD 70) and Jewish state; mopping up operation completed with fall of Masada in AD 73

I. Palestine after the Fall of Jerusalem (AD 70-135)

- 1. Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai & Jamnia
 - Johanan escaped besieged Jerusalem in coffin
 - got permission from Romans to establish rabbinical school and Sanhedrin at Jamnia

rebuilt Judaism (w/o state or temple) along lines of Pharisaism, eventually leading to Mishnah & Talmuds

Jewish Christians excluded from synagogue by adding curse on Nazarenes to synagogue liturgy (AD 90-100)

2. The Bar-Kochba (Second) Revolt (AD 132-35)

Set off by Roman preparations to build pagan city Aelia Capitolina on site of Jerusalem

R. Akiba recognizes Simeon b. Koseba as Messiah & fulfillment of Num 24:17 (star = kochba)

Revolt at 1st successful, w/ Roman troops spread thin eventually put down w/ considerable slaughter

Jews forbidden to come near Jerusalem (Aelia)

Judaism ceases to be a missionary religion

J. Materials for Researching Jewish Backgrounds of NT

1. Commentaries:

Those commentators which put some effort into this often have good material. It is easily organized by the passage you are studying, but be sure to look at parallel passages in the other Gospels.

2. Bible Encyclopedias:

These will be alphabetical by topic, which is great if you know what topic to look under! Most have subject indices with more categories than articles at the end (EJ at beginning), but still may not know what Jewish term to use to study a subject which has a different name in Christian circles (e.g., baptism, look under mikva or tevilah).

The standard liberal encyclopedia is *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols with supplement; an *Anchor Bible Dictionary* is now complete.

The best evangelical encyclopedias are *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE) and *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (ZPEB).

For Jewish background to the NT, one should also consult *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the older *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

3. Specialized Works:

Everett F. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 2nd ed. (Eerdmans, 1993). Both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds, organized by topic with indices. Lots of pictures and bibliography.

- Craig S. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (InterVarsity, 1994). Arranged by passage, with cross-references to parallels. Good material, but no information on sources.
- Strack, H. L. and Billerbeck, P. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*. 7 vols. Munich: Beck, 1922-61. Alas, in German, this valuable reference work gives rabbinic parallels to NT material by biblical passage.
- Dictionary of NT Background* (IVP, 2000), articles in alphabetical order.

4. Primary Sources:

You should try to read Josephus (at least) sometime early in your exegetical career.

- R. H. Charles, ed. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1913.
- James C. Charlesworth, *The OT Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. (Doubleday, 1983-85)
- Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. 3rd ed. Baltimore: Penguin, 1968. A handy paperback edition.
- Philo Judaeus, *Complete Works*. Much harder to find. The Yonge translation has recently been reprinted by Hendricksen in one volume hardback.
- Flavius Josephus, *Complete Works*. Frequently reprinted in the Whiston translation. The Loeb Classical Library has a more readable translation.
- Epstein, I., ed. *The Babylonian Talmud*. 35 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1935-52.
- Danby, H., ed. *The Mishnah*. Oxford: University Press, 1933.

III. Introduction to Exegesis

Here we provide a quick sketch of things to think about in doing exegesis. A more thorough presentation of exegesis will be found in the course NT 650 Advanced Greek. Two helpful books relating to biblical exegesis are: Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand* (Bridgepoint, 1994) and Robert Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Baker, 1997).

A. Some Features We Need to Continually Build

Exegesis is not simply a mechanical process, in which you learn a few rules and just apply them without thinking. It is not even totally scientific (at least as the average layperson thinks about science), as there may be lots of surprises. You may find yourself noticing things that the commentary you are reading does not, and (of course) vice versa. You will not be an expert exegete when you graduate from seminary. But if you will work on the following items, your exegesis will get better and better as the years go on.

1. English (or your native language) Bible Knowledge

The more you know the rest of the Bible, the better you will understand the particular passage you are working on. God really did design the Bible so that Scripture will help you to interpret Scripture.

The advent of computer Bibles has made it easier to find all other occurrences of particular English (Greek, Hebrew) words elsewhere in Scripture, but this doesn't guarantee you'll find all the passages that are relevant to the one you're working on. Even cross-reference Bibles and topical concordances won't guarantee this, though they can be very helpful.

One important item to keep working on the rest of your life is your knowledge of the Bible in your native or heart-language. To help myself with this, I try to read through the Bible once a year, and have done so for 25 years or so. The OT has 929 chapters, the NT has 260, for a total of 1189. To get through the Bible in a year, you need to read several chapters per day. To be exact, to get through just once in a year, you must read 3.26 chapters/day (approx 3/day with 5 on Sundays). If you read 4 chapters/day, you can get through the OT once and the NT twice. I try to use various versions of the Bible C once spent two years reading through the *NIV Study Bible* with all its notes C and have several times used one or another of the one-year Bibles.

2. Biblical Language Competency

Even after you have put in the (considerable) effort to learn Greek and/or Hebrew, much of this stuff will evaporate if you don't use it. I suggest that you try to put

in some time each day (or at least each week) working with one or both of the original languages, even if it is as little as translating only one verse! Tom Taylor recommends a devotional book *Light for the Path* that provides a short passage from the Greek NT and a verse or so from the Hebrew Bible for each day. Another way is to translate the passage you are going to preach from that week (or teach from in a Sunday School class, Bible study, etc.), trying to mix OT and NT so as to keep both languages functional. Another friend of mine, Al Jackson, a pastor in Virginia (now retired, but probably still preaching) goes through Metzger's *Lexical Aids for Students of NT Greek* yearly! I would recommend that you try to review your grammar now and then and work on sight-reading of Greek.

3. Bible Background

If you are serving the Lord in any capacity which involves study of the Scriptures (preaching, teaching, home Bible study, etc.), you will need to spend time working through the particular passage for the next sermon, session, etc. This special study for specific passages should get you into the commentaries, and perhaps Bible encyclopedias and such, so that you will get some exposure to the historical, cultural background of that particular passage.

[I should say here that you need to be realistic. Don't overkill on the amount of preparation you do and then give up after a few weeks. Put in enough time that you are satisfied you understand the passage better than you did before you began on it. You may not be able to solve all its mysteries to your satisfaction, but look at some commentaries to see how they think these should be solved. You want to come to the people you are serving with freshness, so that they, too, will be encouraged to study the Word.]

An important facet you need to develop for your knowledge of Bible background will probably not come through working on specific passages. You need to get some kind of overview of ancient history, culture, religions, etc. that will help you to understand the impact of the OT and NT in their own times, and thus give you some insight into how to apply the Word to our own times and cultures. This will probably only come through wide reading.

For some years, I kept a list of all the books I had read since about 1968. This amounted to over 50 books per year (over 100 for six of these years), and usually over 50 in the broad area of religion. I have read primary sources such as Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, OT and NT Apocrypha, the Nag Hammadi gnostic texts, some of the rabbinic literature, and am currently hung up part-way through Philo (!). I have read works on ancient history, encyclopedias of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, books on everyday life in Rome, ancient Greek warfare, archeology, and such.

If you are a pastor or counselor, you will obviously need to put some of your reading effort into books specifically related to these areas, but you should not neglect reading that will strengthen your understanding of the biblical world.

4. Spiritual Insight

Just as Paul said that the most spectacular gifts are worthless without love (1 Cor 13:1-3), so the most complete set of mental and bibliographic tools for exegesis will be counterproductive without real spiritual life and insight. If we don't know Jesus, all our exegetical skills will only add to our condemnation in the end. If we know Jesus, then we will grow in spiritual insight as we gain experience through our own problems, and through helping others with theirs. It is absolutely crucial that we have a close communion and love for Lord to do good exegesis.

B. Typical schedule of exegesis sessions

We will normally have three 50-minute sessions for each week featuring exegesis. We will divide these into three pieces, though not necessarily of 50 minutes each.

1. Genre discussion
2. Translation
3. Verse-by-verse, with discussion of worksheet

Since all these sessions occur on the same day in our current block-scheduling system, you need to have your translation, commentary reading, and worksheet done when you come to class on these exegesis days.

C. Genres in the Synoptic Gospels

Etymologically, the term "genre" is merely a French word for "kind." It has become a technical term in literary studies for a kind of literature, writing or speaking. It may be as broad as the distinction between prose and poetry; it may be as narrow as a particular kind of specialized poem such as the limerick, or the little stories we call parables. To be recognizable, a genre must have some list of features that distinguish it from other genres. We will look at several genres common to the Synoptic Gospels in the weeks of this course.

Class exercise: What are some of the features of:
a sermon?
a pun?

Genres covered in class exegesis: TP = term paper passage

1. Narrative:
 - Visit of Wise Men (Matt 2:1-23)
 - TP: Emmaus Road (Luke 24:13-35)
2. Miracle Account:
 - Gadarene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20)
 - TP: Faith of Centurion (Luke 7:1-10)
3. Parable:
 - Royal Wedding Feast (Matt 22:1-14)
 - TP: Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1-11)
4. Controversy Account:
 - Casting out Demons by Beelzebub (Luke 11:14-28)
 - TP: Picking Grain on Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)

Genres not covered in class:

5. Discourse:
 - TP: Do Not Worry (Matt 6:25-34)
6. Symbolic Action (Acted Parable):
 - Cleansing Temple (Matt 21:12-13)
 - Washing Feet (John 13:1-9)
 - Cursing Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14,20-25)
7. Genealogy:
 - Matt 1:1-17
 - Luke 3:23-37
8. Dialogue:
 - Temptation (Luke 4:1-13)
 - Following Jesus (Matt 8:18-22)
 - Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-30)

D. The Narrative Genre.

1. Definition

A narrative, very briefly, is a story, account, or tale of events. It may be either factual or fictional, though I understand all biblical narratives to be factual unless somehow marked. For example, narratives in parables are probably fictional; Jotham's narrative of the trees electing a leader (Judg 9:8-15) is presumably (!) fictional.

Narrative is a very broad genre, usually a subclass under prose, though poetic narratives do exist in literature (e.g., the Song of Deborah and Barak, Judg 5; Homer's *Iliad*). It may be distinguished from prayer, exposition, dialogue or discourse, for instance, though these may be included in a narrative or even occasionally have a narrative included in them. E.g., the Gospels and Acts are narratives, yet include these other genres.

2. Components of Narrative

a. Actors/Characters

The persons who appear in the narrative, causing the events narrated, or affected by them.

b. Events/Action

Occurrences described by the narrative.

c. Scenes

Where the events occur: time, country, region, town, indoors or out, etc.

d. Plot

The interconnection and development of the events in a narrative. A complex narrative may have more than one plot, with the various plots interwoven in some way or other. The plot itself, often a conflict of some sort, may be subdivided into sections where, for example, tension is building, the climax is reached, the conflict is resolved, tension is released, etc.

E. Types of Narrative within the Gospels

Leland Ryken, in *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament* (Baker, 1987), pp 36ff, suggests the following types of narratives occur in the Gospels:

1. Annunciation/Nativity Stories

Narratives of events surrounding the birth of Jesus. Emphasis on uniqueness of Jesus, historical validity, supernatural occurrences, fulfilment of prophecy, excitement, etc.

2. Calling/Vocation Stories

Narratives of Jesus' calling people. Who is called, in what circumstances, what is the nature of the call, what kind of response was made?

3. Recognition Stories

Narratives of people discovering who Jesus is. What were the circumstances which led to recognition, what did the person come to recognize about Jesus?

4. Witness Stories

Jesus or another character testifies who Jesus is or what he has done, and what the evidence is for this.

5. Encounter Stories

Representative stories of how Jesus seeks others. They begin with his or their

initiative, continue with Jesus making some claim on their lives, end with their response, either acceptance or rejection.

6. Conflict/Controversy Stories

Most common in Gospels, pitting Jesus as protagonist against an opposing person or group (antagonist). Note the defense, offense, how Jesus gets the advantage, what lesson we are to learn.

7. Pronouncement Stories (in Form Criticism, Apothegm Stories)

An event is linked with a notable saying by Jesus. How do the story and saying interrelate?

8. Miracle Stories

We discuss this later under the genre "Miracle Story," Ryken suggests typical structure as follows:

- a. Need is established
- b. Jesus' help sought
- c. Person in need (or helper) expresses faith/obedience
- d. Jesus performs a miracle
- e. Characters respond to miracle/Jesus

9. Passion Stories

Narratives of events surrounding the trial, death and resurrection of Jesus. Can be viewed as whole section for each Gospel, or subdivided into separate stories.

10. Hybrid Stories

Narratives which combine elements of the above, e.g., miracle stories which produce recognition, pronouncement stories which are also encounters, etc.

IV. Authorship and Date of the Synoptic Gospels

We here sketch the historical evidence for the Synoptic Gospels being written by their traditional authors Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and all before AD 70. We suggest that Matthew was written first (also traditional), that the order of Mark and Luke is uncertain (traditionally Mark is next), though we favor Luke in the late 50s and Mark in the early 60s, shortly after Matthew was translated into Greek.

A. Authorship of the Synoptics

We will take each Gospel in turn, following the traditional order of the NT canon, citing first internal evidence of authorship (which is rather skimpy) and then external, citing the major quotations in full.

1. Matthew's Authorship

a. Internal Evidence

Except for the title (and we never have a copy of Matthew with any other person listed in the title), the text is anonymous (i.e., the writer never indicates when he is alluding to himself in an identifiable manner). We do not know if the title was put on the autograph by the author or not.

Given that Matthew wrote it, is interesting that in his apostle list (Matt. 10:2-4) he calls himself a tax collector, not exactly a popular profession in NT Palestine! Mark, Luke and Acts omit this detail from their apostle lists. This suggests the humility of Matthew and a probable reason for all the Gospels being anonymous, to keep the focus on Jesus.

b. External Evidence

1) Papias (writing c130 AD)

Then Matthew wrote the oracles (τῶν λόγων) in the Hebrew dialect (διαλέκτῃ), but everyone interpreted them as he was able.

Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord,
cited in Eusebius *Church History* 3.39.16

The original of Papias' *Exposition* is not extant, but extracts are cited by several ancient and medieval writers, and the whole was apparently still extant in the middle ages.

What is meant here by "the oracles": Was this the Gospel? Liberals who hold to the Two Document Theory (see our later discussion of the Synoptic Problem)

often say that "the oracles" were the Q source.

However, Papias later uses "oracle" to refer to Mark, and everyone agrees he is referring to the Gospel there. Irenaeus gives the same tradition regarding its origin, but explicitly identifies it as the Gospel of Matthew.

What is meant by "Hebrew dialect"? This could refer to either Hebrew or Aramaic language, as both are sometimes called "Hebrew" in antiquity. This would imply that the original of Matthew was in Hebrew or Aramaic, and it was translated later.

In opposition to the above idea, some take "dialect" to mean "Greek written in a Hebraistic style." This theory does not fit Papias' comment as well, as it is hard to see how a simple stylistic difference would make Matthew so difficult to interpret. The idea of a language foreign to a Greek audience is more in keeping with Papias' remark.

Recently, George Howard at the University of Georgia has argued that a rather poorly preserved text of the original Hebrew of Matthew has come down to us in a medieval Jewish polemical (anti-Christian) text *Even Bohan*; see George Howard, *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text* (Mercer Univ Press, 1987).

2) Irenaeus (c180 AD)

Now Matthew published also a book of the Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the Church.

Against Heresies 3.1.2 (Latin);
Greek in Eusebius *Church History* 5.8.2.

Note that Irenaeus calls Matthew's work a Gospel, in the Hebrew dialect, and gives it a date C when Peter and Paul were in Rome (we know Paul was in Rome in early 60's AD).

3) Pantaenus (c.180 AD)

Pantaenus also was one of them and is said to have gone to India, where the story goes that he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had preceded his arrival, among certain people there who had learned of Christ; that Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them; and that he had left the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which also was preserved to the time indicated.

Eusebius, *Church History* 5.10.3

Pantaenus was a Christian from Alexandria, Egypt, who was head of the catechetical school there before Clement and Origen.

Notice that this is indirect information: "The story goes that ..." Pantaenus notes that Matthew was written in "Hebrew letters" (could still be either Aramaic or Hebrew, but not Greek). The text is said to have been preserved still in the late 2nd century.

The remark about India is not far-fetched; there was travel between India and the Roman world at this time.

4) Clement of Alexandria (c200 AD)

Head of catechetical school after Pantaenus. Left Alexandria during persecution in 203, died 210-217 AD.

Again in the same books Clement gives a tradition of the early presbyters concerning the order of the Gospels in the following manner: He said that those Gospels which contain the genealogies were written first; but the Gospel according to Mark had this occasion...

Outlines, cited in Eusebius 6.14.5

By "tradition of the presbyters," Clement means information he has learned from leaders before him.

Explicitly states that Matthew and Luke were written first, so before Mark.

5) Origen (c240)

Clement's successor in Egypt; later went to Caesarea, where he built up a large library inherited eventually by Eusebius.

In the first of the books on the Gospel according to Matthew, observing the ecclesiastical canon, he testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing somewhat as follows: As he has learned by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are undisputed in the Church of God under heaven, that first there was written the Gospel according to Matthew, the one-time publican but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it in the Hebrew language (γράμμασιν) for those from Judaism who believed.

Commentary on Matthew: cited in Eusebius, Church History 6.25.3

Order: is Origen giving chronological or canonical order here?

Language = letters. This is clearer than saying "dialect."

The next two witnesses are important more for their access to written documents which have not survived, than for their likely access to reliable oral tradition. Eusebius is the major historian of the ancient church, Jerome one of its best scholars.

6) Eusebius of Caesarea (c325)

Bishop of Caesarea after the end of Roman persecution, with access to the same library as Origen.

Yet of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us memoirs; and they, it is reported, had recourse to writing only under pressure of necessity. For Matthew, who preached earlier to Hebrews, when he was about to go to others also, committing his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, compensated by his writing for the loss of his presence to those from whom he was sent away.

Eusebius, *Church History* 3.24.5-6

"Memoirs" - an ancient genre for famous people thinking back over events in their own lives. Matthew and John had not planned to write but when they saw the need arise (e.g., leaving Palestine) they did so.

7) Jerome (c400)

Matthew who is also called Levi, and who changed from a publican to an Apostle, was the first one in Judaea to write a Gospel of Christ in Hebrew letters and words for those from the circumcision who believed; who translated it afterwards into Greek is not sufficiently certain.

Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 3

c. Summary on Authorship of Matthew

- 1) That Matthew wrote the Gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition and (perhaps not independently) of the titles on extant manuscripts.

This is consistent with title and content of the first Gospel. No other names are associated with it. The early church knew of fake gospels and rejected them.

- 2) That Matthew's Gospel was the first written is also given several times in the tradition.

This is frequently disputed today, as most liberals (and many conservatives) think Matthew's Gospel uses Mark's.

- 3) That Matthew's Gospel was written in Hebrew (or Aramaic) is a regular feature of the tradition.

This, too, is often disputed today because the extant Greek Gospel does not look like translation-Greek from a Semitic language. [Translation-Greek: a lot of Hebrew syntax and vocabulary range carried over into the Greek.] The LXX is an example of translation-Greek in most of its text, though it varies from book to book.

But it could be that the translator tried to give it a more fluent Greek style. Some OT translations into Greek were concerned about style: e.g.

Symmachus and Theodotion - good Greek style;
contrast Aquila - very literal translation Greek.

In English, the NASB is something like translation-English, the NIV has a good English style.

Perhaps Matthew himself made a free translation at a later time. We don't know for sure if it was a translation, or (if so) who made it.

Effect on inspiration if it is a translation: No problem if Matthew translated it. More a concern if done by someone besides an apostle or a trusted associate (Luke, etc.). However, the church has been without the Bible in the original languages for long periods in church history: Western church only had Latin in Middle Ages. Even today, most Americans don't know the Biblical languages.

What languages were used in Palestine in NT times? Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were all used in Bar-Kochba materials which we have been found recently in caves. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew (or Aramaic) were used in the sign over the cross. Don't know how many people were multi-lingual. Since several of Jesus' NT statements are in transliterated Aramaic, this was probably Jesus' native language.

2. Mark's Authorship

a. Internal evidence

Like Matthew, except for book title, Mark is anonymous in its text.

Some have suggested the style seems to fit the personality of Peter:

- 1) impressionable rather than reflective.
- 2) emotional rather than logical.
- 3) many vivid details, including:

Jesus's emotions, looks, gestures (Mark 3:5; 6:6,34; 7:34; 8:12; 10:14,21; 14:33)

Peter's own thoughts (9:6 at transfiguration; 1:21 "being reminded, Peter said")

This would suggest close contact with Peter, but Luke 9:33 also gives Peter's response at the transfiguration.

The outline of Mark is close to that of Peter's talk at Cornelius' house (Acts 10:37-41). Both start with John's baptism rather than Jesus' birth or pre-existence (like the other gospels).

The standpoint of narrative is consistent with Peter as author. By Astandpoint@ we don't mean author refers to self in 1st person; rather, he structures narrative so that reader tends to identify with him or his group (rather like the way the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke are written from Joseph's or Mary's view). E.g., compare Mark 5:37f and Matt 9:23 (raising Jairus' daughter). Matt. tells little of what happened in house. Mark gives much more detail: age of girl, food for her, people put out of room. This is consistent with the idea that Matthew remained outside and got a few details later, while Peter went in and saw all the action (which is what we are told happened).

Mark 14:51 (young man who loses his sheet at arrest of Jesus) makes best sense as a brief sketch of Mark himself. Otherwise, it is strange to introduce someone with no explanation, especially when they have no connection with the narrative.

b. External Evidence for Authorship of Mark

1) Papias (c130 AD)

And this the Presbyter [apostle John?] used to say: Mark, indeed, since he was the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately, but not in order the things either said or done by the Lord as much as he [Peter? Mark?] remembered. [] For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterwards, as I have said [heard and followed] Peter, who fitted his discourses to the needs [of his hearers] but not as if making a narrative of the Lord's sayings; consequently, Mark, writing some things just as he remembered, erred in nothing; for he was careful of one thing C not to omit anything of the things he had heard or to falsify anything in them.*

Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord;
cited in Eusebuis, *Church History* 3.39.15

This is the most complete statement from Papias regarding any Gospel. The brackets are either explanatory material added by translators to clarify his state-

ment or my comments.

Papias is citing information which goes back before him. The "Presbyter" (elder) is most likely the author of 2 and 3 John C the Apostle John. Irenaeus notes that Papias studied under John.

Note the problem as to where the quotation from John ends. It probably ended as early as [*], since the next sentence is in the 1st person (Papias?).

Mark as the "interpreter of Peter": Might refer to a language which Peter did not know. Peter probably knew Greek as he wrote 1 and 2 Peter, perhaps Mark translated into Latin. However, Mark could be called an "interpreter of Peter" because he wrote Peter's memoirs for him.

"Accurately, but not in order..." is strange, since many feel that the chronology/order of events in Mark is quite good. This might, however, refer to Mark's original note-taking: i.e., Peter did not give the data in chronological order but "fitted it to the needs of his hearers" as he gave messages in various Christian churches. In this case, Mark's compilation is in order, but the data as given him by Peter was not in order.

"As much as he remembered..." also probably refers to Peter, not Mark.

"Accurate" (first occurrence) is within the direct quote from John.

Probably Papias is following rabbinic usage here: The student memorizes (exactly) a teacher's statement (the *Mishnah*) and then gives an explanation of that statement (*Gemara*). Thus the quotation above before [*] is the exact statement; the material afterwards is Papias' explanation.

2) Justin Martyr (c140-50 AD)

After speaking several times of the memoirs of the apostles called Gospels, and having just mentioned Peter, Justin says: *It is written in his [Peter's] memoirs that He [Christ] changed Peter's name, as well as the sons of Zebedee, Boanerges*, alluding to Mark 3:16-17.

Dialogue with Trypho 106.

The assumption that "his memoirs" refers to Peter as author and not to Christ as subject is reasonable since Justin never elsewhere refers to "Christ's memoirs" but always to "the memoirs of the Apostles".

3) Irenaeus (c180 AD)

Matthew published ... while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the church. After their departure (κζοδοζ; death?) Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing the things preached by Peter.

*Against Heresies 3.1.2 (Latin);
Greek in Eusebius, Church History 5.8.2*

"Departure" could refer to death (figuratively) or to leaving Rome alive (literally); both constructions are common.

4) Clement of Alexandria (c200 AD)

... the Gospel according to Mark had this occasion: When Peter had preached the word publicly in Rome and had declared the Gospel by the Spirit, those who were present C they were many C besought Mark, since he had followed him for a long time and remembered the things that had been spoken, to write out the things that had been said; and when he had done this, he gave the Gospel to those who had asked him. When Peter learned of it later, he neither obstructed nor commended it.

Outlines; cited in Eusebius 6.14.5

Note that Peter is still alive after Gospel is written. Peter is not sure what to do with the writing; his puzzlement here somewhat resembles that when the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles at Cornelius' house.

5) Tertullian (c200 AD)

So then, of Apostles, John and Matthew instill us with faith; of Apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it.

Against Marcion 4.2

Is Tertullian referring to the order of writing here? It is doubtful. He may only have in mind the strength of the witnesses re/ their proximity to Jesus.

6) Origen (c225 AD)

... and that secondly there was written the Gospel according to Mark, who made it as Peter instructed him, whom also he (Peter) acknowledges as son in the Catholic Epistle in these words saying: AThe church in Babylon, elect together with you, and Mark, my son, salute you@ (1 Peter 5:13).

*Commentary on Matthew; cited in
Eusebius, Church History 6.25.5*

"Secondly ... Mark" would most naturally refer to chronological order, but

perhaps (in the context) only to canonical order. See the beginning of this quotation (page 43 of our notes) with reference to the "ecclesiastical canon."

c. Summary on Authorship.

- 1) That Mark wrote the Gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition, as is the belief that he gives us Peter's preaching.

Mark's authorship is supported by extant manuscript titles. There is less argument over Mark's authorship as compared to Matthew's or John's. There is, however, considerably more resistance in liberal circles to the idea that he gives us Peter's preaching.

- 2) These traditions are consistent with the nature of the Gospel itself in a stronger and more obvious way than was the case for Matthew.

The linkage to Peter is not explicit in the manuscripts, but is consistent with the tone of the Gospel as seen above under internal evidence (vignette of 14:51-52, personality of Peter).

- 3) Some see a contradiction in the tradition regarding the date of Mark and the time of its writing relative to Luke.

Irenaeus is interpreted as saying that Mark wrote after Peter's death, whereas Clement of Alexandria clearly implies that Mark wrote before his death.

A contradiction is not necessary here, as Irenaeus may be referring to Peter (and Paul) leaving Rome alive (literal exodus) rather than to their death (figurative exodus). It appears that Paul at least did leave Rome after his first imprisonment (Acts 28, tradition).

Another alleged contradiction relates to the relative order of Mark and Luke. Many traditions give the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, but Clement says Gospels with genealogies (Matt, Luke) were written first, i.e., Matthew, Luke, Mark, John.

3. Luke's Authorship

a. Internal Evidence

Except for its title, the Gospel text is anonymous.

However, the prologue of Acts links Acts to Luke, and internal features in Acts suggest that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul, either Luke or Jesus

Justus. The prologues of Luke and Acts both mention Theophilus. Acts' prologue refers to a previous account which is clearly the Gospel we call Luke.

The vocabularies of Luke and Acts are similar and indicate a well-educated author with an unusual knowledge of medical terms. See William K. Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, where this evidence is presented in detail.

b. External Evidence

We have fewer early references than for Matthew and Mark. Perhaps no one saw fit to report Papias' comments on this Gospel, if he made any.

1) Muratorian Canon (late 2nd century) from Italy

The Muratorian Canon is a list of the books belonging to the NT, named for its discoverer Muratori (1740). It is a fragment, with end, beginning (and possibly some of the middle) missing. It survives in a single 8th century manuscript "in barbarous Latin, by a careless and ignorant scribe." It is clearly a translation of a Greek original, which from internal evidence dates back to the late 2nd century and was written in or near Rome, which it calls "the city."

The Muratorian Canon mentions Hermas, author of the Shepherd of Hermas, as the brother of Pius who was apparently bishop of Rome in author's own lifetime.

The Canon begins as follows:

... but he was present among them, and so he put [the facts down in his Gospel]. The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as a companion of his traveling, [and after he had made] an investigation, wrote in his own name C but neither did he see the Lord in the flesh C and thus, as he was able to investigate, so also he begins to tell the story [starting] from the nativity of John.

As only Luke begins with the birth of John the Baptist, the correct Gospel is in view: No other known Gospel (including apocryphal ones) begins with John's nativity.

The remark about "traveling companion" fits with the testimony of Acts.

2) Irenaeus (c180 AD) from France and Asia Minor

Now Matthew published ... while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter ... handed down to us in writing the things preached by Peter.

Luke also, the follower of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by that one. Afterwards John

Against Heresies 3.1.1-2 (Latin)
Greek in Eusebius, *Church History* 5.8.2

Irenaeus seems to be giving the general chronological order of writing. Notice that he puts Luke third but doesn't quite say that Luke is written third.

3) Clement of Alexandria (c208 AD) from Egypt

Again in the same books Clement gives a tradition of the early presbyters concerning the order of the Gospels in the following manner: He said that those Gospels which contain the genealogies were written first; but the Gospel according to Mark had this occasion.... Last of all, John,....

Outlines; cited in Eusebius 6.14.5

Note the chronological order seems different than Irenaeus' in that Luke precedes Mark.

4) Tertullian (c215 AD) from North Africa

So then, of Apostles, John and Matthew instill us with faith; of Apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it For Luke's Gospel similarly men are used to ascribe to Paul.

Against Marcion 4.2

5) Origen (c225 AD) from Egypt

... and thirdly, that according to Luke C the Gospel praised by Paul C who made it for those from the Gentiles who believed.

Commentary on Matthew; cited in
Eusebius, *Church History* 6.25.6

The remark about the "Gospel praised by Paul" is probably referring to 2 Cor 8:18. It is doubtful that this is what Paul had in mind in that passage!

6) Eusebius (c330 AD)

Luke, in regard to race being of those of Antioch, but by profession a physician, since he had been very much with Paul and had no mean association with the

rest of the Apostles, left us examples of the therapy of souls, which he acquired from them, in two inspired books: the Gospel which he testifies that he also wrote according to what those handed down to him who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word, all of whom he also says he had followed even from the beginning; and the Acts of the Apostles which he composed from what he had learned, not by hearing but with his eyes. But men say that Paul was accustomed to refer to his Gospel whenever, writing as it were about some Gospel of his own, he said, According to my Gospel. @

Eusebius, *Church History* 3.4.6-7

Eusebius may be drawing inferences from NT passages as "my Gospel" probably refers to Paul's message, not to the gospel of Luke. Many of Paul's references to "my Gospel" (e.g., Rom. 2:16, 16:25) probably predate the writing of Luke.

c. Summary on Authorship

- 1) That Luke, a follower of Paul and a physician, wrote the Gospel ascribed to him is the unanimous opinion of tradition, although we have no remarks quite so early as those of Papias on Matthew and Mark.

By c200 AD, we have info from all geographical areas of early Christianity agreeing that Luke is the author. This implies the title has been on the work a long time, or that early Xns had access to common knowledge.

That the author was a physician who traveled with Paul is consistent with the internal vocabulary of the 3rd Gospel and with its linkage with Acts. Thus based on internal evidence Luke is most likely to be the author.

- 2) The Gospel is frequently mentioned third, perhaps preserving a tradition regarding the order of authorship.

Alternatively, this could be an early binding or canon order. The Muratorian Canon, Irenaeus, and Origen all cite Luke as third.

If Luke is really written third and after Peter's death, then Clement is in error and some internal problems develop regarding the date of Acts.

B. Dates of the Synoptic Gospels

1. Date of Matthew's Gospel

a. Internal evidence

Internal evidence is of very little help here. Two remarks suggest that it was **not** written immediately after the resurrection (i.e. in the 30's):

Matt 27:8 "called the Field of Blood to this day."

Matt 28:15 "This story was widely spread among the Jews to this day."

Both imply a significant time interval between the event and writing, but don't say how much.

Liberals tend to date Matt after 70 AD, partly to place it after Mark (which they date just before 70), and partly to "post-date" Jesus' predictions:

Matt 21:41 - Parable of tenant farmers who kill son implies destruction of nation Israel for killing Jesus, so after 70 AD, story being made up to fit what happened.

Matt 22:7 - Wedding Banquet, guests refused to come so king "destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire." (Fits Jerusalem => written after 70).

Matt 23:38 - "Your house is being left to you desolate!" (Either Jerusalem or temple destroyed => after 70).

Matt 24 - Olivet Discourse describes fall of Jerusalem, so written afterwards.

Liberals say Mark could be written just before the fall of Jerusalem since that Gospel does not include these details as clearly.

Obviously this is no problem to believers, since all these are in prediction contexts, and Jesus can predict the future.

b. External evidence

Matthew was written before earliest surviving manuscripts. The papyri p^{64,67} and p⁷⁷ represent 2 manuscripts from about 200 AD. So written before 200.

Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas (probably written c132 AD) cites Matt. 22:14 ("many called, few chosen") saying "as the Scripture says," but doesn't name Matthew. Liberals say Matthew was written by then, but Pseudo-Barnabas misremembered quote as OT Scripture.

Tradition on authorship would require that it be written within Matthew's lifetime, probably no later than 100 AD, possibly much earlier. This is limited by Matthew's age: Since he was an adult with some authority (tax collector) by c30 AD, it is doubtful he was living after 100 AD. Thus the traditions imply that Matthew was written in the 1st century. Allusions in other Apostolic Fathers,

including Clement (c95 AD) would agree with this.

Irenaeus' tradition would date it to c61-68 AD.

Several other traditions make Matthew's Gospel the first one written, so it might be even earlier.

Luke (see below) was probably written in late 50's, so Matthew's date would then be earlier.

c. Various proposals for Matthew's date

These range from 37 AD (Old Scofield Bible) to 125 AD (so Robert Kraft, a liberal prof at U. Penn.). 37 AD is probably too early for the "to this day" references. 125 AD is far too skeptical of historical sources. Does not explain why Christians and even heretics accepted it and used only the 4 gospels.

My suggestion for date: Irenaeus slightly mistaken. Matthew wrote a Hebrew Gospel in the 40's or 50s before he left Jerusalem (note when Paul visits Jerusalem, he found only Peter and John there). Matthew later made a Greek edition in the 60's for wider use. Thus Irenaeus is correct about author and language, but mistakes its publication in Greek (61-68 AD) for its original Hebrew composition in the 40's or early 50's.

Papias's statement implies that for some time Matthew was the only written Gospel available and was in demand even in its Hebrew form as apparently no Greek translation had been made yet.

This model is proposed to fit (1) the tradition of Matthew being the first Gospel written with (2) the evidence for a pre-60 date of Luke (see below).

2. The Date of Mark's Gospel

a. Internal Evidence

We have nothing direct. Liberals like to date by post-dating predictions, so they tend to put it late.

Solution to the Synoptic problem has a bearing here, depending on whether we see Mark as written before or after Matthew and Luke.

b. External Evidence

See various fathers cited above. Based on a count of surviving manuscripts and citations by church fathers, Mark was considerably less popular than Matthew in the early church.

c. Several dating schemes:

1) The concordant (conflict-minimizing) interpretation of the testimony of the church fathers puts the date of Mark in the 60's before the death of Peter.

Clement dates Gospel during Peter's lifetime.

Irenaeus is referring to Peter leaving Rome and not to his death.

Then we can date Mark between Paul's arrival in Rome narrated in Acts (61-63 AD) and 68 AD (when persecutions ended with Nero's death).

2) Some scholars reject Clement of Alexandria's testimony and interpret Irenaeus' "exodus" remark so as to date the Gospel after the death of Peter.

This is the common liberal view, with Mark dated after 68 AD, perhaps into early 70's. Some extreme liberals date Mark as late as 115 AD!

3) Many conservatives reject all tradition and put Mark back into the 50's, so that Mark can pre-date Matthew and Luke.

This view throws out a lot of data in order to maintain a conservative version of the 2-document theory. This will be discussed later, under our topic "The Synoptic Problem."

d. Summary on Date of Mark

Clearly, people are willing to ignore data so that their view of the synoptic

problem (to be discussed) looks plausible.

The concordant view seems to fit the data the best, and is favored by me. However, it must reject the two-document theory which puts Mark earlier than Matthew.

3. The Date of Luke's Gospel

a. Internal Evidence.

- 1) Clearly Acts 1:1 presupposes Luke, so the Gospel must be written before Acts.

The prologues are connected, since Acts refers to the "previous account." Luke ends with the ascension, Acts picks up from there and continues. Both are addressed to the same person, Theophilus.

- 2) Liberals feel that Luke 21:20 reflects the Jewish war, so they date Luke after 70 AD.

As predicted in Lk 21:20, in 66 AD the city was surrounded by armies, but the Roman general got scared and retreated. This allowed people to flee the city, as Jesus warned them to do, before the Romans came back the 2nd time (68 AD) and leveled Jerusalem (as in v 24).

Only unbelievers feel a need to post-date prophecies. No such approach is warranted for believers, though of course Luke could have been written after 70 if other evidence so indicates (i.e., it is not necessary that Luke write before the prophecy was fulfilled).

b. External Evidence

- 1) Acts (as we discuss in course on Acts & Pauline Epistles) seems to date from the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, c63-64 AD.

The date of Acts must precede the Roman fire (64 AD) as it reflects no antagonism between Christianity and the Roman government. Once Nero pinned the blame for the fire on Xns, Xy became an illegal cult until after 300 AD. Acts shows no hint that Xy is illegal.

Acts also shows no hint of the death of Paul (c68 AD). Paul has been in Rome for 2 years under house arrest when the book of Acts' narrative ends.

Liberals (to try to explain this away) say everyone knew what happened to Paul so there was no need to include his death. But "house arrest" is strange way to end the book if he's dead!

Some (incl some conservatives) suggest Luke intended to write a 3rd book as a sequel to Acts, but for some reason never was able to do so. This argument is based on taking Acts 1:1 "the first account" $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ to mean "first of several" and assuming Luke would have used $\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu$ if he meant "first of two." But the word used in Acts 1:1 can mean "first of two" in Hellenistic Greek, even though this was not proper in Classical Greek.

If our suggestion 1) is right, then Luke brings the reader up to date at the end of Acts, i.e., he is writing just two years after Paul has arrived in Rome.

- 2) That Luke would be dated slightly earlier than Acts is seen from internal evidence (above), especially if Paul's 2-year imprisonment in Caesarea gave Luke the opportunity for researching and writing the Gospel.

Writing the Gospel before voyage to Rome would avoid problems with Luke losing his notes in the shipwreck.

In this case, Luke would begin to circulate in the East about the time of Paul's voyage, c60 AD.

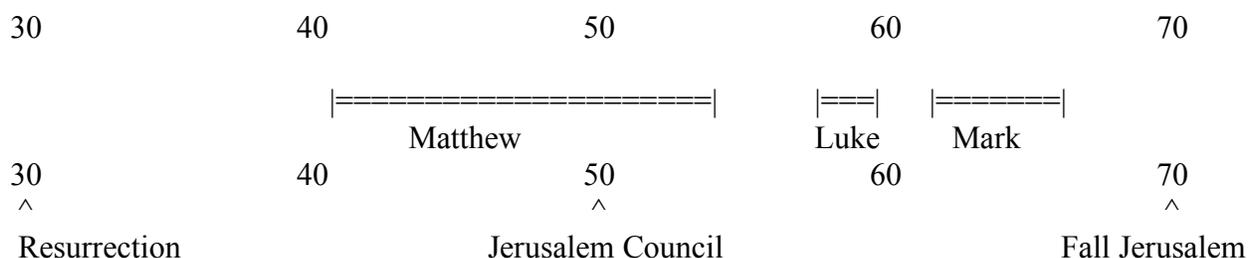
- 3) A date of c60 AD seems to buck the tradition which puts Mark in the 60's but earlier than Luke. I suggest that either the tradition is partially mistaken or that both Mark and Luke are nearly simultaneous and reached different parts of the Empire at different times, i.e., that Mark arrived first in some places, Luke first in others.

Mark is traditionally written in Rome (the West). Clement, in Egypt (the East), puts Luke ahead of Mark chronologically.

Irenaeus' testimony looks chronological, but note above (page 51) that he does not give an explicit time or sequence reference for Luke (like "afterward"). Irenaeus may not be intending to be chronological here, or he may be mistaken because his sources received the two Gospels in a different order than Egypt did.

Thus we date Luke 58-60 AD, before Acts in 63-64 AD.

4. Summary on Dates of the Synoptic Gospels



C. Characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels

1. Characteristics of Matthew

a. Matthew the author

He is mentioned by name 7 times in 4 different books of the NT, but these involve only 2 occasions: (1) his conversion and (2) the apostle lists. He is called "Levi of Alpheus" in Mark 2:14, so may have been the son of Alpheus and brother of James the Little (listed as son of Alpheus in Mt 10:3, Mk 3:18, Lk 6:15, Ac 1:13).

Conversion: Matt 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27,29 - was a tax-collector, so held a dinner for old friends to meet Jesus. An interesting picture of the reaction of a new convert.

Apostle list: Matt 10:3 (only list using term "publican"), Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13. In these lists, the apostles are always grouped in 3 groups of 4 and are never mixed between groups. Matthew is always in the 2nd group, as either #7 or #8.

b. Matthew's Original Audience

Matthew's Messianic emphasis is more appropriate for Jews.

His tendency to assume a knowledge of Jewish practices (rather than to explain them) suggests principal readers in view are Jews and Jewish Christians.

Mt 15:2 - "tradition of the elders" about washing hands. Mark gives 3-4 verses of explanation, Matt. doesn't.

Mt 23:5 - "they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels (of their garments)." Even the NASB added parentheses to provide some explanation. To show their piety, some Pharisees wore bigger phylacteries and

longer tassels than the average person.

Mt 23:27 - Scribes and Pharisees "are like whitewashed tombs." Jews would whitewash tombs so people wouldn't accidentally touch them and become unclean (esp. before festivals).

c. Aim and Structure of Matthew.

1) Aim - no direct statement is made in the Gospel.

Contents suggest Matthew's purpose is to show Jesus as the Messiah who fulfilled OT prophecies. Matthew cites more prophecies and a wider variety of them than any other Gospel writer.

Matthew appears to draw a subtle parallel between the ministry of Jesus and the history of Israel.

2) Internal evidence of structure.

We try to find out how the writer would have outlined the material (not making arbitrary guesses); this gives more accurate view of book's structure.

a) 2 possible major transition passages - both begin with the same phrase: "After that Jesus began ..."

Mt 4:17 "to preach" = begins ministry to multitudes. Transition from the preparatory narratives to Jesus' public proclamation of the gospel.

Mt 16:21 "to show His disciples" = begins His private ministry to the disciples and outlines the rest of the book: suffer, be killed, rise.

b) Discourses.

Usually 5 are seen (Godet, *Introduction to the NT*), ending with the formula: "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished"

	Chapters	Formula
(1) Sermon on the Mount	5-7	7:28
(2) Instructions to the 12	10	11:1
(3) Kingdom Parables	13	13:53
(4) Church Discipline	18	19:1
(5) Olivet Discourse	24-25	26:1

Some say Matthew models his Gospel around the Pentateuch, so have 5 discourses = 5 books. Sermon on Mount would fit Exodus, but what of

Genesis?

Some see further (but non-chronological) parallels of: Genealogy = Book of the generations. Wilderness temptation = Wanderings.

But there are 2 other discourses in Matthew, not just 5:

Mt 23: "Woes to Pharisees" - doesn't end with formula. Could link it with Mt 24-25, but topic is different.

Mt 3: Discourse of John the Baptist.

It appears that Matthew is giving topical samples of Jesus' preaching relevant to who Jesus is. Attempts to get these samples to fit the Pentateuch seem rather stretched.

c) Is Matthew involved in shifting materials?

Some suggest that Matthew gathered materials by theme rather than ordering them chronologically.

His discourses are admittedly by topic. His miracles are mainly concentrated in chs. 8-9.

Matthew's order of events is different from that of Mark and Luke in a few places.

But we find no solid evidence of chronological liberty between the Gospels (i.e., the same events explicitly said to have happened in a different order). All the Gospels have a chronological structure, but with different purposes and emphases.

As an itinerant preacher, Jesus doubtless repeated the same/similar teaching material on different occasions.

Different cultures have different literary procedures. Quotations must follow a specific accuracy and style for an academic thesis, but the requirements for a newspaper article are not as formal. Of course, to invent dialogue which never occurred is bad in any culture.

When condensing a long speech or narrative, a writer might either use key sentences from a discourse, simplify the action or summarize it in his own words. Either approach would be acceptable so long as it tells us what actually took place. [He need not tell us what he is doing, however.]

d. Characteristic phrases in Matthew

- 1) "That it might be fulfilled" is very common in Matthew.

Some of these fulfillments are also noted in other Gospels, but not so many as in Matthew. Some liberals have suggested that a book of testimonies (a compilation of OT prooftexts about the Messiah) was used in the early church. This may be so, but it is more likely (cp. Luke 24:27) that these go back to Jesus' own explanation of Messianic prophecy after his resurrection.

- 2) "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs over 30 times.

This is apparently synonymous with "kingdom of God" in Mark and Luke. In fact, Matt 19:23-24 uses both terms in parallel. In Rabbinic sources "heaven" was a common substitution for "God," as they were reluctant to write or speak the name of God because of its holiness.

e. Other Materials Unique to Matthew

- 1) Matthew refers to various Jewish customs and usages not especially interesting to Gentiles.
- 2) Matthew's birth material is distinctive.

Both Matt and Luke narrate Jesus' birth; both are clear on the virgin birth. But otherwise, they do not overlap much.

Matt notes the Wise men coming, Herod's attempt to kill Jesus, and the flight to Egypt.

Matt appears to give Joseph's perspective (see him wondering, worrying, acting), while Luke gives Mary's viewpoint.

- 3) Peter and the Church - Matt 16, and Church Discipline - Matt 18.

Only Matthew discusses the Church, even though it is the most Jewish Gospel. This raises some problems for that dispensational view which makes such an absolute distinction between the Church and Israel and also sees Matthew as the "Jewish Gospel" in the sense that it is "not for this dispensation." Note that *ἐκκλησία* is LXX term for "congregation."

- 4) Great Commission - Matt. 28.

A commission also appears in Mark (but in questionable text), Luke, Acts and John, each (except Matt & Mark) in a different context than the

others. Jesus saw the spread of the Gospel as sufficiently important to repeat his instructions on several occasions.

Liberals don't like the implications of "go to all the nations," "be with you through the ages," and the Trinitarian formula, so they deny this goes back to Jesus. They also question Matthew's authenticity and date because of perceived conflicts with Acts: (1) command to go vs. early reluctance of apostles; (2) Trinity vs. early baptism "in the name of Christ."

None of these is very serious if Xy is true. If Jesus is who the Bible claims he is, then his atoning death and resurrection are certainly news of earth-shaking importance (Psalm 22 says as much, and it was certainly written before the rise of Xy). If Jesus is God and there is only one God, then He is present everywhere and shares "the Name" with the Father. The Acts' problems relate to emphasis: (1) the early disciples were apparently waiting for further instructions on how to go about this, and did not at first realize that Gentiles would become Xns as Gentiles without converting to Judaism; (2) we probably misread both Matthew and Acts in taking the phrases "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" and "in the name of Jesus Christ" as instructions on the exact wording to be used in a ceremony.

f. Sketch Outline of Matthew. (| = about one chapter)

-----	1:1
Genealogy	
-----	1:18
Birth and Infancy	
-----	3:1
Preparation for Ministry	
-----	4:12 (17)
Public	
Galilean Ministry	
-----	13:1
Limited	
-----	16:21
Private	
-----	19:1
Journey to Jerusalem	
-----	21:1
Last Week	
-----	26:1
Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion	
-----	28:1
Resurrection	

g. A Symmetrical Outline of Matthew

from Charles H. Lohr, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961): 427-28.

- A Narrative: Birth and beginnings (1-4)
- B Sermon: Blessings, entering the kingdom (5-7)
- C Narrative: Authority and invitation (8-9)
- D Sermon: Mission discourse (10)
- E Narrative: Rejection by this generation (11-12)
- F Sermon: Parables of the kingdom (13)
- E= Narrative: Acknowledgment by disciples (14-17)
- D= Sermon: Community discourse (18)
- C= Narrative: Authority and invitation (19-22)
- B= Sermon: Woes, coming of kingdom (23-25)
- A= Narrative: Death and resurrection (26-28)

2. Characteristics of Mark

a. The Man John Mark

1) Mark mentioned in the NT 10 or 11 times

6 times in Acts: 12:12,25; 13:5,13; 15:37,39

3 times in Paul: Col 4:10, Phm 24, 2 Tim 4:11

once in 1 Peter 5:13

perhaps in Mark 14:51-52.

2) Tracing his life:

Mark was a cousin (κουμπός) of Barnabas (Col 4:10).

Mark's mother was Mary, who owned a house in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). His father is not mentioned; perhaps he was dead or an unbeliever.

Mark may have been present at Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:51-52). This is a speculation. Possible story: The last supper was held at Mary's house. The mob comes to the house to arrest Jesus; Mark awakens and follows the mob at a distance (wrapped in a sheet) to Gethsemane. He watches the arrest from the bushes and almost gets caught himself.

Mark was living in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12) with his mother during the persecution in which James (son of Zebedee) was killed and Peter was imprisoned (c44 AD; dated from Josephus' remarks about death of Herod Agrippa).

Barnabas and Paul take Mark with them to Antioch (Acts 12:25). Mark then goes along with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5) as their assistant (συνπρόεδρος). Word originally meant a slave rower, but had been generalized by NT times to servant or assistant. As Mark had little training in the Word cp w/ Paul and Barnabas, he probably looked after housing, food, etc.

Mark abandons them when they go into Asia Minor (Acts 13:13; c47-48 AD). Whatever his reason was, Paul does not think it was a good one. Some possibilities:

- a) Switch in leadership from Barnabas to Paul occurred on Cyprus. Mark was irritated by it.
- b) Going into Asia Minor was a change of plan and Mark did not want to be gone that long.
- c) Mark opposed the aggressive evangelization of the Gentiles.
- d) He became fearful of the dangers, disillusioned, or homesick.

After the Jerusalem council, Paul and Barnabas plan a second missionary journey

to visit the churches they established (Acts 15:37,39). Barnabas wants to give Mark a second chance but Paul does not. So they split up: Mark and Barnabas go to Cyprus, Paul and Silas (a mature Christian) head for Asia Minor (c50 AD).

Hear nothing more of Mark until later in the Epistles, since Acts mainly follows Paul.

About 10 years later (61-63 AD), Mark is back in the good graces of Paul (Col 4:10, Philemon 24). Mark is apparently being sent on a mission by Paul and is commended to the Colossian church. He is now a fellow-worker with Paul.

Still later, Mark is near Ephesus and is commended as being useful to Paul (2 Tim. 4:11; 64-68 AD). Timothy is to bring him when he comes from Ephesus.

1 Pet 5:13 may predate 2 Tim reference. Peter is still alive but Roman persecution has apparently begun (c64 AD or later); Peter is warning Asian churches about it. Mark is with Peter "in Babylon" and sends his greetings. Peter calls him "my son", presumably in the spiritual sense.

Where is Babylon? Possibilities:

- a) Literal: The area in Mesopotamia around where the city of Babylon had been, where there was still a large Jewish community.
- b) Egypt: City near modern Cairo was called Babylon; also had a large Jewish community.
- c) Rome: Is called "Babylon" in Revelation; may be a code to throw off authorities if letter intercepted.

Tradition says that Mark later went down to Alexandria in Egypt and became a leader of the church there.

b. Mark's Audience

Pretty clearly Gentile, possibly Roman.

- 1) Aramaic phrases (are many in Mk; see below) are generally translated. Thus readers were not expected to know Aramaic.
- 2) Jewish practices are explained (cleansing hands, etc.). For any Jew, this would be unnecessary.

Thus Mark is writing to a non-Jewish audience which is unfamiliar with the languages and culture of Palestine. Such people are clearly Gentiles. From tradition (and perhaps Latinisms, below) we may also infer that they were

Romans.

3) Several Latinisms (the use of Latin terms in Greek) occur in Mark:

"φραγελλώ" (Mark 15:15) from Latin 'flagello'.

This term also appears in 2 other Gospels (John 2 and Matt 11), so it may only show that Latin military and governmental terms were picked up in Palestine during 100 years of Roman rule.

"κεντυρίων" (Mark 15:39,44,45) from Latin centurion.

Matthew, Luke and Acts use the Greek equivalent, literally "ruler of a 100" (κατοντάρχης).

Doubt that we should put much weight on the Latinisms when it comes to guessing the audience.

c. The Aim of Mark.

No direct statement is given in the Gospel.

More difficult to infer an aim for Mark than for Matthew. Author does not *say* he is intending to "preserve the traditions of Peter."

The opening line (Mark 1:1) may state the aim. While Mark does preserve "the good news about Christ" (1:1), this is the general aim of all the Gospels.

Perhaps Mark is aimed especially at the Roman mentality, which tended to be practical, action-oriented, organized. Peter himself had such a practical temperament so he probably fit well with the Romans in this. Thus there may have been a high demand for his material among the Romans as tradition says.

d. Characteristics of Mark:

1) Vividness

Mark is full of graphic and picturesque details which are not required for the action, but add color and depth to the narrative (e.g., the 5000 reclined on the *green* grass).

Mark notes Jesus' emotions, and he uses historical present frequently to add life to the narrative.

2) Detail

Mark often reports incidents with more detail than do Matt or Luke. Names of people involved, time of day, surrounding crowds are noted, which are frequently not found in the others.

Yet Mark is the shortest Gospel. This shortness is obtained by omitting long discourses and reporting fewer events.

3) Activity

The **action** in Jesus' ministry is emphasized. "ε↔θύς" is used over 40 times, tending to give the narrative a rushed, breathless quality.

Mark stresses Jesus' actions more than his words. Mark does not usually give long discourses of Jesus. Mark 13 (the Olivet discourse) is much the longest speech of Jesus in Mark.

Mark is packed with miracles: 18 are recorded (though only 2 are unique to Mark).

4) Aramaic

Many Aramaic words are recorded, and usually translated into Greek.

a) Aramaic words unique to Mark:

Boanerges (3:17): epithet of the 2 sons of Zebedee, meaning "sons of thunder".

Talitha Cum[i] (5:41): command to Jarius' daughter, "Little girl, arise!"

Ephphatha (7:34): command to deaf-mute: "Be opened!"

Bartimaeus (10:46) Name of the blind man, meaning "son of Timaeus".

That Mark even translates the Aramaic name "Bartimaeus" suggests that his audience had no feel for Aramaic whatsoever.

Abba (14:36) Jesus addressing God, meaning "Father".

This term occurs in Paul (Rom, Gal) but not in the other Gospels

b) Aramaic words which are also found in other Gospels.

Corban (7:11): "Gift to the temple"; is not translated in Matt 27:6.
Golgotha (15:22): "Place of a skull"; both Matthew and John use this and both translate it.

Eloi, Eloi, ..., (15:34): "My God, My God," Matthew uses and translates.

Rabbi, Rabboni used a number of times in Mark (4x), Matt (4x), and John (9x); only translated once and that by John.

Mark probably used the Aramaic for vividness.

These quotations do not tell us that Jesus *only* spoke Aramaic. His conversations with the Syro-Phoenician woman and Pilate imply that he had a knowledge of Greek.

e. A Sketch outline of Mark.

-----	1:1
Preparation for Ministry	
-----	1:14
Galilean Ministry	
-----	10:1
Journey to Jerusalem	
-----	11:1
Last Week	
-----	14:10
Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion	
-----	16:1
Resurrection	

3. Characteristics of Luke

a. Luke the Physician

- 1) Luke is mentioned by name only 3 times in the NT:
Col 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11

From these sparse references, we infer that:

- a) Luke was a physician, loved by Paul (Col. 4:14).
- b) He was a faithful companion of Paul, even to the very end in Rome (2 Tim 4:11, but seen in all 3 passages).
- c) He was apparently Gentile rather than Jewish (Col 4:14).

Strong but indirect evidence here. Col 4:10-14 is a series of greetings from friends which Paul breaks into 2 groups: the circumcised and uncircumcised. Luke is in the latter group.

- 2) In addition, the "We-passages" in Acts indicate the author sometimes traveled with Paul.

The author in these cases writes in the 1st person plural, including himself in the action. Implies he was with Paul then.

Three textually certain occurrences of this:

- a) Acts 16:10-17. 2nd Missionary Journey.

"After Paul received the vision to go to Macedonia, we us"
and so on throughout the passage.

The group consists of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and author. Use of "we" starts in v.10, ends in v.17. Geographically this would imply that the author joined them at Troas and left them at Philippi.

- b) Acts 20:5 - 21:18. 3rd Missionary Journey.

Spotty usage throughout this section. Note that "we" begins in Philippi and ends in Jerusalem. Perhaps the author is a delegate for the Philippian church in taking gift money to Jerusalem, but he does not name himself in the list of delegates. This also suggests that Luke was left in Philippi during the 2nd missionary journey to help build the church there and is now picked up.

- c) Acts 27:1 - 28:16. Voyage to Rome.

Now 2 years later. "We" picks up in Caesarea and ends in Rome. This suggests perhaps Luke remained in Palestine for the 2 years between the 3rd and 4th journey, perhaps using this time to re-search the Gospel materials.

One passage of uncertain text.

d) Acts 11:28. At Antioch before 1st journey [variant].

Only appears in Codex Bezae (D) and late mss of ancient versions. Passage refers to Agabus the prophet in Antioch.

The "we" here may reflect an early tradition that Luke was originally from Antioch (see Eusebius and Jerome).

Liberals try to discount force of these passages by saying that the author of Acts (not Luke) used a diary and extracted the "we" passages as direct quotes. This is *not* the most natural interpretation of the phenomenon.

3) Luke as a Greek Physician.

Given his use of medical terminology, Luke was probably trained in the Greek medical traditions.

The two most famous Greek physicians of so-called Hippocratic school:
Hippocrates (4th cen BC)
Galen (2nd cent AD). [after Luke's time]

Some of the writings of the Hippocratic school are available today which give us their general procedures. These men (and their associates) were noted for:

a) Diagnosis by observation and deduction (rather than by divination).

b) Careful collection of case reports.

This list of symptoms and treatments helped to build experience or (at least) showed what not to do.

c) Simple treatments.

Some herbal drugs, diet, rest, etc. Nothing exotic like magic, dung on puncture wounds, chicken teeth, etc. (cp McMillen, *None of*

These Diseases).

d) High standards of hygiene.

Luke probably had this background; seems to have interviewed people whom Jesus had healed in a case-report style.

There were other medical people associated with temples (plus plenty of quacks, of course), but the AGreek school@ was the best of its time.

4) Some other suggestions about Luke.

a) Hometown.

Eusebius and Jerome said that Luke was a native of Syrian Antioch (which fits the variant in Codex D). We presume that this is a tradition; manuscript D is unlikely to have the original text here.

Luke's use of the term "Hellenists" in Acts 11:20 apparently refers to pagans, not Jews. Luke means by "Hellenist" someone who was not Greek racially but who had adopted Greek culture.

Ramsay thinks Luke was from Philippi, as this was where Luke is left and later picked up. Luke was the "cause" of Paul's Macedonian vision. This idea seems unlikely, though Luke does appear "suddenly" in the narrative at Troas. Perhaps Luke is from Antioch and he either meets Paul accidentally in Troas or was sent by the Antioch church to find and help Paul.

b) Luke is the brother of Titus.

Alexander Souter bases this on 2 Cor. 8:18, where "the brother" could be translated as "his brother".

Souter notes that Titus is significant in Paul's epistles, but strangely is never mentioned in Acts. Similarly, in the Gospel of John, the author never mentions himself or his brother James. Souter suggests that Luke, like John, minimizes all references to himself and his brother Titus in Acts.

This is rather speculative, since Paul often refers to other men as "brothers", frequently using the term spiritually.

b. The Aim and Method of Luke.

- 1) Aim: To allow Theophilus to know the certainty or reliability (ασφαλεια) of the things he had been taught.

Luke's aim is given in his prologue to the Gospel (1:1-4), written in Greek of an even more classicized, careful Hellenistic style than his usual writing. His prologue is compressed in comparison with that of other histories of the time, but his Gospel is also shorter than the typical history. The prologue gives the same information as such prologues, serving as a dedication and explaining how and why the work was undertaken.

Liberals are nervous about the term "reliable" as it implies that someone tried to write as accurate a history of Jesus as was possible in c60 AD. If Luke succeeded, liberal theology is down the drain!

"Most excellent" [Theophilus] is a title given to governmental officials; such usage is seen in Acts. It is also used in several ancient Greek book dedications, e.g., Galen and the *Epistle to Diognetus*.

Theophilus may or may not be a Christian. A God-bearing@ names like his were common in the Greek and Jewish cultures. Cannot well argue that this person is imaginary merely on basis of etymology of his name (lover of God)..

Presumably Luke had a wider circulation in mind for this Gospel, probably his intended wider audience is educated Gentiles.

2) Luke's Method

- a) Luke was aware of the status of his subject at the time of writing.

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken ..."

Luke knew that many others had written about Jesus. However, he is probably not referring to other canonical Gospels here, as only 1 or 2 (at the most) had been written at this point.

Probably many Christians were interested in putting together the materials heard from the Apostles, but most did not have time or opportunity to carefully research their materials.

- b) Luke studied all related matters carefully himself.

"From the beginning" is probably a reference to the subject matter. Luke does start with the earliest earthly events. Could alternatively mean the

beginning place (Palestine) or that Luke himself was a disciple from the beginning, though the tradition does not support this last suggestion.

One can construct a history either by living through the events or by carefully studying the available data later (the usual historical method). Luke is apparently doing the latter.

- c) Luke used materials delivered by a group designated as "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word."

These people would include the Apostles and other full-time workers (the 70, etc.) who were also eye-witnesses. The use of a single definite article for the two terms indicates that the group is viewed as a unity having both qualifications.

Luke probably interviewed many people who were healed or present at the occasions he narrates..

Luke may have interviewed Mary, since the Lukan birth material has Mary's perspective. It is possible she was still alive in the 50's, being perhaps 70-80 years old.

- d) Luke wrote up an orderly, sequential, accurate account.

Obviously, all such claims as the above make liberals rather nervous! This Gospel, we are told, is written in Greek by a trained intellectual Gentile who had personally investigated the accounts of eye-witnesses.

c. Characteristics of Luke

1) Emphases of Luke's Gospel

- a) Universalism, i.e., the Gospel is for *all kinds* of people.

Luke has an unusual emphasis on both Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, men and women, respectable people and outcasts.

- b) Jesus' gracious attitude towards outcasts of society:

Sinners, lepers, Samaritans, harlots, tax collectors, etc.

- c) Prayer

More of Jesus' prayers and parables on prayer are included in Luke

than in the other Gospels.

d) Social Relationships

especially an interest in wealth and poverty

Why did Luke stress these relationships? Perhaps because these would appeal to his audience. Greek philosophers of the NT period were highly concerned with ethics. Many cultured Greeks of the period were also interested in ethics and unhappy with the debauchery of Rome.

2) Material Unique to Luke.

a) Luke preserves Semitic Praise Psalms.

These are very Semitic, though otherwise the Gospel of Luke is the least Semitic of the four. The Latin names given below (taken from first word(s) of their Latin texts) indicate their long usage in the liturgy of the Western church.

(1) *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55) - Mary is concerned about how she will be received at Elizabeth's house. Praises God at outcome.

(2) *Benedictus* (Lk 1:68-79) - Zachariah praises God after John's birth.

(3) *Gloria* (Lk 2:14) - Words of the angels at Jesus' birth. Not sure if this is technically a psalm.

(4) *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk 2:29-32) - Simeon's prayer upon seeing Jesus. Title means "now let depart."

b) Parables.

All Gospels contain some parables (even John).

There are 2 general types:

(1) Story Parables are Aearthly stories with a heavenly meaning.@
Example: The Wheat and Tares is typical: an earthly agricultural story conveys information on the progress of the Gospel.

(2) Illustrative parables: also called "example parables" or "paradigms"

This type is unique to Luke or nearly so (Matt 12:43-45?; 1 Kings

20:35-43?). These do not transfer meaning from physical to spiritual, but instead they picture an example of spiritual truth in operation and we are to generalize the principle.

Examples:

- (a) Good Samaritan - Question: "Who is my neighbor?"
Answer: "Anyone in need."
Principle: You do likewise.
- (b) Rich Man and Lazarus - A sample of what happens after death.
JW's want this to be a story (translation) parable so they can get rid of the idea of hell.
- (c) Pharisee and Publican – A sample of pride and humility.
- (d) Rich Fool - A sample of people who make no preparation for the next life.
- (e) Banquet Seats (Luke 14:7-11) - A sample of the result of selfishness: Forced to sit in a lower place.
- (f) Banquet Host (Luke 14:16-24) - A sample of hospitality re/ who to invite: the poor.

Why is this type of parable unique to Luke?

Don't know. Liberals say various circles of tradition invented different types of materials, but this doesn't solve the problem. There is no reason to believe in such isolated groups in the early church. Perhaps a better model is that Jesus was inventive and used different styles for different audiences. Luke apparently emphasized this material because he especially appreciated it. Perhaps other authors left them out when compressing accounts.

c) Miracles

The miracles unique to Luke are usually related to women: e.g., Jesus raises son of the widow of Nain;
Heals woman bowed down with infirmity.

d) Narrative of the Perea Ministry.

Perea is a largely Jewish region East of the Jordan

d. Sketch Outline of Luke.

Preface	
	----- 1:4
Birth and Infancy (John included)	
	----- 3:1
Preparation and Genealogy	
	----- 4:14
Galilean Ministry	
	----- 9:51
Journey to Jerusalem and Perea Ministry	
	----- 19:28
Last week	
	----- 22:1
Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion	
	----- 24:1
Resurrection	

V. Exegeting Jesus' Parables

A. Some Definitions relevant to Parables

Some confusion can arise about exactly what a parable is, since the definition used in English literature is not quite the same as the range of usage of the word παραβολή in the New Testa-

ment. On top of that, NT parable studies have been messed up for about a century because commentators unwisely followed Jülicher's claim that parables were quite different from allegories and always made only a single point.

1. Dictionary definition: "A parable is a short, fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle."

Not bad. Of course, a parable doesn't *have* to be fictitious; we have no way 2000 years later to tell whether any or all of Jesus' parables are. That a parable is a fictitious story, however, casts no shadow on the biblical teaching of inerrancy.

2. Literary definition: "A parable is an extended simile, whereas an allegory is an extended metaphor."

This definition gets us into technical questions of what a simile is, and how it differs from a metaphor. On top of that, it makes a distinction that Jesus and the NT writers do not. The word "parable" as used in the NT includes allegories and a number of other figurative genres.

For your information (but not for any of our tests), we give the following definitions of simile, metaphor, etc.

Simile: explicit comparison employing words "as, like"; e.g., "God is like a king."

Metaphor: implicit comparison, not employing words "as, like"; e.g., "God is a king."

Parable: simile is expanded into a story showing how some item, person, etc., is like the story or like some element in the story.

Allegory: story picturing concepts, etc. by means of persons or elements in the story named for the concepts. E.g, character names in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

3. New Testament usage: "A rather broad genre of illustration, including parable (narrow definition), allegory, similitude, and sample parable, as well as proverb and paradox."

We've already defined "parable" and "allegory" as used in this sentence in #2, above. What do the other terms here mean?

Similitude: longer than a single simile, but not really long enough to be a story, e.g., the woman who puts leaven in dough until all is leavened.

Sample parable: a story which illustrates some spiritual truth by giving a sample of it, rather than by giving "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning" as parables more commonly do. The parable of the sower and the soils is an earthly story (about planting seed) with a heavenly meaning (about the varied reception of the Gospel). A sample parable, by contrast, is the Good Samaritan, which gives a sample of what it means to be a neighbor.

B. How Parables Function

1. Parables are Stories. They are designed artistically by their creator to be interesting by using the standard devices of storytelling (see A. N. Wilder, *Semeia* 2[1974]: 138-40):

- brief
- unified
- limited number of actors (rule of two)
- direct discourse
- serial development
- rule of three
- repetition
- binary opposition (black vs white)
- end-stress
- often resolution by reversal
- usually two-level

2. Parables are Analogies (John Sider, *Interpreting the Parables* [Zondervan, 1995], 254).

A verbal comparison that combines a **tenor**, a **vehicle**, and one or more **points of resemblance** in a structure of logic specially suited to serve as illustration or argument.

Almost all of Jesus' parables are analogies of equation, sometimes worded as simile and sometimes as metaphor, but structured as proportions, as in mathematics $A:B = a:b$ (i.e., A is to B as a is to b).

a. An example from Shakespeare (*King Lear*, 4.1.37):

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, C they kill us for their sport."

Shakespeare's character is saying something about the relationship (as he sees it) between humans and the gods. This is the subject or **tenor** of his remark.

Tenor: relation of gods to humans

He is using the relationship between flies and (wanton) human boys as a means to illustrate this subject.

Vehicle: relation of boys to flies

The point of resemblance which the character has in mind is here explicitly stated, "they kill us for their sport."

Point of resemblance: in respect of how (mis)treated.

This can be diagramed as a proportion:

tenor *vehicle*
we: gods = flies: (wanton) boys

with respect to how they mistreat us
point of resemblance

b. An example from Jesus' parables (Wheat & Weeds, Matt 13):

Story: A man sows good seed in his field, his enemy sows weeds on top of them. When discovered, the man's slaves want to remedy the situation right away, but the owner has them wait until the harvest.

Tenor: "The kingdom of heaven is like..." Jesus' subject is the kingdom of heaven. He is telling us about certain features of its (future) history, apparently.

Vehicle: The story above is the vehicle. Jesus is telling us about the kingdom of heaven (heavenly subject) by means of an earthly agricultural story of an enemy's attempt to spite his neighbor by ruining his crop with weeds.

Point of Resemblance: Jesus' story has a number of points of resemblance, not just one, though one of them may well be the main point. What kinds of analogies and points of resemblance can we find?

C. Parables in the Synoptics (and John)

1. Christological parables

Strong Man Defeated	Mt 12:29; Mk 3:27; Lk 11:21-22
Rejected Stone	Mt 21:42-44
Door of the Sheep	Jn 10:1-9
Good Shepherd	Jn 10:1-5, 11-16
Father the Vinedresser	Jn 15:1-2

2. Parables of lost & found

Lost Sheep	Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:3-7
Lost Coin	Lk 15:8-10
Lost Son	Lk 15:11-32

3. Parables of forgiveness & mercy

Unmerciful Servant	Mt 18:21-35
Day Laborers	Mt 20:1-6
Two Debtors	Lk 7:36-50
Unprofitable Servants	Lk 17:7-10

4. Parables on prayer

Son Asking Bread	Mt 7:9-12; Lk 11:11-13
Friend at Midnight	Lk 11:5-8
Unjust Judge	Lk 18:1-8

5. Parables of transformation

New Patch	Mt 9:16; Mk 2:21; Lk 5:36
New Wine	Mt 9:17; Mk 2:22; Lk 5:37-39

6. Parables of stewardship

Lamp & Bushel	Mt 5:15; Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16; 11:33
Crooked Business Manager	Lk 16:1-9
Unfaithful Upper Servant	Mt 24:45-51; Lk 12:42-46
Talents	Mt 25:14-30
Pounds	Lk 19:11-27
Day Laborers	Mt 20:1-16
Vineyard Workers	Mt 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19

7. Parables of invitation & rejection

Children in Market Place	Mt 11:16-19
Two Sons	Mt 21:28-32
The Great Supper	Lk 14:15-24
Marriage of the King's Son	Mt 22:1-14

8. Parables of the second coming

Vultures & Carcass	Mt 24:28; Lk 17:37
Fig Tree Heralds Summer	Mt 24:32-33; Mk 13:28-29; Lk 21:29-31
Householder & Thief	Mt 24:42-44; Lk 12:39
Porter	Mk 13:34-36
Waiting Servants	Lk 12:35-38
Wise & Foolish Virgins	Mt 25:1-13

9. Parables of warning & judgment

Axe at Roots	Mt 3:10
Fan in Hand	Mt 3:12
Tasteless Salt	Mt 5:13; Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34-35
Fire, Salt & Peace	Mk 9:49-50
Settle out of Court	Mt 5:25-26; Lk 12:57-59
Eye Light of Body	Mt 6:22-23; Lk 11:34-35
Blind Leading Blind	Mk 4:24; Lk 6:39
Speck & Log	Mt 7:3-5; Lk 7:41-42
Wise & Foolish Builders	Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:47-49
Empty House	Mt 12:43-45; Lk 11:24-26
Every Plant not Planted	Mt 15:13
Barren Fig Tree	Lk 13:6-9
Tower Builder	Lk 14:28-30
King at War	Lk 14:31-33
Wicked Tenants	Mt 21:33-45; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19
Sheep & Goats	Mt 25:31-46

10. Parables of the kingdom

Sower	Mt 13:3-8; Mk 4:4-8; Lk 8:5-8
Tares	Mt 13:24-30
Growing Seed	Mk 4:26-29
Mustard Seed	Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19
Leaven	Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21
Treasure	Mt 13:44
Pearl	Mt 13:45-46
Dragnet	Mt 13:47-50

New & Old Mt 13:52

11. Illustrative (example) parables

Good Samaritan	Lk 10:30-37
Rich Fool	Lk 12:16-21
Lowest Seats	Lk 14:7-11
Dinner Invitations	Lk 14:12-14
Rich Man & Lazarus	Lk 16:19-31
Pharisee & Tax Collector	Lk 18:9-14

12. Acted parables

Cursing the Fig Tree	Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14, 20-24
Cleansing the Temple	Jn 2:13-22; Mt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-19; Lk 19:45-48
Jesus at 12 in Temple	Lk 2:41-50
Jesus' Baptism	Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34
Healing on Sabbath	e.g., Mk 3:1-6
Healing with Clay	Jn 9:1-7
Writing on Ground	Jn 7:53-8:11
Triumphal Entry	Mt 21; Mk 11; Lk 19; Jn 12
Anointing Jesus	Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-8
Foot-Washing	Jn 13:1-11

VI. The Gospels as Literary Works

A. Their Literary Form

What is the literary form or overall genre of the Gospels? A number of different suggestions have been made.

1. Biography?

Obviously the Gospels are presenting information about Jesus, a person who actually lived in history, so they are certainly biographical in some sense.

a. Not biography in modern scholarly sense

- B not written by uninvolved observer with detached attitude
- B not trying to give all the important dates and facts
- B not primarily personal reminiscences and character studies

b. More like biography in ancient popular sense

- B written by author with practical concerns, exhortation, etc.
- B acquainting reader with a historical person
- B giving some account of this person's deeds, words
- B some resemblance to ancient biographies about:
Socrates, Epictetus, Apollonius
- B but Gospels concentrate on Jesus' death, and on reactions of people to him

2. Propaganda, PR, Sales Pitch, Hype?

The Gospels *are* seeking to convince their readers that Jesus is vitally important and to move them to respond properly to him.

a. Propaganda, as name implies, seeks to propagate certain ideas or attitudes

- B commonly a dirty word today, because it so often involves playing fast and loose with the truth, giving the events a particular spin
- B usually involves working on fears, prejudices, trying to excite emotions, etc.

b. Gospel writers *are* trying to invite a reader response

- B but not mainly response of interest or admiration, though these involved
- B primarily response of faith or trust in Jesus

c. Gospel writers are *surprising* in that they:

- B restrain their post-Easter faith in telling the story
- B let the events of Jesus' ministry tell their own story

3. Dramatic history?

The Gospels are telling a dramatic story of the person, actions and impact of Jesus, a real

figure in history. They do in some ways look more like plays than modern narratives.

- a. Roland Frye thinks the Gospels should be classed as dramatic histories, resembling the historical plays of William Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw.
- b. Characteristics of dramatic history:
 - B essentially fair representation of events
 - B directed to a broad, general audience
 - B condensation important to attract and hold audience
 - B key practice is to use representative (sample) persons, incidents, actions to give accurate picture while keeping length within bounds

4. Collections of Stories?

The Gospels are most striking (in contrast to modern biographies) in being a collection of stories B incidents, speeches and sayings of Jesus.

- a. Action packed
 - using numerous brief stories allows more action than a single connected narrative
- b. Centered on Jesus
 - B his person and work
 - B explain and celebrate Jesus
 - B use narrative to show:
 - B his actions
 - B his words
 - B responses of others to him
- c. Varied materials
 - B probably used independently before being compiled
 - B form critics say these materials circulated independently
 - B I would suggest they were used by apostles and other eyewitnesses as separate anecdotes
 - B various categories of brief narratives (see Ryken=s list in III-E above, pp. 39-

40)

- B sketched events
- B detailed events
- B dialogues
- B words of Jesus
 - B brief sayings
 - B extended discourse
 - B parables

B. Their Techniques

1. Restraint and Objectivity

Gospels are unusual, and unlike even ancient biographies in this. Authors let Jesus speak, and do not try to persuade or influence the reader by evaluative comments. Selection of incident is the only technique used to make the impression desired.

2. Concise, Compressed Accounts

In the synoptic Gospels especially, most incidents are a single scene, with a couple of actors (often a group acting as a unit), and they are told with a very economical use of words. John's Gospel tends to work with fewer accounts, but longer, more detailed.

3. Very Concrete Narration

Since brief accounts can very easily become bland, general summaries, this danger is avoided by the presentation of specific incidents, using short, vivid description (like an artist's sketch), and direct discourse, with characterization provided by the actor's words or actions in that particular incident, rather than by specific statements.

4. Selection of Materials

The author selects which incident from Jesus' ministry he will recount, and how he will tell it. Without actually using evaluative words, the author can communicate his emphasis by the amount of space he devotes to a particular incident or item in it, whether he chooses to use dialog or summary, and what expectations he raises in the reader's mind.

5. Variety

The author groups his materials in various ways, perhaps alternating Jesus' actions with his words, miracles with controversies, followers with opponents. This helps keep the attention of the reader or (if read aloud) of the audience.

6. Sampling

The Gospel writers apparently give us samples of Jesus' speech and actions, rather than trying to give a full report. These are typically samples of the types of miracles Jesus did, the various kinds of people he interacted with, the sorts of opposition he faced, and the kind of speeches he gave on various occasions.

VII. Mid-Term Exam

No, this is not the exam. But we will try to give you some information on what to study and how. This material is especially designed for the NT 550 Synoptics mid-term, but should be helpful for the final exam as well (with suitable modifications), and more generally for studying other courses.

A. How to Study

The following is a list of items which, if you do them, will surely improve your grade in this or any course. They are taken from the October 1994 issue of *The Teaching Professor*. Even if (due to other responsibilities) you don't have time to do all of these, there are some that take no extra time (## 3-7) and will pay real dividends.

1. I read the assigned reading before we cover that material in class.
2. I allow enough time for reading the assigned material so that I can read it slowly and thoughtfully.
3. I read to understand, because I really want to know the subject we are studying.
4. I attend class regularly and am rarely or never late.
5. I sit near the front of class, so that I feel like a participant, not merely an observer.
6. I take notes on virtually everything said or discussed in class.
7. I ask questions in class until the subject being covered is clear in my mind.
8. I get together with several others in the course to review readings and lecture notes 2 or 3 days prior to the exam.
9. I get a good night's sleep (7 or 8 hours) prior to the day of the exam.

B. What to Study

1. Study the "Contents & Outline" pages in the front of the printed notes. They were especially designed to give you an overview of the course.
2. Study the headings in the notebook below the level of those in the "Contents & Outline" above. They will help to fill in some detail on the framework provided by the outline.
3. Read over the notebook (sections I through VI) at least a couple of times, using a

| highlighter to mark what appear to be significant points. Don't mark everything; that just wastes time!

4. About two-thirds of the exam points will be multiple-choice, short-answer, or matching, the other third will be essay. Try to see what sorts of material would make a good essay, and what is more likely to be short-answer or such. Here working with some other students in the class can be very profitable.
5. Regarding memorization, I don't think that is the best strategy for seminary-level courses. Try to understand what is being talked about in each section of the notes. Try to visualize the history, the arguments, etc. But don't assume just having a general idea of what the course is about will identify dates or persons for you!

VIII. The Synoptic Problem

A. What is "the Synoptic Problem"?

1. The problem

Synoptic means "looking together." The first three Gospels are very similar to one another, as though looking at the life of Jesus from the same perspective, especially when compared with the Gospel of John. Yet they also have a number of puzzling differences.

The problem: What is the relationship among the first three Gospels that will explain what makes them so similar and yet significantly different?

We expect reports concerning historical events to be similar, but the histories of Jesus are unusual:

- In over 3 years of ministry involving many long speeches, only a few hours are recorded;
- While hundreds were healed, only a few healings are recorded individually; the same ones are generally mentioned in the various Gospels.

Those who reject the inspiration of the Gospels say:

- Similarities are due to copying;
- Differences are due to changes made intentionally or because authors were unaware of each other.

2. The Phenomena of the Problem

a. Verbal Agreements and Differences.

Consider the Parable of the Sower:

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Ὁδοῦ <i>fξ↑λθεν</i>	Ὁδοῦ <i>fξ↑λθεν</i>	<i>fξ↑λθεν</i>
Ⓜ σπείρων	Ⓜ σπείρων	Ⓜ σπείρων
τοῖ σπείρειν	σπεῖραι	τοῖ σπεῖραι
		τεῖν σπόρον α↔τοῖ
καθῖ	καθῖ <i>fγένετο</i>	καθῖ
<i>fν τ\</i> σπείρειν	<i>fν τ\</i> σπείρειν	<i>fν τ\</i> σπείρειν
α↔τεῖν		α↔τεῖν

Matthew

□ μων ♣πεσεν
παρ□ τ←ν @δόν

καθι φλθόντα
τ□ πετειν□

κατέφαγεν α↔τά

□λλα δ∞
♣πεσεν φπθι
τ□ πετρώδη
™που ο↔κ ε∃χεν
γ↑ν πολλήν

καθι ε↔θέως
φξαντέιλεν
δι□ τε μ← ♣χειν
βάθος γ↑ς

≡λίου δ∞ □νατείλαντος
φκαυματίσθη
καθι δι□ τε
μ← ♣χειν ρίζαν
φζηράνθη

□λλα δ∞
♣πεσεν φπθι
τ□ς □κάνθας
καθι □νέβησαν
α∃ □κανθαι καθι
□πέπνιξαν α↔τά

□λλα δ∞
♣πεσεν φπθι
τ←ν γ↑ν τ←ν καλ←ν

Mark

Ε μων ♣πεσεν
παρ□ τ←ν @δόν

καθι αλθεν
τ□ πετειν□ καθι

κατέφαγεν α↔τό

καθι □λλο
♣πεσεν φπθι
τε πετρ'δεσ
™που ο↔κ ε∃χεν
γ↑ν πολλήν

καθι ε↔θ·ς
φξαντέιλεν
δι□ τε μ← ♣χειν
βάθος γ↑ς

καθι ™τε
□νέτειλεν @ ≈λιος
φκαυματίσθη
καθι δι□ τε
μ← ♣χειν ρίζαν
φζηράνθη

καθι □λλο
♣πεσεν ε∃ς
τ□ς □κάνθας
καθι □νέβησαν
α∃ □κανθαι καθι
συνέπνιξαν α↔τό
καθι καρπεν
ο↔κ ♣δωκεν

καθι □λλα
♣πεσεν ε∃ς
τ←ν γ↑ν τ←ν καλ←ν

Luke

Ε μων ♣πεσεν
παρ□ τ←ν @δόν
καθι κατεπατήθη

καθι
τ□ πετεινα
το· ο↔ρανο·
κατέφαγεν α↔τό

καθι ♠τερον
κατέπεσεν φπθι
τ←ν πέτραν

καθι
φυων

φζηράνθη
δι□ τε
μ← ♣χειν ∅κμάδα

καθι ♠τερον
♣πεσεν φν μέσ∑
τ'ν □κανθ'ν
καθι συμφυε ρσαι
α∃ □κανθαι
□πέπνιξαν α↔τό

καθι ♠τερον
♣πεσεν ε∃ς
τ←ν γ↑ν τ←ν □γαθ←ν

καθι φιδίδου καρπόν	καθι φιδίδου καρπόν□ναβαίνοντα καθι α↔ξανόμενα καθι ♣φερεν	καθι φυον φποίησεν καρπόν
™ μον ♥κατόν ™ δ∞ ♥ξήκοντα ™ δ∞ τριάκοντα	ε∅ς τριάκοντα καθι fv ♥ξήκοντα καθι fv ♥κατόν	♥κατονταπλασίονα
® ♣χων {τα □κουέτω	καθι ♣λεγεν ™ς ♣χει {τα □κούειν □κουέτω	τα-τα λέγων φφώνει ® ♣χων {τα □κούειν □κουέτω

Henry Alford well summarizes the phenomena as follows:

"The phenomena presented will be much as follows: first, perhaps, we shall have three, five or more [words] identical, then as many wholly distinct, then two clauses or more, expressed in the same words but differing order; then a clause contained in one or two and not in the third [Gospel]; then several words identical; then a clause not only wholly distinct but apparently inconsistent; and so forth; with recurrences of the same arbitrary and anomalous alterations, coincidences, and transpositions."

Greek Testament, 1:5

We can try to convert this merely anecdotal evidence to numbers by giving statistics on verbal variations within the Synoptic materials *only* in those sections where they *overlap*, noting the frequency of identical and different wording (agreement for verbs means they have the same tense, not merely the same root). Taken from Schaff, *Church History*, vol.1.

Book	% unique words	% agreement w/ 2	% agreement w/ 1
Mark	40	22	38
Martthew	56	14	30
Luke	67	12	21

b. Differences in the Order of Events.

The order of events in the Synoptics is mainly the same, as can be observed in a harmony of the Gospels like Robertson's. Yet some differences do occur, e.g.,

Healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Robertson ' 43)

Mt 8:14; Mk 1:29; Lk 4:38

Healing of a Leper (Robertson ' 45).

Mt 8:2-4; Mk 1:40; Lk 5:12

Which did Jesus really do first? Mark and Luke have the above order, but Matthew the reverse. Presumably one or the others are not chronological here.

Within the narrative of a given incident we will sometimes find differences:

Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness

Matt and Luke vary on 2nd and 3rd tests

Lord's Supper: Was the cup given first in Luke?

(There is a textual problem here)

Some problems which arise in questions of order:

B If textual variants, which is correct text?

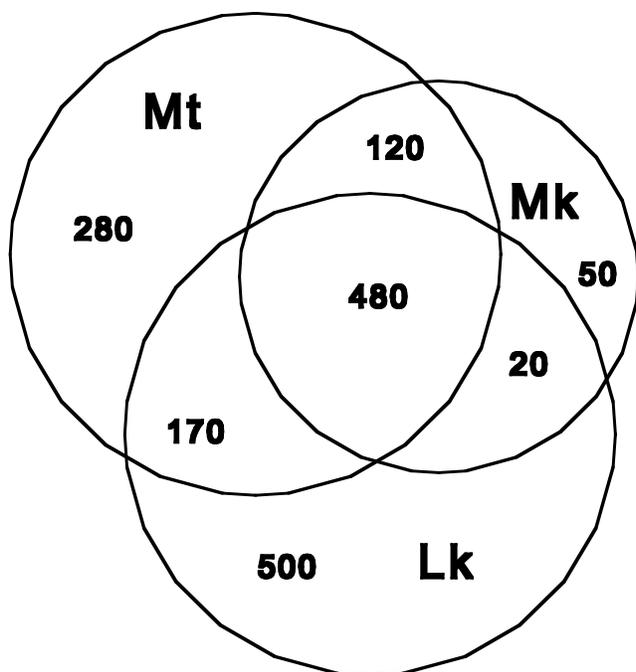
B Are 2 similar sections really describing the same event or 2 different events that were similar?

Is Sermon on the Mount in Matt. the same as the Sermon on the Plain in Luke? I.e., are these two different reports of the same occasion or similar sermons on two different occasions?

More radical interpreters say the 2 cleansings of the temple are the same event and thus one of the gospels is wrong in its placement of that event.

Agreements in order of events of Matt and Luke against Mark are very rare compared with other combinations, and this is used to argue for certain solutions to the synoptic problem.

c. Overlap and Uniqueness of Content.



Not how words or orders differ, but whether or not an incident occurs in the various gospels.

1) By verses, as indicated in chart at left, from J. B. Tyson, *Study of Early Christianity*, p.184-185.

Allan Barr, *A Diagram of Synoptic Relationships*, shows details of distribution.

2) By the sections used for the Eusebian Canons (Lists).

Canon	Content	# Entries
1	All 4	74
2	3 Synoptics	111
3	Mt/Lk/Jn	22
4	Mt/Mk/Jn	25
5	Mt/Lk	82
6	Mt/Mk	47
7	Mt/Jn	7
8	Lk/Mk	13
9	Lk/Jn	21

10a	Matthew	62
10b	Mark	19
10c	Luke	72
10d	John	96

Eusebian sections are often rather small. The books are divided into the following number of sections each: Matthew (155), Mark (233), Luke (342), John (232).

The Eusebian Canons are 13 lists designed to help one find parallel passages in the other Gospels. They can be found in the front of the various editions of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

Let us look at some phenomena of overlap and uniqueness of content for all four Gospels as revealed by a careful look at the canon table above.

2 possible combinations do not actually appear in these lists:

- (1) Mk/Lk/Jn. One set of 3 is missing because there is no passage in Mk, Lk and Jn which is not also in Matthew.
- (2) Mk/Jn. If a passage occurs in Mk and Jn, it also occurs in Matt or Luke.

Note canons 2-4, passages which occur in exactly three Gospels. By comparison of the number of entries in each, we can see reason for name "synoptic" for Mt, Mk, Lk.

Note canons 5-9, passages which occur in exactly two Gospels. By comparison, see Mt/Lk dominates and Mt/Mk is second.

3) Summary of overlap.

- (a) Almost all of Mark is found in either Matt. or Luke.
- (b) Matt. and Luke have much common material not in Mark.

This is Q in the 2-document theory.

This is mainly discourse material, with only 1 narrative (temptation of Jesus).

- (c) Matt. and Luke have much material unique to each.

3. A Sketch History of the Synoptic Problem.

Something of the problem was recognized as soon as the second Gospel began to circulate, probably in the 60's.

Opponents of Xy used the Gospels against each other to attack Christianity, e.g., Celsus' *True Account*.

Heretical attacks motivated Christians to try and solve the synoptic problem. Here we sketch some such attempts:

a. Tatian's *Diatessaron* (c170)

Tatian prepared a "woven" harmony, taking all the accounts and editing them into a single narrative.

b. The Canons of Eusebius (before 340)

Eusebius used Ammonius' divisions to make the lists (canons) noted above. The tables index parallel accounts, making study of these accounts much easier.

c. Augustine, *Harmony of the Evangelists* (c400)

Augustine made the first attempt to go incident-by-incident through the Gospels and suggest how to harmonize them.

He is also the first to suggest a theory on how synoptics arose, a version of the successive dependence theory (on which more later), in which Matt was written first, Mark condensed it, and Luke used both in writing his Gospel.

Augustine's theory: Mt ==> Mk ==> L
 =====>

About this time military & economic disaster struck the Roman Empire. Literacy fell drastically (from perhaps 80% to 5%) between 300 to 500. This type of study was not resumed until the Reformation.

d. Reformation Harmonies

With the resumption of academic biblical studies in the Renaissance and Reformation, attempts to harmonize resumed, rethinking the sort of work Augustine had done. The problem was faced of how to decide when to treat two similar events as the same or different, with widely divergent solutions.

We continue with more recent theories, from the 1780's to present.

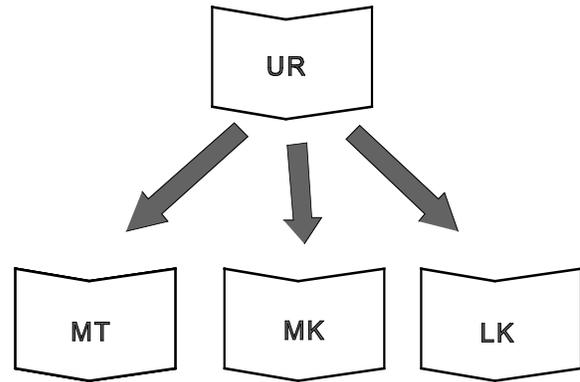
e. The Urevangelium (primitive Gospel)

Proposed independently by Lessing and Eichhorn

There was one original Gospel.

Similarities between Synoptics are due to all 3 using Ur as source.

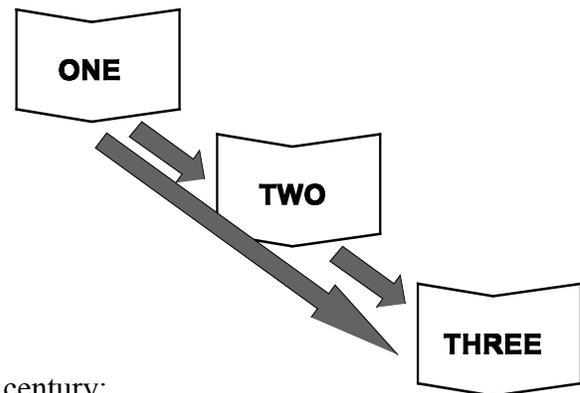
Differences arise as they edit and translate Ur differently.



f. Successive Dependence

Proposed by Augustine, revived by Grotius.

Idea: /1/ is written,
/2/ uses /1/ when writing his,
/3/ uses both /1/ and /2/.
In most versions, /2/ or /3/ may use other oral or written sources besides previous Gospel(s) also.



These were very popular in the 19th century; every possible order was suggested at that time (see Thiessen or Alford).

Is still used today by some, e.g.:

Augustinian Mt ==> Mk ==> Lk

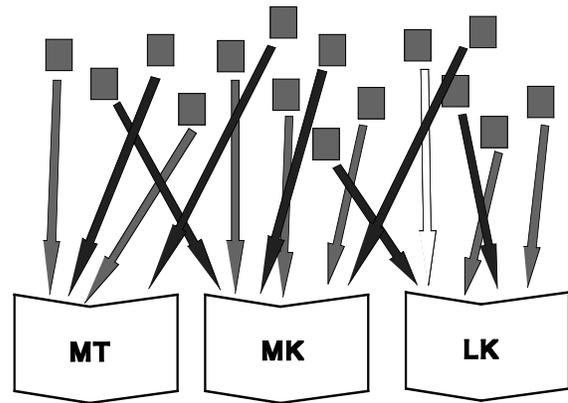
Griesbach Mt ==> Lk ==> Mk

Markan Mk ==> Mt ==> Lk

g. Fragmentary

Proposed by Friedrich Schleiermacher, "father" of modern liberalism.

Were many written fragments ("short accounts", not "parts of mss") of anecdotes, parables, discourses, miracle accounts, short stories, etc., which the Gospel writers strung together into a continuous narrative.



Similarities between Gospels explained by using same fragments, differences by using different fragments or different editions of same fragments.

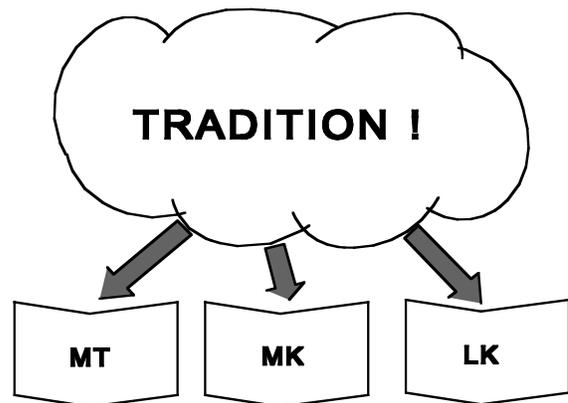
h. Oral Tradition

Proposed by Westcott and Alford, who are relatively conservative.

The common basis of the Synoptics is entirely oral.

The Apostles, who were present when the events occurred, unified the oral tradition into continuous written narratives.

The traditions themselves may have come directly from the Apostles.

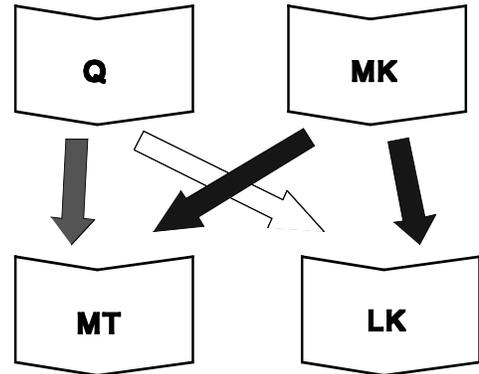


Similarities are due to common oral tradition, differences from oral variation.

i. Two Document Theory

Proposed by Eichhorn, Bernard Weiss, and H.J. Holzmann in the 19th cen, is the dominant theory today.

Mark or its precursor (Ur-Markus) is one written source for Matthew and Luke. The other material common to Mt-Lk but not in Mark is from another (written) source, called "Q" (probably from German Quelle, source).



Thus Q and (Ur-)Mark were the written sources for most of the material common to Mt-Lk.

Matthew and Luke worked independently of each other.

Scheme is hypothetical (no extant Q manuscript).

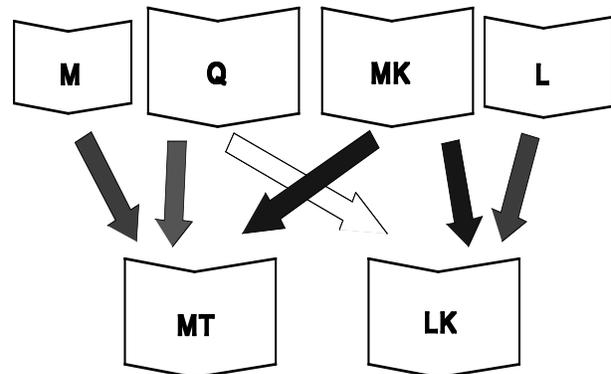
Q has also been called the "Logia" based on the assumption that this was what Papias was referring to instead of Matthew; another name is "Sayings Source," as most of its material consists of sayings of Jesus.

As there is some material which is unique to Mark (not in Mt or Lk), some proponents say that Mt & Lk used a proto-Mark (Ur-Markus) which was later edited into the modern Mark.

j. Four Document Theory

Proposed by B.H. Streeter.

Besides Q and Mark, Streeter adds written sources "M" and "L" which contained the materials unique to Matthew and Luke, respectively.



Not many people accept this model, but most use the terms "M" and "L" to refer to the

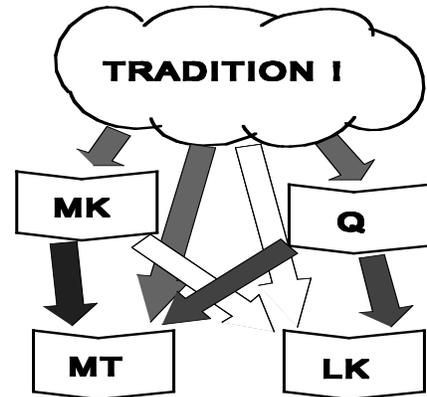
material unique to Matt and Luke. They are not necessarily implying that "M" and "L" were real written documents (as Streeter does), or even oral sources.

k. Form Criticism

Proposed by Rudolf Bultmann.

Will be considered in detail later, under topic "Form Criticism."

Is a combination of g), h), and i) above. Goes behind the 2-document theory to the oral sources of Mark and Q. Says they arose from fragmentary collections of notes and oral tradition.



These traditions were not compiled by the Apostles (as in Westcott and Alford) but were integrated by the writers of Q and Mark.

Writers of Mt and Lk added more tradition to Mark's framework and Q in their Gospels.

4. Discussion of these Various Theories

a. Urevangelium

1) Advantages:

Explains similarities in a natural way: A common source. Lessing and Eichhorn proposed that this source was a written Gospel in Aramaic. This Aramaic Gospel was not preserved because few people spoke it after Aramaic died out in the church (after 100 AD) so it was not copied. This tendency *is* seen in history: Documents in a foreign language are not copied if language is not known (especially if translation is available). Hebrew and Greek were lost to the Western Church for centuries in Middle Ages.

2) Problems:

Have no direct or indirect evidence for this document.
If it was the Aramaic Matthew, why is it so different from the Greek Matthew?
Why did the writers use this source in such a peculiar way? Sometimes quote

directly, but then suddenly make tense and wording changes (see parable of the sower above).

Serious order differences if both Mt and Lk used Ur.

How do we explain the material that is unique to each Gospel (especially the apparent discrepancies) from only this one source?

If the Gospels are condensations from it, how did Mark happen to extract only the same material as Mt and Lk?

Thus the Urevangelium theory explains similarities well, but does not account for the differences.

b. Successive Dependence

1) Advantages:

Claims that we have all the original documents. No need to invoke lost documents or proto-Gospels.

2) Problems:

Who borrowed from whom? Since all varieties of source and borrower have been proposed, it seems like the order is not obvious.

Don't know whether authors "expanded" source narratives or "contracted" them.

How did the verbal differences arise? Why did the writer feel free to make changes in his source(s) if he knew only the (inspired) gospel(s) in front of him?

Where does material in later Gospels come from which is not in the earlier Gospels, particularly when it appears inconsistent?

Robert Gundry's *Commentary on Matthew* takes a somewhat similar view. Argues that Matt. had Mark and Q: Matt. modified shepherd story into wise men story using a *Midrash* style. [A big strain on inspiration, etc.].

c. Fragmentary

1) Advantages:

Luke 1:1 implies that there was much written material available, since there had been many attempts to write accounts. (But must these be fragmentary?)

Schleiermacher saw that the Gospels look like a series of anecdotes: There are only a few examples of connections between the stories (Jesus doing several events one after another on the same day).

Apparently there were a variety of sources: We see Luke shift from a Semitic style in Luke 1-2 to a Hellenistic style in the rest of Luke. This implies he had a different source for Luke 1-2 (Mary?).

2) Problems:

Schleiermacher and Bultmann downplay the reliability of the fragments to the point where we can't know their order or historicity. This view has the same problems as Form Criticism, so will discuss later.

There is probably some merit in this view, but needs repair.

d. Oral Tradition

1) Advantages:

The events of Jesus' life were presented orally in the early ministry of the Apostles.

In evangelical circles, the connotation of "tradition" is negative, implying many generations of transfer. This connotation is not necessary in the corresponding Greek words:

παράδοσις - means "to hand over".

παράδοσις - means "material handed over".

These terms show up in the NT, and can be translated as "tradition." But they do not have the sense of a long, cloudy history with no known ultimate source.

The Greek sense refers to what a teacher hands over to a student to guard carefully and keep from error.

Similarly, in Rabbinic schools, a good student was like a plastered cistern which did not leak a drop of the material stored in it.

Whether Rabbinic handing over went back reliably to Moses as the Rabbis claimed (2000 years and 30 to 40 transfers) is one thing, whether NT tradition is

reliable within one generation (30 years or less with 0 [Apostles] or 1 transfer) is another.

2) Problems:

This is a possible view if we do not insist the NT sources were only oral: Shorthand did exist and was used for recording court cases, etc. Educated followers could have taken notes, written diaries, etc.

A combination of written and oral sources seems best.

e. Two and Four Document Theories.

1) Advantages:

Matthew and Luke do appear to depend on Mark in that they follow Mark's order most of the time. When Matt and Luke do not follow Mark, neither one follows the other.

Thus could see how Luke and Matthew might have had Mark in front of them, but not each other's Gospel (Mt didn't have Lk or Lk have Mt).

With this strength, can see why the view is dominant. However, it is not the only way to explain the data: Griesbach explains this parallelism by saying that Mark followed both Matt and Luke where they agreed and followed only one of them when they did not!

Nearly any borrowing scheme can be argued both ways: "simple" is not always earlier than "complex." It is very difficult to tell which account was first in other literature, too.

2) Problems:

Have no evidence for the background documents Q, M, or L. Not even comments regarding their existence, unless we take Papias as referring to one of them (but the early church took this as referring to Matthew).

The verbal differences are peculiar if Mt and Lk were copying from Mark: Why did they change some, then use other wording?

Why did Luke omit a large section of Mark (6:45-8:9)? No easy rationalization: If we propose that this section was missing in Ur-Markus, then we invent another missing document.

A particular problem for evangelicals:

Why did Matthew the Apostle follow Mark so slavishly if Mark is second-hand and Matthew was there himself? Why not use his own notes instead of Peter's memoirs?

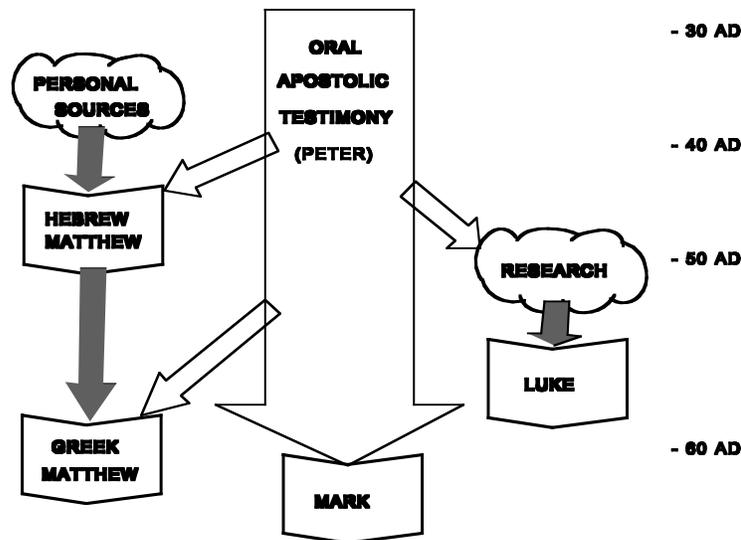
Biggest problem: This view throws away all traditional (i.e., historical) information concerning Gospel origins. All tradition says that Matthew was written before Mark; this view reverses the order.

B. A Proposed Solution to the Synoptic Problem

Having looked at both internal and external evidence, we suggest that the Gospels were written by the traditional authors, who used both oral and written sources.

Internal evidence suggests that Mark was followed in some way by Luke and Matthew. In apparent contradiction to this, external evidence says that Matthew was written earliest, and that Luke was probably also written before Mark.

I suggest a model in which the oral source of Mark is also a primary source of Matthew and Luke, but that Mt and Lk were written before Mk.



1. How are the similarities to be explained?

We suggest that Mt, Mk and Lk used mainly oral sources with some written supplements.

a. All the synoptics depend on the life of Christ, an actual series of events in history.

So some of the similarity is due to the fact that these things actually happened.

Yet how do we explain the common selection of certain events from a much larger whole?

b. All depend on the oral preaching and teaching of the Apostles.

The apostles experienced all of Jesus' public ministry; they preached and taught together for a number of years afterward; and they were in communication to some extent thereafter.

Doubtless, as the apostles were together, they talked through which incidents in Jesus' ministry best captured who he was and what he did, and how best to present these.

c. The apparent priority of Mark may be a result of Peter's influence as spokesman and leader among the Apostles during the early years together in Jerusalem.

Mark preserves the teaching of the most influential Apostle, but is not the *written* source of Mt and Lk.

Peter's preaching, the oral source of Mark, is also the main oral source for Matt and Luke because of Peter's influence in the selecting and shaping of the material which constitutes the apostolic testimony to Jesus.

d. The similarity of Matthew and Luke where Mark is not present may be due to each having used Jesus' oral teaching materials.

Matthew arranges these sayings and discourses in blocks while Luke scatters them throughout the narrative.

While some suggest Luke used Matthew, Luke often has these discourses in a different context than Matt. Why would Luke have changed the context of Matthew? One of the strengths of hypothesizing Q is that it explains this feature by seeing Q as having no narrative context. But this still has authors inventing contexts.

Better to say that Jesus often repeated materials, so Luke and Matthew place items differently because Matt. reports one occasion and Luke another, as determined by his interviews. Sayings are typically reported only once in a Gospel as writers

are trying to avoid monotony and book production was expensive.

Idea so far: Actual events in history produce the similarities. The selection of which events to present was partly done by a single group process.

- e. The students of Jewish rabbis learned their masters' teaching by rote; perhaps this was also done in Christian circles.

The great similarities in wording (especially in Jesus' teachings) suggest memorization.

There are clear parallels between Jesus and Rabbis. Both had disciples, sometimes taught in parables, debated with opponents, were called "Rabbi."

Both in Greek and Jewish cultures, learning was mainly by memorization from oral instruction, rather than by reading books, taking notes, etc. See Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*. Some students had great memories and could quote teachers like an encyclopedia. Others could recall logic and arguments well.

- f. Some documents or notes were likely used.

Luke 1:1-4 mentions many who wrote accounts, though Luke does not tell us whether or not he used their written materials.

Papias' comment on Mark, "accurately but not in order" perhaps should be understood of Mark's note-taking during Peter's sermons which he later organized into final Gospel.

2. How are the differences to be explained?

Recall that the Gospels contain sometimes exactly the same incidents and wordings, clustered with some striking differences in event, order and words.

- a. Jesus' teaching was doubtless somewhat (but not exactly) repetitive, as he spoke to different audiences. This would help his disciples to learn his teachings and yet may account for some of the variations.
- b. Some of Jesus' actions were repeated: Many miracles, cleansing of the Temple, feeding of multitudes.
- c. Different witnesses see and emphasize different aspects of the same event.
- d. Oral repetition (even by a single person) regularly produces the verbal variation ob-

served here (striking similarity with "random" variation of tenses, synonyms). There is no need to postulate a many-linked chain as in the case of rabbinic oral traditions allegedly going back to Moses.

Even with Matt in the 40's, there are 10+ years of oral repetition. The striking similarities are due to the Apostles being together; variations in tense and wording are natural features of personal differences and even repetition by an individual.

The writers and speakers are telling us what happened but are not attempting to be identical in their accounts.

- e. The Gospel writers apparently did not always intend to convey the very words of Jesus, many of which were probably not spoken in Greek anyway.

They tell us what Jesus said, but an exact transcript would be impractical because of length.

All the Gospel writers were seeking to communicate widely, not just to a wealthy elite (contrast Josephus' 20-volume *Antiquities*), so they kept costs down by selecting and summarizing events and discourses.

Papyrus rolls were not that long and were rather expensive. The Gospel message was compressed to the media (book style) and economy of the day.

Summaries may omit details yet still be accurate.

- f. Presumably the Gospel writers did not each know everything known by the others, having their own recollections and research.

Something may have happened when a particular Apostle was not around; or he may not remember it.

- g. The evangelists certainly did not use all they did know (John 21:25), but rather selected (John 20:30-31) their materials to keep their accounts within bounds and to give them the emphasis intended.

Shortening an account by generalizing and being vague makes the story drab. Better to retain dialog and concrete detail, even if it means selection of only a few incidents or key sentences of sermons to retain vividness. Note the similar use of "sound-bites" by modern TV newscasts.

3. How does all this fit with inspiration?

- a. Inspiration does not require dictation; it allows the author's style to come through

without losing truthfulness.

Inspiration does not rule out some dictation. Consider the 10 Commandments, not only dictated by God, but physically written by Him.

Inspiration is consistent with approximate language (e.g., round numbers), summarization, and non-chronological arrangement (so long as the author does not claim chronological order), but not with real contradiction or explicit chronological error.

A summary may *seem* misleading if you are trying to extract points from the story which the author is not providing (e.g., 1 or 2 Gadarene demoniacs). It is possible to misinterpret an inerrant text!

A writer may sometimes use a logical arrangement rather than chronological order without telling you this explicitly.

- b. Inspiration assures us that the accounts are harmonious, but it does not necessarily tell us how to harmonize them.

Typically we can suggest 2 or 3 possibilities and cannot be sure which one is right.

- c. Inspiration is a revealed doctrine.

We do not derive inspiration from Scripture by inductively resolving all known difficulties; we deduce it from its teaching: God cannot lie, writers were guided, Jesus, apostles, prophets treat Scripture as inerrant, etc.

Thus we do not need to answer all objections before accepting it, though we should still work at answering them in order to help others and to strengthen our own confidence in God and his Word.

Liberals have an "advantage" here as they can pile up apparent inconsistencies and then claim a high probability that at least one of these is a genuine error; but the same technique can be used against the sinlessness of Christ or the goodness of God.

Remember *any* single event is "improbable" as too many other things *might* have happened.

We can argue that the Scriptures give positive evidence of their supernatural source, and are impressive enough where their historical accuracy is testable, that we have no excuse that will stand in the judgment for rejecting them.

IX. Geography of Palestine

In order to have a good overview of what is going on in the Bible, the New Testament, and the Gospels in particular, it is desirable to have a handle on the relevant geography. For the Synoptic Gospels, this is that of Israel at New Testament times.

A. Physical Features of Palestine

On a large scale, there has been little change in the basic geography since NT times.

1. Major Regions from West to East

The major geographical structures take the form of bands running North and South. We list these here starting on the West (at the Mediterranean coast) and moving Eastward to the desert.



The direction of prevailing winds is also from W to E, carrying moisture from the Mediterranean and depositing it on the hills. This helps us understand the climate of each region:

a. Coastal Plain / Plain of Sharon

A low, flat plain, which is fertile where not too sandy or salty. Militarily, this area is easy to invade from outside the country (from Egypt, Syria).

b. Shephelah / Lowlands

A somewhat higher, rolling terrain, though still low relative to central hill country (next item). With rolling hills, wide valleys, most travel is along valleys. The area is still relatively easy to invade.

c. Hill Country

A region of sharp hills, v-shaped valleys, rather like West Virginia in the US. Travel is along ridges and much more difficult, therefore more difficult to invade. Farmers use terracing for agriculture. The rainfall is good W of the main ridge, but poor to E (in rain-shadow of ridge; compare rainfall W & E of Rockies in US).

d. Rift Valley

A geologic fault (technically called a *graben*) extending N into Syria and S into Africa, forming a wide u-shaped valley, with Jordan R in middle. The climate is hot, and very arid away from river, so it must be irrigated to have crops.

e. Trans-Jordan Plateau

A flat tableland, higher than the hill country, relatively well-watered at W edge, but quickly becoming desert to E.

2. Some Smaller Geographic Features

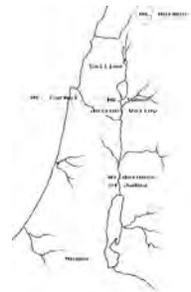
We list these moving from North to South.

a. Mt. Hermon

Highest peak in Palestine area (over 9000 ft), the S-most large peak of Anti-Lebanon range. The top is generally snow-covered all year.

b. Galilee & Mt. Tabor

This hilly region is the best-watered area in Palestine, about equal to Eastern US. It is higher in N, lower in S (called Upper Galilee, Lower Galilee). The climate is reasonably cool except around Sea of Galilee, which is well below sea-level. Mt. Tabor is an isolated peak, over 1900 ft, just N of Jezreel Valley.



c. Jezreel Valley / Plain of Esdraelon

An E-W valley connecting coast w/ Jordan Valley, it separates Samaria from Galilee. It forms the easiest transportation corridor from Med Sea to Rift Valley, so an important trade route.

d. Mt. Carmel

A long ridge (approx E-W) on S side of Jezreel Valley, with a max height about 1800 ft. This forms a barrier to N-S travel, and so trade routes cross it thru passes. Control of the passes is important militarily, and the city of Megiddo (Revelation's Armageddon) controls one such pass.

e. Wilderness (of Judea)

A Barren region E of Jerusalem, where the combination of low rainfall and poor chalky soil produce a virtually uninhabited area. The territory is used for grazing sheep and goats in the wetter, winter season.

f. Negev

Arid land south of Hebron, flat to rolling. The soil is good, but very little rainfall due to latitude effect. Some agriculture was (and is) possible using tricks to concentrate water.



3. The Major Bodies of Water around Palestine

a. Mediterranean Sea

A large body of salt water, connected to the Atlantic at Gibraltar. Palestine has few natural ports (compared to Greece, or to Phoenician coast further N), so Jews did not become seafarers, involved in trade mostly as middlemen.

b. Sea of Galilee (Sea/Lake of Tiberias)

A fresh water lake with its surface 600 ft below sea level (lower than Death Valley in US), fed by Jordan River which also continues as its outlet. It was important for fishing then and now, but its peculiar topography & climate can produce fierce storms.

c. Jordan River

River begins on lower slopes of Mt. Hermon, descends about 2300 ft in 100 mi (not counting meanders) through Sea of Galilee to Dead Sea.

d. Dead Sea (Lake Asphaltitus)

Its surface is lowest point on earth, -1296 ft. Water is extremely salty; fish cannot live in it. Its waters and salt deposits were mined then and today for minerals.

B. Political Features of Palestine

These have changed drastically over the centuries. We sketch them as they were about the time of Jesus' ministry, as this is most helpful for understanding the Gospels.



1. Political Divisions at Ministry of Christ

a. Judea

The old territory of the tribe of Judah, but expanded at this time to include Samaria (to N) and Idumea (to S). Ruled by Herod the Great 37-4 BC, by his son Archelaus 4 BC - AD 6, by Roman procurators AD 6-41 and 44-66, with Herod's grandson Herod Agrippa I ruling from 41-44. The population of Judea proper was mostly Jews, but Samaria mostly Gentiles (Samaritans and others) and Idumea mostly descendants of the Edomites.

b. Galilee

The area W of Sea of Galilee. Once the domain of the Northern tribes of Israel, it was long the home of Gentiles until the Maccabees became dominant and repopulated it with Jews. After the death of Herod the Great, it was ruled by Herod Antipas from 4 BC - AD 39, then by Roman procurators and H Agrippa 1 like Judea. Considered by some a hotbed of revolutionaries.

c. Perea

A narrow strip E of Jordan R inhabited mainly by Jews, and ruled by same rulers as Galilee.

d. Tetrarchy of Philip

A multi-ethnic region NE of Sea of Galilee, with mostly Gentile inhabitants. After the death of Herod the Great, it was ruled by his son Philip, 4 BC - 34 AD, then by Roman procurators and Herod Agrippa 1 as above.

e. The Decapolis

A league of (usually ten) Hellenistic cities, plus their city territories, with mostly Gentile inhabitants. After the Romans came, it was independent of Jewish control.

2. Cities of Palestine during 1st Cen AD

a. Jerusalem - Jewish capital

b. Caesarea - Roman capital of Palestine
built as artificial port by Herod the Great; both Jews and Gentiles lived there

c. Sebaste - OT Samaria rebuilt by Herod for his army veterans; inhabitants mostly Gentile

d. Tiberias - new city built by Herod Antipas as capital for Galilee

e. Caesarea Philippi - built by Philip as capital for his Tetrarchy

f. Decapolis Cities

Scythopolis, Hippos, Gedara, Gerasa, Philadelphia, ...

g. Galilean Towns

Nazareth, Cana, Magdala, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, ...

h. Judean Towns

Jericho, Bethany, Bethlehem, Emmaus, ...



3. Major Roads

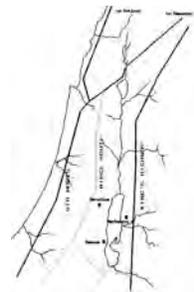
Names below are traditional ones in Biblical studies, some coming from earlier periods in the history of the region.

a. Via Maris (Latin for "Way of the Sea")

coastal road from Egypt splits at Megiddo, one branch to Antioch, other to Damascus and Mesopotamia

b. King's Highway - on T-J Plateau, from Gulf of Aqabah to Damascus

c. Ridge Route - thru Hill Country; less important and more difficult travel, but connects



Jerusalem w/ Galilee

4. The Herodian Fortifications

Built by Herod Gt for his personal safety. We list just three of them here; there were several others.

- a. Machaerus - E of Dead Sea, where John Baptist put to death, acc to Josephus
- b. Masada - W of Dead Sea; fortified mesa with several palaces; last stand of Zealots took place here AD 73
- c. Herodium - SE of Bethlehem; also fortified palace; Herod's tomb here acc to Josephus.

C. The Geography of Jerusalem

1. The Valleys around Jerusalem

- a. Hinnom - W and S of the city
As place where garbage burned, so *Ge-Hinnom* became picture of hell.
- b. Kidron - E of city betw Temple and Mt. of Olives; location of Gethsemane
- c. Tyropoeon (Greek for "Cheesemakers") within city, betw Temple Mt. and higher hill of Upper City to W; now largely filled in



2. The Hills around Jerusalem

A few of the more important ones

- a. Ophel
site of City of Jebusites & David
- b. Moriah
site of Temple, and (apparently) Abraham's sacrifice
probably Zion = Ophel or Moriah
- c. Mt. of Olives
Outside city c 2 mi to E, at edge of wilderness, on way from Jericho to Jerusalem, site of Jesus' ascension
- d. Hill of Upper City
W of and higher than Ophel or Moriah. Called Zion in Middle Ages, but prob misidentified.

3. The City Walls in the N.T. Period



a. South Wall

Some dispute whether wall enclosed Tyropoeon Valley at NT time. We will go with view that it did for testing purposes.

b. East Wall

On W side of Kidron V and along E side of Temple

c. West Wall

On E side of upper part of Hinnom V

d. North Walls

The city was most vulnerable on N, as not protected by gorges, so several successive walls built here:

(1) 1st N Wall

from Joppa Gate towers to middle of Temple

(2) 2nd N Wall

from Joppa Gate towers N, then E to Antonia Fortress.

(3) 3rd N Wall

begun after Jesus' ministry, by Herod Agrippa I, finished during revolt

4. Sections of The City

a. City of David

old Ophel Hill

b. Temple Mount

Mount Moriah

c. Lower City

prob Tyropoeon Valley

d. Upper City

hill between Hinnom and Tyropoeon

e. Second Quarter

between 1st and 2nd North Walls

f. New City / Bezetha

between 2nd and 3rd North Walls; outside city walls at Jesus' time

5. Major Buildings, Structures

- a. Temple Complex
note courts and porticoes; platform
about 750' EW x 1500' NS
- b. Fortress Antonia
NW of Temple and adjoining; tradi-
tionally site of Jesus' Roman trial, tho many now think this was at Herod's Palace (below)
- c. Jaffa Gate Towers
3 towers built by Herod, named for brother Phasael, wife Mariamne, and friend Hippicus
- d. Herod's Palace
built by Herod the Great; probably used by Roman governor when in city, rather than by
Herod Antipas; alternate site for Jesus' Roman trial
- e. Sanhedrin Building
called "Hall of Hewn Stones" in Rabbinic literature
near Temple, but location now uncertain
prob site of Jesus' condemnation on Fri morning
- f. Hippodrome
stadium for chariot races (as in film *Ben Hur*)
location uncertain, some put in Tyropoean Valley
- g. Theater
like Hippodrome, mentioned by Josephus, but location uncertain



6. Other Sites related to Jesus' Ministry

- a. Pool of Bethesda
N of Temple and NE of Antonia
five porticoes, see John 5
- b. Pool of Siloam
S(W) of Temple near junction of Tyropoeon and Hinnom
see John 9
- c. Upper Room
site of Last Supper, traditionally in Upper City
- d. Caiaphas' House

site of Jesus' trial or hearing by Sanhedrin, traditionally in Upper City

f. Gethsemane

an olive grove in Kidron Valley, or slopes of Mt of Olives;
several sites claimed by various religious groups

g. Calvary / Golgotha

three sites now claimed, up from two when I first taught this material!

(1) Church of Holy Sepulchre

no longer looks authentic, but most widely recognized since time of Constantine

(2) Gordon's Calvary

prob more like what Calvary looked like in Jesus' time, but evidence against its authenticity

(3) Mt of Olives

Ernest Martin puts it near site of slaughtering red heifer, citing both typological and historical reasons, where Centurion could see veil ripped in two

X. Exegeting a Miracle Account

A. The Genre "Miracle Story"

1. Definition: a narrative focusing on a miracle as its main feature

2. Usual Features of Genre:

- problem narrated
- request for help
- actions of miracle worker
- result:
 - healing, deliverance, etc.
 - response of demon
 - response of spectators, etc.

3. Functions of Miracle Accounts in the Gospels

- person of Jesus seen through his acts
John 20:30-31; John 5:36
- redemptive activity of God

MIRACLES IN THE SYNOPTICS

PERICOPE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Healings:			
Man with leprosy	8:2-4	1:40-42	5:12-13
Centurion's servant	8:5-13		7:1-10
Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:30-31	4:38-39
Gadarene demoniacs	8:28-34	5:1-15	8:27-35
Paralyzed man	9:2-7	2:3-12	5:18-25
Woman w/ bleeding	9:20-22	5:25-29	8:43-48
Two blind men	9:27-31		
Man mute & possessed	9:32-33		
Man w/ shriveled hand	12:10-13	3:1-5	6:6-10
Man blind, mute, possessed	12:22		11:14

PERICOPE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Canaanite woman's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30	
Boy with demon	17:14-18	9:17-29	9:38-43
Two blind men	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43
Deaf mute		7:31-37	
Man possessed in synagogue		1:23-26	4:33-35
Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26	
Crippled woman			13:11-13
Man w/ dropsy			14:1-4
Ten lepers			17:11-19
High priest's servant			22:50-51
Official's son	Jn 4:46-54		
Sick man at Bethesda	Jn 5:1-9		
Nature Miracles:			
Calming storm	8:23-27	4:37-41	8:22-25
5,000 fed	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17
Walking on water	14:25	6:48-51	
4,000 fed	15:32-38	8:1-9	
Coin in fish's mouth	17:24-27		
Fig tree withered	21:18-22	11:12-14	
Catch of fish			5:4-11
Water to wine	Jn 2:1-11		
Another catch of fish	Jn 21:1-11		
Resurrections:			
Jairus' daughter	9:18-19, 23-25	5:22-24, 38-42	8:41-42, 49-56
Widow's son			7:11-15
Lazarus	Jn 11:1-44		

XI. Biblical Theology of the Synoptics

A. Introduction to Biblical Theology

1. Definitions: two uses of term "biblical theology"

a. In contrast to **un-biblical** theology:

Biblical theology is that doctrine which is in accordance with the teaching of Scripture.

In this sense, biblical theology is orthodox theology.

b. In contrast to **systematic** theology:

Biblical theology is the study of how a part (usually) or even the whole of Scripture presents theology in its own terms (vocabulary, images, structure, etc.).

In this sense, biblical theology is trying to see what terms, pictures, etc. John used to proclaim God's word, what terms Paul used, or Isaiah...

We are here interested in this second usage, though of course we want our study of biblical theology to be biblical in both senses!

The subject of biblical theology is a vast one, and we have time and space in this course only to look at a sample.

2. Looking for Unifying Themes in the Synoptics

The terminology of the Synoptic Gospels is often different from the rest of the NT, even from the Gospel of John, which covers the same events.

One way to get a feel for some of the emphases of Synoptics (as distinct from rest of NT) is from study of word statistics, comparing relative frequency of usage of various words in the Synoptics with the NT as a whole.

As our sample study, consider the following word frequencies of the Synoptics relative to the whole of the NT. Remember that length of the text of the Synoptics is about 1/3 (or .33) of the entire NT:

Theological Topic	Relevant Word	Frequency (Syn/NT)	Decimal Fraction	Comment
Christology	Christ	40/750	.05	Low!
	Son of Man	70/87	.8	High!
	Son of God	26/79	.33	Average
Love	agapao	23/126	.18	Low
	agape	2/107	.02	Very low!
Faith	pisteuo	34/223	.15	Low
	pistis	24/233	.10	Low
Salvation	sozo	4/42	.09	Low
	soteria	45/103	.44	High
	soter	2/24	.08	Low
Forgiveness	aphiemi	114/144	.79	High!
	aphesis	8/17	.47	High
Kingdom	basileia	119/160	.74	High!
	basileus	44/110	.40	High
	basileuo	4/19	.21	Low

Why do you think "Christ" is relatively rare in the Synoptic Gospels, but "Son of Man" is enormously common? Why some of the other differences seen here?

Here we see that "Son of Man," "forgive" and "kingdom" are significantly distinctive terms in the Synoptics relative to the rest of the NT.

Herman Ridderbos, in his book, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, picks up these and other features well by seeing a major theme of the Synoptics to be "the coming of the kingdom." As a sample study of biblical theology, we will here summarize his main points with occasional suggestions for modification.

B. The Kingdom as a Major Theme in Biblical Theology of the Synoptics

There are 31 passages in the Synoptics where the phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used [all in Matthew], plus another 49 passages with "kingdom of God" [only 4 in Matthew]. We study all these passages, plus others which use the term "kingdom" where the context makes clear it is God's kingdom that is in mind, plus other passages which seem to be talking about the kingdom but do not use the term, to get a full picture of what the Synoptics teach on this subject.

1. The Kingdom Characterized

It seems to be a mistake to make any real distinction between the phrases "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God." Mark and Luke never use the former phrase, but use the latter in places where Matthew uses the former (e.g., Matt 4:17 vs Mark 1:15; Matt 5:3 vs Luke 6:20). In fact, Matthew himself uses the two in parallel (Matt 19:23-24). Apparently Matthew follows the pious Jewish practice of sometimes using substitutes for explicit references to God. One of these substitutes is "heaven."

Ridderbos suggests that the kingdom spoken of by Jesus in the Synoptics can be characterized by the following terms. The kingdom is:

Theocratic
Dynamic
Messianic
Future
Present

It is **theocratic**, i.e., "ruled by God," as seen in the terminology "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven," as well as in what is said about it.

It is **dynamic** in the sense that the term is not primarily used (as our English word "kingdom" is) to refer to spatial territory (e.g., "United Kingdom" = England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland), but to refer to the king's activity or rule. So "kingdom of God" = "rule of God," which can take place among his followers in a world that is otherwise in rebellion against Him.

It is **Messianic** in that God rules thru his mediator, the Messiah, especially called "Son of Man" in the Gospels, with the important background of that phrase in Daniel 7.

It is **future** in that the kingdom is regularly described in strongly eschatological terms and as not yet having come.

Yet it is **present** in some real sense, as the kingdom also comes at Jesus' 1st coming. This solution seems better than the dispensational emphasis on the Jews' rejecting Jesus' offer of the kingdom, though there is some sense in which that is also true.

2. The Kingdom of God is Present (already fulfilled, come)

This present aspect of the kingdom can be seen in several themes:

Satan, the wicked one, has already been overcome. He is defeated at Jesus' temptation, in Jesus' (and the disciples') casting out demons, in the fawning behavior of the demons, and (perhaps) in the fall of Satan (Lk 10:18-19; 11:21 and parallels).

Jesus' miraculous power is already being displayed at his first coming, making visible the restoration of creation, and fulfilling Messianic prophecy (Mt 11:5; 8:17). In the work of Jesus, God is visiting his people (Lk 7:16).

The Good News is already being proclaimed, as predicted in Isa 52:7 (good news, your God reigns) and Isa 61:1-2, which Jesus read in the Nazareth synagogue and proclaimed "fulfilled this day" (Lk 4:21).

Jesus' followers in some sense already possess the kingdom, "for theirs *is* the kingdom" (Mt 5:3,10). Similarly, "blessed are you because you *see*" (Mt 13:16, 17); "this day salvation *has come*" (Lk 19:9); "your names *are* written" (Lk 10:20).

Jesus the Messiah is already here. He is identified as Messiah (my Son, cp 2 Sam 7; Ps 2) at his baptism (Mt 3:17 & parallels) and transfiguration (Mt 17:5 & pars). The "Son of Man" is present (Mt 8:20; 11:19; 12:32, 40; 13:37, 41; 16:13). Jesus' "I" sayings are a powerful testimony of who he is (Mt 11:28; 12:30; 10:32-42).

3. This Present Kingdom is Provisional (not yet complete)

Yet the present kingdom is not the whole story. The biblical presentation is more complex than just a present kingdom or just a future kingdom, as liberals tend to see it, who divide the two views to different sources.

The kingdom is both present & future. Both elements occur, though the Gospels do not use our distinctions present/future or 1st/2nd coming, but rather "this present age ... the age to come" (e.g., Mk 10:30). Here we see a unity w/ tension, which is reflected in the problem bothering John the Baptist when he sends messengers to Jesus (Mt 11:2-6). This is seen in the following elements:

The time of the Evil One continues. Satan still has power (see Lord's prayer). He desires to have Peter (Lk 22:31). The tares growing with the wheat are sons of evil one. The demons are afraid Jesus has come to "torment us *before* the time" (Mt 8:29).

The miracles Jesus does are (merely) signs. They are not immediately followed by the

consummation. Jesus limits their use. Even their use as evidence is restricted, connected w/ faith. These signs indicate the coming of the kingdom, they point to end, but they are not even the beginning of the end. Their purpose is subservient to the preaching of the Gospel (Lk 10:20).

Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables, to reveal & conceal for those who do & don't understand the mystery of the kingdom (i.e., that the king is here, but the kingdom is not yet as to be expected). The parables of the kingdom show us that the sowing begins w/ Jesus' coming, but the harvest is not till the end of the age; that the kingdom's advance is pictured not in terms of military conquest but of growth.

The judgement is thus delayed. The tares will be allowed to grow together with the wheat until the end of the age. The master (parable of pounds, Lk 19:11-27) will go away to receive his kingdom and then return. Meanwhile what people have done to others = done to Jesus (sheep & goats, Mt 25:31-46).

During this delay, the kingdom is at work through the word of Jesus and the labors of his disciples. Several growth parables (not all of them) picture the growth of the word. The parables of pounds & talents picture a time for his servants to use what is entrusted.

This labor involves seeking what is lost. The parable of fig tree in vineyard (Lk 13:6-9) indicates there is still time for repentance. The seeking is pictured in the lost sheep materials (Mt 9:35-38; 10:6; 15:24; Lk 15:4-7) and the parables of lost coin & son (Lk 15). In contrast to the harvesting done by the angels at the end of the age (Mt 13:35-38), here it is done by Jesus' followers in this age (Mt 9:35-38).

It is to the provisional kingdom that the "Servant of the Lord" materials belong. The Christology of the Synoptics has 2 focal points:

- (1) Son of Man;
- (2) Servant of the Lord

The former emphasizes (via Daniel 7, but with ambiguity) his kingship. The latter his obedience and suffering. The temptation in wilderness shows us that the path of glory lies thru obedience, hardship, suffering; Jesus refuses to take the quick, spectacular way. This is in fulfilment of the suffering servant passages in Isa 40-55. The Messianic secret is necessary to rejection.

What is the relationship between Jesus' kingdom & his cross? There is only a minor outworking of kingdom before cross. The crucifixion in some sense postpones the last judgment, opening space for the provisional, present kingdom. The preaching of Gospel only really develops after resurrection.

4. The Gospel of the Kingdom

What is this "good news" of the kingdom? Ridderbos sees 2 aspects: salvation & commandments.

Strictly speaking, the good news is not new, it is the fulfillment of OT promises. It is good news for the poor, especially the godly who are oppressed (beatitudes [clearer in Luke], unjust Judge). It involves a new covenant and a new Israel, the people of God's good pleasure (Lk 2:14; 12:32; Mt 11:25-6; note also Mt 21:43).

What "salvation" (rescue) is being offered? It is remission of sins, fulfilled in Jesus' coming & work. His good news of salvation is the antithesis to rabbinic doctrine of reward (see Pharisee & Tax Collector, Lk 18:9-14). It is pictured in God being our Father, both as a present relation and as future bliss. It gives us assurance of the certainty of salvation. It is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, the true Son of God. While it is not earned (by us), those who are saved are characterized as doing the Father's will.

How do the commandments fit into the "good news"? God's intention for his children is that they be righteous. God's demands are summarized as "righteousness." All other values we might have are to be sacrificed for the kingdom. The good works we do demonstrate the presence of kingdom. We fulfill the Law (Sermon on Mt) by giving it its full measure. The Sermon on Mt, in fact, gives the antithesis to rabbinic interpretation of the Law. Jesus is not against Law but against our refusal to be fully committed to God's Law.

5. The Kingdom & the Church

How is the kingdom related to the church? Ridderbos suggests that the kingdom is God's *work of salvation* consummated in Jesus X. The church, by contrast, is the *people* called by God & sharing the bliss of the kingdom.

How is the kingdom related to the Lord's Supper? The Lord's supper displays two themes: the death of X and the eschatological kingdom. It makes a distinction between the commencement and consummation of the kingdom. This is also seen in the provisional nature of the supper (eating a mere tidbit; til I come). It is a picture of our table fellowship thru X's death. It pictures Jesus as the sacrifice inaugurating the new covenant (new covenant in my blood). Contra the Roman Catholic position, the Lord's Supper is a sacrificial meal rather than the sacrifice itself, which has already been made once for all time.

6. The Future Consummation of the Kingdom

Liberals usually claim Jesus & disciples taught 2nd coming would occur in 1st century and were mistaken. But this is the simplification of a complex problem by the selective

discard of inconvenient data.

Ridderbos notes 2 themes in Jesus' predictions:

- (1) passion statements ==> Isaiah's suffering servant
- (2) parousia statements ==> Daniel's Son of Man

These are not put together before the resurrection, so the disciples didn't understand how they relate. The Great Commission (Mt 28:16-20) lifts the veil from this mystery and inaugurates a new period in salvation history. This had previously been implicit, but not clear.

The resurrection discloses an intimate connection between Jesus' role as Servant & as Son of Man. The events at his crucifixion (temple veil, earthquake, resurrections) prefigure the end of the age/parousia.

The end of the age is itself an orientation-point (goal) for the period following Jesus' resurrection. The disciples' work & goals may now be viewed in its light, namely that a great task precedes the eschatological coming of kingdom. Jesus, however, gives no hint of how great a timespan would elapse before the parousia.

Jesus' disciples are called upon to discern the times. The 2nd coming is to be sudden, but signs are not excluded. We certainly won't need signs to recognize its occurrence (lightning, vultures).

Jesus' main eschatological teaching is given in the Olivet Discourse (Mt 24-25, Mk 13, Lk 21). It may be outlined as follows:

- beginning of sorrows
- great tribulation
- ref to fall of Jerusalem but not exclusively so
 - (Mt & Mk coalesce 2 motifs: fall of Jerus & 2nd coming)
- parousia/2nd coming

What are we to make of Jesus' time-limit pronouncements? Ridderbos' interpretation of what He meant by "this generation" seems weak to me: "certainty w/o any time indication"; I favor a reference to last generation, the generation that sees these signs will not pass away until He comes. Ridderbos thinks "some standing here" refers to resurrection; I favor a reference to transfiguration (next few verses) & to eschatological visions which Peter and John (at least) will have. I believe Jesus' ambiguity here is intentional.

The Parousia Parables point to a substantial period between the ascension & parousia, but we can't tell (in advance) whether it is to be years or centuries.

What about the fulfillment & consummation of the eschatological prophecies? The Synoptic Gospels don't give a systematic presentation of eschatology. Ridderbos sees several teachings, which can be overpressed to produce contradictions but are actually consistent:

- (1) pay attention to signs, don't be deceived by false messiahs
- (2) signs are:
 - (a) beginning of sorrows
 - (b) abomination of desolation
 - (c) great tribulation
 - (d) cosmic catastrophes
- (3) abomination of desolation has both Jewish & universal elements
[prob fits pre-Mill view better]
- (4) some living at Jesus time will witness his powerful manifestation as Son of Man before they die, incl his enemies
- (5) don't give up praying for coming kingdom, God will speedily fulfill
- (6) be watchful; no one knows when he will come
- (7) don't forget great task in meantime

Ridderbos' weakest section seems to be that on Prophecy & History. He notes that prophecy lacks time perspective, which is very similar to the Dispensational "mountain peaks of prophecy." I agree. He sees an interweaving of (1) Jewish & (2) universal elements as in (1) fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) & (2) end of age. This interweaving is not to be solved by form criticism nor as interpretation after the fact (AD 70). Rather, the prophet paints future in colors known to him, including his own geographical horizons; he is poetic, using figurative language rather than allegorical.

I have no problem with this *per se*, but for much of eschatology we will have to wait until it happens to see how much is figurative and how much isn't.

There are other themes in the Synoptics by which one can attempt to put together a picture of their theological teachings. I believe Ridderbos has hit on a very important one.

XII. Form Criticism & Redaction Criticism

A. Terminology of Form Criticism

"Form criticism" is a rough English translation of the German terms: *Formgeschichte* (Form history) or *Gattungsforschung* (Genre research).

Form criticism is a method of analyzing materials that have been orally transmitted to recover their earliest versions, on the assumption that their literary form(s) can be identified and restored to their primitive conditions. We will clarify this better below.

The idea is that as stories or sayings circulate orally, their content and complexity change in predictable ways, like stories about the "fish that got away," an example of the fish story genre.

The application of form criticism to the New Testament begins with Rudolf Bultmann just after World War 1.

B. The Background of Form Criticism.

This approach did not suddenly appear with Bultmann, but has a lengthy background in biblical studies. Several strands of liberal thought were united in form criticism.

1. F.C. Baur=s Reconstruction of Church History

A German church history professor in the mid 19th cen, Baur adopted Hegel's philosophy of history and applied it to church history.

At this time Hegel's philosophy of history as the conflict of ideas was very influential. He saw all history as a conflict between certain new ideas (thesis) which spawned counter-ideas (antithesis), leading eventually to some compromise idea (synthesis). Most people are more familiar with how Karl Marx applied this idea to the struggle between social classes.

Baur was the first to apply these ideas to early church history. He saw early struggle between two groups in the early church:

Jewish Church	Gentile Church
Peter	Paul
Jews	Hellenistic Gentiles
Jesus as a great miracle-working man and Messiah.	Jesus as God in a new mystery religion.
Jewish Church	Gentile Church

Emphasis on Law	Emphasis on sacraments
National salvation	Individual salvation.

Bultmann used Baur's ideas of separate early Jewish and Gentile churches for dating his "sources".

2. D.F. Strauss= Mythical Approach

Wrote *Leben Jesu* in 1835. Said much in the Gospels was mythical, especially the miraculous. The Gospels are propaganda pieces which teach religious truth, but the events they narrate did not happen.

Form critics, esp. Bultmann, see much myth in Gospels also.

3. B. Weiss and H.J. Holzmann=s Documentary Theory

Popularized the 2-document theory, which Eichhorn had proposed earlier. Mark and Q are the sources in back of Luke and Matthew.

Form criticism sees Mark and Q as the literary sources behind the Gospels, but then tries to go back behind these documents to the "original" primitive oral materials.

4. Old Liberal arguments over the character of Jesus

With miracles removed, have conflicting pictures of Jesus as a moral teacher, revolutionary leader, prophet of eschatological doom, or charlatan. Which parts of the Gospel material are selected or rejected affects which type of Jesus we get.

Bultmann and others hoped that Form Criticism could clarify the picture, get back to the "real, historical Jesus."

5. W. Wrede and J. Wellhausen=s Skepticism

Proposed that even Mark and Q were theological constructs derived from the interpretations of the early church. If so, then we must dissolve the framework of these narratives and look at the isolated, basic sayings.

This is what form criticism does.

6. Form Criticism in the Old Testament

Hermann Gunkel distinguished small units in Genesis and Psalms which he claimed had once circulated orally before being written down. The units in Genesis (he said) contained legends designed to explain the origin of names, holy sites, etc. The units in the

Psalms were worship or liturgical materials prepared for specific occasions or specific shrines. Gunkel tried to reconstruct the *Sitz-im-Leben* (life situation) in which these stories or psalms originated.

Bultmann tries to do the same for the units he finds in the Synoptic Gospels.

7. Form Criticism in the NT

After World War I, Bultmann applied Gunkel's method to the Gospels, that is, to the pieces isolated from the framework of Mark and Q as suggested by Wrede and Wellhausen.

Bultmann claimed this method could distinguish earlier material from later material, Gentile from Jewish sources, and could show which materials really went back to Jesus.

Bultmann's methods have been refined since his time and find their most avid practitioners in the members of the Jesus Seminar mentioned back in section I "The Historical Jesus."

C. The Methods of Form Criticism

1. What is a form?

To understand form criticism, we start with the basics. There are all sorts of things that are called "forms" and a number of these have some relationship to our concern.

A form is a sort of mold which gives shape to some medium. For instance we have concrete forms for pouring concrete into, jello molds for making shaped jello salads, etc. These we might call *physical forms*.

Language forms also give shape to some medium, but the medium here is language. These forms hold certain words fixed, while other words are variable, making the forms useful for a variety of applications. Such forms could be either oral or written. Some examples:

a. A polite introduction

"_____, I would like you to meet _____."

b. A sermon

A sermon can have various forms, depending on whether it is textual, topical, or expository.

The classical sermon form consists of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The body especially should make 3 points and be sprinkled with illustrations and exhortations. The conclusion might end with a poem or a prayer or an altar call, depending on the particular Christian denominational background.

A good test for recognizing a form is if it can be mimicked or parodied: e.g., a textual sermon on "Mary had a little lamb"

c. A legal or financial form: checks, deeds, wills.

d. Literary forms in English:

Sonnet: 14 lines, iambic pentameter, lyric, fixed rhyme-scheme.

A Sonnet, by Frances Ridley Havergal (1838-79)

Love culminates in bliss when it doth reach
A white, unflickering, fear-consuming glow;
And, knowing it is known as it doth know,
Needs no assuring word or soothing speech.
It craves but silent nearness, so to rest,
No sound, no movement, love not heard but felt,
Longer and longer still, till time should melt,
A snow-flake on the eternal ocean=s breast.
Have moments of this silence starred thy past,
Made memory a glory-haunted place,
Taught all the joy that mortal ken can trace?
By greater light >tis but a shadow cast:
So shall the Lord thy God rejoice o=er thee,
And in His love will rest, and silent be.

Limerick: 5-line humorous poem; 3 lines (1,2,5) with 3 feet, rhyming; 2 lines (3,4) with 2 feet, rhyming; 5th line is the "punch line."

There was a young lady named Bright,
Who travelled much faster than light,
She set out one day,
In a relative way,
And returned on the previous night.
Anonymous

There was a professor named Newman,
Who was known for his wit and acumen,
He gave out a test,

But everyone guessed,
So he flunked them without even fumin'.
John A. Bloom

2. The Assertions of Form Criticism

OK, so there are forms in written and oral literature. What does Bultmann claim we can do with them? Here are the typical assertions of Bultmannian style form critics. Some form critics are more conservative than he is, but Bultmann has had by far the greatest influence in NT studies.

a. There was a period of oral tradition before the written Gospels.

Bultman argues for 2 generations of oral transmission, from Christ to perhaps 70 to 100 AD.

b. At that time, Gospel sayings and narratives circulated as independent units.

c. These units can be classified by their form into groups, typically three groups:

Saying: A statement of Jesus with no narrative supporting it.

Apothegm story A proverb or sharp pithy saying, with a story around it.

Miracle story: Narrative of a miraculous event.

d. The early church preserved and invented many of these units to fill practical needs.

Knowing their emphases we can determine the source of a particular unit and show that many do not go back to Jesus.

1) The Palestinian (Jewish) church saw Jesus as its Messiah, and expected his return as Daniel's Son of Man.

2) The Hellenistic (Gentile) church saw Jesus as cult-lord or deity of their new mystery religion, and emphasized their present communion with the Holy Spirit.

- e. These materials have little or no real biographical, chronological, or geographical value.

Whatever they tell you in these areas was added later in the oral tradition or made up by Mark to fit his framework, etc.

This tendency is seen in folklore: Stories about George Washington are embellished with unhistorical details. E.g., throwing a dollar across the Potomac R.

Note the implication that the early church was sloppy with the truth and used their "stories" for propaganda purposes.

- f. The original version of each tradition unit may be recovered and its oral history traced by using the laws which govern tradition.

This original version is not necessarily from Jesus. It could be from the early Jewish or Hellenistic church, or even from non-Christian Jews.

These laws are derived from observing how stories, etc. develop in:

- 1) Traditions in Greek and Jewish literature. Example: *Letter of Aristeas* tracing origin of LXX is increasingly embellished as it is reported by Philo, Josephus, Church fathers, and others.
- 2) Parables in Talmudic and other Jewish religious literature.
- 3) The apocryphal gospels as they borrow from canonical materials.
- 4) The canonical Gospels Matthew and Luke as they borrow from Mark and Q.

3. The Procedure of Form Critical Analysis.

- a. Isolate the stories and sayings from the context, which is assumed to be a purely editorial invention.

Assume that Matthew and Luke both used Mark.

- b. Use the laws of tradition to recover the original or primitive state of each story or saying.

- 1) A "primitive narrative" is claimed to be characterized by:

- B A single scene
- B A short time period

- B Only 2 or 3 characters
- B Any group present acting as a unit

2) Development in a narrative is indicated by:

- B Increasingly elaborate and explicit details.
- B Tendency to add names where none were originally.
- B Converting indirect to direct discourse.
- B Tendency to add miraculous elements.

c. For each original (most primitive) form, decide which early group was responsible for it.

Possibilities: early church (Jewish or Gentile), Jews, Jesus.

Criteria:

- 1) Multiple attestation: If form appears in Mark and Q, then probably OK.
- 2) Dissonance: Jesus actually said those things which we cannot imagine any other early source would say, e.g., paying taxes to Caesar.

D. The Application of Form Criticism

1. Basic Forms Identified

Typically, three basic forms are identified in the Gospel material, though some critics have more. Notice the category of "sayings" has numerous sub-varieties.

a. Miracle stories

Form critics find the following structure to them:

- 1) The problem described (sickness, danger, necessity).
- 2) The problem solved (actions of healer; very reserved in the NT).
- 3) Effect of miracle stated (reaction of crowd, demon, person healed).

Examples:

Mark 1:23-27 (Demon-possessed man in synagogue)

Some contextual connection ("Just then..."). Critics throw this out as work of the editor.

Problem: Man is possessed by demon.
Solution: Jesus speaks and heals the man.

Bultmann notes that in comparison with apocrypha and Greek miracle stories, there is great simplicity in Jesus' healings: No magic words or ritual (tho some point to "Ephatha," mud on eyes, etc.).

Effect: Reactions of crowd, demon, healed person are noted.

Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus rebuking the wind and waves)

Context: "On that day" Thrown out.
Problem: Boat sinking, high winds.
Solution: Jesus rebukes the wind (reserved actions).
Effect: Calm; disciples amazed.

Both these examples fit Bultmann's primitive miracle story form: single scene, few actors, crowd as unit.

Miracle stories actually do have a basic form, but that does not mean you can call them primitive or developed. It is the natural way to narrate something of this sort, and would apply to any problem-solution anecdote.

b. Apothegm Stories (or Saying Stories)

An apothegm is a saying. An apothegm story is a narrative with a saying as its central feature. The narrative is constructed to illuminate the meaning or impact of the saying.

1) General Characteristics of NT Apothegm Stories

(Some of these, suitably modified, also apply to secular and modern forms).

- a) The emphasis is on a saying of Jesus or one approved by him.
- b) The brief, simple narrative is just sufficient to make the saying comprehensible.
- c) The story contains some biographical interest.

Some biographical interest regarding what people thought Jesus was like. Bultmann claimed these have no historical value as they

are not accurate. Post-Bultmannians would disagree, saying if there is multiple attestation & dissonance, then biographical features may go back to the historical Jesus, so having some value.

d) Story is "rounded off" by a saying or act of Jesus.

Functions to get in and out of the story nicely. Usually ends with the saying itself or an act of Jesus.

2) Bultmann sees two types of apothegms:

a) Jewish. Similar to those in Rabbinic literature.

Someone (enemy, king, disciple, person in crowd) asks Rabbi a question.

Rabbi's characteristic answer is a parable or another question.

Naturally this type would be older, but not necessarily from Jesus.

Examples:

Mark 3:2-6 (Man with withered hand healed)

This is not primitive as we see a combination of miracle and apothegm here (since emphasis is on the saying, the miracle is the scene which illuminates the saying). It needs simplification to be a primitive form according to Form Criticism.

Context: Pharisees watching Jesus.

Question: Will he heal?

Response: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Jesus' healing miracle answers question.

Bio. interest: Jesus' anger, concern for sick man.

Rounding off: Either the healing itself or when the Pharisees leave.

Mark 2:23-28 (Grain picking on Sabbath)

Jesus answers their question with a question.

Rounds off with saying: "Sabbath was made for man,"

Biographical interest: Compassion.

Have many cases where Jesus responds with a parable. Question: Who is my neighbor? Answer: parable of Good Samaritan.

b) Greek Apothegm stories

This is a much less definite form.

Form is introduced by stereotyped formula:

"When he was asked by _____ about _____, he said"

There is no real story or background given with it. This is the way anecdotes of the various Greek philosophers were typically preserved.

Classic NT example:

Luke 17:20-21 (uses formula above)

As the Greek apothegm stories are obviously later additions (showing Greek influence), Bultmann throws them all out.

According to Bultmann, Jewish apothegms may have Jesus or early Jewish church or pre-Christian Jews as source; Greek apothegms have Gentile church as source.

c. Sayings

Sayings originally had no story with them, as apothegm stories did. Some of these may now be grouped together to form Asermons, @ others may be part of an apothegm story now. How do we know if sermon or story is editor's invention? Why remove the story in one case and not in another? Form critics say that if saying makes no sense without story, then it is an apophthegm story, not a simple saying.

Bultmann finds 5 kinds of sayings:

1) Proverbs (Bultmann calls these "Logia")

Like OT book of Proverbs, or Benj Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

Short pithy saying, "The first shall be last and the last first." Perhaps "Physician, heal yourself." (This is a parable in the broad sense, but proverb in the narrow sense.)

2) Prophetic or apocalyptic saying

A saying about the future, esp. the end of the age.

"Not one stone will be left upon another."

"Two will be grinding at a mill,"

3) Law Words (Commandments)

Sayings structured as commands (imperative).

"Turn the other cheek"; "Go the extra mile."

4) "I" Words

These focus on the person/authority of Jesus.

"But I say to you" in the Sermon on the Mount.

5) Parables

Metaphorical sayings often in story form, without the meaning embedded in the narrative.

Bultmann was influenced by Adolf Jülicher, who claimed authentic parables make only a single comparison (have only one point) and are never allegorical.

The parable of the sower may be authentic, but the interpretation is not because every item has an assigned meaning. This is too complicated to be a primitive form.

The parable of the wedding feast has two parts to it, the wedding invitation and wedding garment sections. These were two parables combined by the editor of Matthew 22.

The King's wedding feast (Matt 22) is a revised version of the earlier rich man's banquet in Luke. Wars, son, king added later.

Authentic parables of Jesus are related to the ministry of Jesus or to the coming kingdom (Bultmann would throw any others out).

2. Results for the Life of Christ (according to Bultmann)

Results vary considerably depending on where the form critic falls on the liberal-to-conservative spectrum (Bultmann is near the extreme liberal end).

a. Miracle Stories

Even after reducing them to their primitive form, Bultmann must conclude these are not genuine, as his worldview does not allow miracles to happen (*Existence and Faith*, p 291f). A big assumption. He could have tried to explain them as misunderstood natural events, but apparently did not want to be ridiculed like Paulus was.

b. Apothegm Stories

Only two are genuine (i.e., go back to Jesus). Bultmann threw out (using dissonance argument) all that could fit a Jewish or Christian background.

This is a poor methodology: If we threw out everything of Luther's which is also fit the Catholic church or early Lutheranism, we have hardly anything left! (perhaps his *Bondage of the Will?*)

Unless a person has no followers, we would expect to find parallels between his teaching and those of followers. Unless he is very strange, we would expect to find parallels between his teaching and that of his culture.

Mark 12:13-17 (Tribute money)

Argument for authenticity: Neither the Jews or persecuted Christians liked paying taxes.

Rebuttal! Source of story could be Herodians (or Zealots!) depending on whether Jesus is seen as speaking seriously or ironically.

Mark 14:3-9 (Anointing at Bethany)

Argument for authenticity: Allowing perfume to be poured, "Poor always with you" idea. Not scolding at a waste of money is unique, as Jews and Xns were big on helping the poor.

c. Sayings

Only about 40 are genuine.

1) Proverbs: None are genuine.

The early Xns were not interested in the life of X until 70-80 AD. They then adopted Jewish proverbs already in existence to provide materials to manufacture Jesus= Ateaching.@

2) Apocalyptic Sayings: Some are from Jesus.

Others are Xnized Jewish Apocalyptic sayings or sayings by Xn prophets later ascribed to Jesus.

Bultmann views early Xnty as being like the modern Pentecostal movement (not a compliment, in his view). "Prophetic messages" were misattributed to Jesus.

3) Law-words: A few are from Jesus.

Most stem from the legalism of the early church (and were invented by them). Jesus was not legalistic, so only the commands against externalistic religion are likely authentic, as they go against legalism.

4) I-words: None from Jesus.

These speak of His messianic ministry and His deity; thus Bultmann rejects them. The Messiah idea (he thinks) was invented by the early Jewish church (compare Wrede's messianic secret theory).

5) Parables: Some are genuine.

However, their contexts and interpretations are later inventions of the church. All predictive features are obviously late additions.

d. Results: Information on the personality and life of Jesus is rather scarce.

Jesus lived, suffered, and died. Bultmann believes some people followed Jesus, but they misunderstood him if they thought he was Messiah even, much less savior and God.

e. Results: Information on the teaching of Jesus is somewhat clearer.

From the 40 genuine sayings, we can deduce some ideas:

1) Jesus saw himself as a prophet sent in the last hour to warn men that the kingdom was coming and to call them to repentance and lives of holiness.

These points are all true, but Bultmann has scaled down considerably what Jesus claims and teaches.

2) Jesus pictured the coming kingdom as real and imminent. But He was wrong.

This is the common liberal view, that Jesus (and the Apostles) expected

the kingdom to come during their lifetimes. Bultmann and others feel justified by the events, as the kingdom did not, and has not, come (but cf. 2 Peter 3:3ff).

- 3) The real value of Jesus' teaching is the fact that each of us is always faced with the "existential choice" to live (at every moment) either for God or for the world.

Bultmann sees the only value of Jesus' teaching in our everyday life. There is no afterlife or future judgment.

This everyday value is real and present in Jesus' teaching, but is only a small fraction of it.

E. An Evaluation of Form Criticism.

1. In terms of the assertions in section C. 2. above.

- a. "There was a period of oral tradition before the written Gospels; it extended some 2 generations, and the first Gospels were written in 70-100 AD."

There was an oral period, since the Gospels themselves were not written immediately. But this only lasted c20 years (until 40-50 AD), not the 40-70 years that the liberals claim.

After only 20 years, there were still many eye-witnesses alive (since many events were seen by 1000's); thus before c70 AD, there were many around for verification. After Jerusalem fell, most Jewish Xns were scattered and many other eyewitnesses were dead.

Paul writes as early as 20 years after the events, and none of his letters are over 35 years after Jesus. He had close contact with the Apostles and the Jerusalem church.

Early and pervasive tradition says 2 Gospels were written by Apostles, and 2 others by their immediate associates.

As a result, there is no real "chain of tradition" such as is essential to form criticism:

Event ---> A ---> B --{ ... }--> Y ---> Z ---> Written.

Instead, all information in the Gospels was first or second hand, with many witnesses, multiple testimony and plenty of opportunity for checking.

b. "Early sayings and stories circulated as independent units."

We do, in fact, observe that the Gospel's structure is like "beads on a string" C detailed incidents are tied together with brief connectors.

Form criticism says the early church created most of the beads and nearly all the string to hold them together.

Some of the Gospel accounts probably were used as independent units in the sense that the Apostles traveled around teaching what Jesus said and did. They would naturally use individual incidents to illustrate points and teach facts in their preaching.

But these incidents never had an independent, isolated circulation in their transmission from event to written Gospel. The Apostles knew the "string" as well as the beads. Other teachers (like the 70) knew how the incidents went together, and this connecting information was never lost.

If traditional authorship is at all correct, independent "circulation" is of no relevance to the content of the canonical Gospels.

Besides, not all Gospel material looks like beads on a string. The passion narrative is too tightly connected to have been independent anecdotes. Other stories are always closely joined together (e.g., woman with hemorrhage, Jairus' daughter, Mark 5:22-43). Mark has a tightly united Sabbath day sequence in 1:21-39. Some sayings are tightly associated (Mark 4:21-25; 8:34-9:1).

We see places where the single author who put the units together was a moral and poetic genius: e.g., the Sermon on the Mount has striking Hebrew parallelism and poetic content; its moral teaching is the best ever seen. See also the chiasms noted by Kenneth Bailey, *Poet & Peasant* and the various remarks on the literary quality of the parables and sermons of Jesus in Leland Ryken, *The NT in Literary Criticism*. How did all these fragments, made up by various early groups, get woven into this moral and literary tapestry? What genius did this? Jesus is the best suggestion! But in that case these units had only one source and were never independent.

c. "The Gospel materials can be classified into forms."

In some sense, any written or oral communication can be classified into forms. Beyond this, the "beads on a string" structure of the Gospels allows many examples of relatively short, discrete forms, namely stories and sayings of various sorts.

Yet the formal character of some of Bultmann's categories is questionable. Four of Bultmann's 5 saying categories (all but parables) are merely descriptive of content C. What style distinguishes a "law-word" or "I-word" from a proverb?

Furthermore, the Passion narrative has no form which it fits. How can you reduce something this complex to a primitive form? And the dating of formless materials cannot be based on the development of forms.

Bultmann has decided in advance (independent of true forms) which materials are authentic and which he can't believe. We see him throw out all "miracle forms" even when they have a true "primitive form."

- d. "The early church invented and expanded stories and sayings to meet their practical needs."

Surely, one factor in the preservation of material about Jesus was its value to the early church. But this was not the only factor and there is no need to propose invention.

But what do we mean by practical? Note that Paul's Epistles are far more "practical" than the Gospels in meeting the needs of functioning churches, as they are written to real churches having real problems. This is very obvious in the great preponderance of preaching from the Epistles we see in "practically-oriented" churches.

Yet compared with Paul's teaching, it appears that many of the church's interests are not found in the Gospels and vice versa. The Gospels tell us who Jesus is and what He did (salvation history, biblical theology), but do not answer many practical issues. Even the details of the practical application of Jesus' atonement are found in the Epistles rather than the Gospels, apparently because Jesus did not discuss this during his earthly ministry.

That people were willing to follow Jesus B leading to their deaths B suggests he must have done or said something noteworthy. Much of the material in the Gospels is not directly practical to the later church, but it is important historically (dealings with the Pharisees, etc.). The Gospels are concerned to preserve Jesus' ministry (sayings and actions), which is why the church preserved them.

Are the Gospels invention? Many "practical" things in the Gospels are impossible C the Sermon on the Mount contains much that people cannot do in their own abilities. Legalistic churches are careful not to invent commands that can only be obeyed by grace!

When liberals say that Gospel material was invented, they are claiming that the early church did not control what was being taught about Jesus. But the NT is concerned about truth, trained elders, and rejecting false teaching. Liberals try to dismiss most of this material (e.g., the Pastoral Epistles) by pushing its date to the end of the 1st century.

But if there was a group of church leaders who controlled church teaching and content from Christ's death until the Gospels were written, then liberals are in trouble. In that case the Gospels are historically reliable, liberal theology is wrong, and there is a judgement to come.

e. "The Gospels contain little of biographical, geographical, or chronological value."

The Gospels have lots of data in these areas, but we cannot very well check all of it 2000 years later. Certainly Jesus is pictured as making huge claims regarding himself and a coming judgment. These implications continue to affect men.

To deny these claims and the historical value of the Gospels one must assert that the early church was not interested in the Jesus of history. This is contradicted everywhere:

1 Cor 15 (c25 years after events): "If Christ is not raised, you are still in your sins!" Paul does not say "take my word for it," but appeals to many witnesses who were still living. So 25 years after events, one could still check on details about the life of Christ.

Luke 1:1-4 explicitly says that the author had an interest in what really happened. He apparently interviewed eyewitnesses and investigated matters carefully.

Acts 1:21-22: when selecting a replacement for Judas, the Apostles pick someone who was with them from Christ's baptism to the resurrection. Thus, the Apostles were not only witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, but also of his ministry. This shows a great interest in the history of Jesus.

The early church was also concerned that this material be transmitted carefully. See the concern in 2 Thess 2:2,15,17; and 3:17 about fake messages and letters from Paul regarding the 2nd coming. Paul says he personally signs his letters as proof of authenticity.

2 Tim. 2:2 says to "commit to faithful men what you heard in the presence of many witnesses." So Timothy had more than just Paul's word to go on.

[We see a similar statement in the rabbinic literature (Mishnah, *Eduyoth* 5:7): Rabbi Aqabyah b. Mahalalel is on his death bed (c90 AD); he tells his son to repeat only what he has heard from a majority of teachers. Ignore the tradition which comes from one only, even if it is his father.]

To hold on to their position, form critics must reject Papias' testimony regarding the close connection between the Gospels and Apostles, though there is no external evidence against it:

Apostle Matthew ==> Gospel Matthew
Peter ==> Mark ==> Gospel Mark

Liberals make the apostle Matthew the author of Q (at best) and say all other early references are based on misinterpretations of Papias. This is a big assumption: could Irenaeus be limited to Papias alone as his data source when his primary teacher was Polycarp?

Note that the Gnostics had to go to plot theories in order to claim authority for their teachings. They agreed that the public teaching of Jesus was just as in the canonical Gospels, but claimed it was incomplete, and had to be supplemented with "secret" words of Jesus (cf. opening words of Gospel of Thomas).

All this shows that the church was interested in who Jesus really was and that their written documents were good. Marcion even modified Luke instead of throwing everything out as "unreliable."

- f. "The original version of each tradition unit may be recovered and its history traced by using the laws which govern tradition."

Even if we grant that Bultmann's laws of tradition are valid (though in fact they have serious problems), this does not prove falsification occurred in the Gospels.

Claims that during the transmission of tradition, details tend to increase, names are added, discourse shifts from indirect to direct, do not fit with Mark being the source of Matthew and Luke.

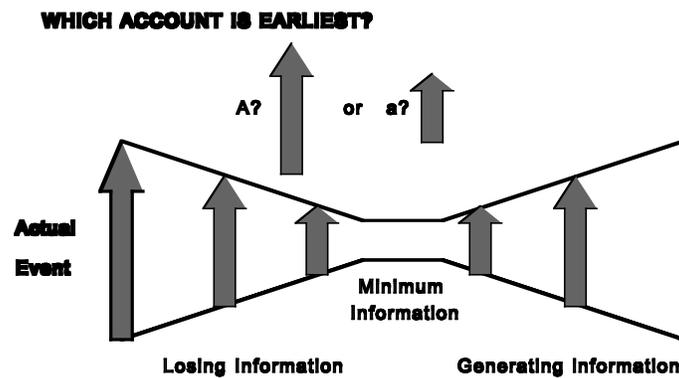
It is true that these tendencies frequently do characterize transmission of stories and sayings (as in fleshing out a sermon illustration), but even a tendency to do something does not prove it was done in a particular case.

The problem is, that for an event which really happened, the people did have real

names, they really spoke with direct discourse, and the events actually occurred in great detail. So all these things were in the original event.

Given two narratives of an event with different levels of detail, you have to *guess* which one is the older:

For example, say story *A* has two forms: *A* with much detail *D*, and *a* with little detail *d*. Which version is earlier, *A* or *a*?



Even if one grants some falsification in the Gospels, is there enough to completely throw out the teaching of the Last Judgment? Liberals must say the Gospels are totally unreliable in order to do this. Could this have happened in one generation within a group that was obviously concerned about truth?

One cannot throw out miracles stories on the basis of laws of tradition. This would resemble concluding from "fish stories" that fish do not exist. The laws of tradition would only allow simplifying the stories, but not ruling them out altogether.

Bultmann and liberals throw out miracles on the assumption that they cannot occur. No scientist, much less Bultmann, knows enough to say the universe is a closed system of cause and effect which even God cannot penetrate.

Bultmann's procedure guarantees finding a non-miraculous, unorthodox "Jesus" (using dissonance principle), but does it actually tell us anything about the real Jesus?

2. Some positive lessons from Form Criticism

- a. The Gospel accounts contain just the sort of material we would expect in the authentic reminiscences of men who witnessed memorable events, especially if they were charged with teaching these events and had then done so for some time before writing.

We observe:

1) Broad outlines

A general sequence and overview of the period

2) Many simple, single incidents

Memorable occasions and anecdotes

3) Some sequences

These involve both trivial and major items and the interlinkages between them.

4) "Forms" and "rounding off"

These are more characteristic of oral repetition by one person than of oral transmission through many individuals. The frequent reuse of material in a traveling ministry would tend to shape striking statements and miracles into this form.

- b. Form criticism is hyper-skeptical.

If it were applied elsewhere we would know very little about the past.

Some scepticism is helpful, but with too much you throw out much of what you need. Once we get beyond living people, you must rely on written documents and oral traditions. Films and videos can't be trusted any more than writing.

- c. Form criticism has made a positive contribution by showing that we have no tradition in the Gospels of a non-messianic, purely human Jesus.

If we take the primitive forms before Bultmann throws them out, we still have miracles, and messianic claims. Jesus considers himself able to forgive sin, claims a close relationship with the Father, to be human, but uniquely divine.

Bultmann must go beyond form criticism with blanket worldview assumptions in order to throw this material out.

The Christ of the Gospels continues to be a contradiction to those who have ruled out the supernatural.

F. What is Redaction Criticism?

1. Some Definitions

Redaction - activity of a redactor

Redactor - synonym for "editor"

Redaction Criticism is a type of biblical study concerned with the activity of redactors:

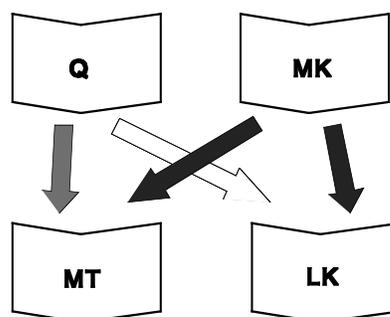
It is concerned with studying the theological motivation of an author as this is revealed in the collection, arrangement, editing and modification of traditional material, and in the composition of new material or the creation of new forms within the traditions of early Christianity (Norman Perrin, What is Redaction Criticism? p 1)

2. Sketch History of Redaction Criticism

A relatively recent development in liberal NT criticism, for which we give a quick review:

a. Synoptic Problem and Source Criticism

Since 2nd cen, debate & discussion re/ similarities & differences among Gospels & how to explain them. By the late 19th cen, a sort of consensus had been reached, called 2-document theory:



This type of work called literary or source criticism.

b. Historical Reliability of Gospels:

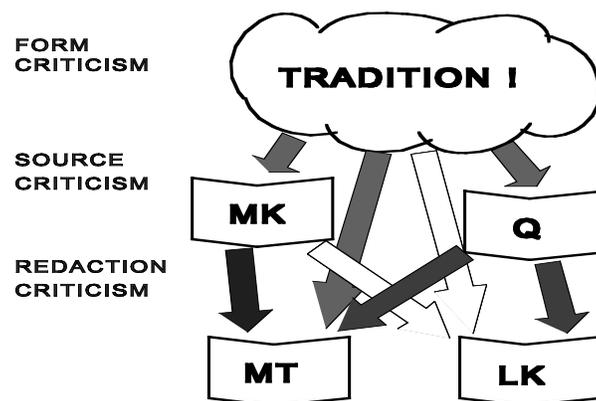
This discussion went on in parallel to that of Synoptic problem. It became an especially sharp debate w/ rise of theological liberalism in 19th cen. By the end of cen, most liberals felt Mark was most reliable Gospel and (except for miracles) basically historical. Wilhelm Wrede, in his *Messianic Secret* (1901), argued Mark was not reliable history, but theologically motivated to present Jesus as Messiah, tho he never claimed to be such.

c. Form Criticism:

Form Criticism arose in NT studies just after World War 1 in Germany. Its pioneers were Karl Schmidt, Martin Dibelius, and especially Rudolf Bultmann. They accepted Wrede's claim that Mark made up his own framework, and they tried to go behind the Gospels to study the period of oral transmission. Most FCs claimed that between Jesus' life and the writing of the Gospels, much material was invented and much was changed.

d. Redaction Criticism:

RC seeks to round out critical analysis of the Gospels by filling in areas overlooked by Form Crit and Source Crit. It studies the work of the Gospel editors (esp their theological motivation) in compiling oral materials to form written accounts or in combining & editing written materials to form the Gospels.



Redaction Crit was foreshadowed in the work of Wrede, Bultmann, and esp in R. H. Lightfoot's Bampton Lecture of 1934. But the real flowering came from Germany just after

World War 2:

Gunther Bornkamm on Matthew (1948ff)
Hans Conzelmann on Luke (1954)
Willi Marxsen on Mark (1956)

More recently has it has spread to study of Q and John.

Robert H. Gundry's work, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary & Theological Art* (1982), represents the spread of the method into evangelical circles (for which he was voted out of the Evangelical Theological Society). Gundry feels that Matthew invented some of the incidents in his Gospel to make theological points, i.e., the visit of the Magi and the killing of the babies. Gundry may be the most radical evangelical here, but he is certainly not alone.

G. The Methodology of Redaction Criticism

How does redaction criticism operate? The following steps give a sketch of the procedures involved:

1. Carefully compare all differences between Gospel and its parallel(s) (e.g., compare Matt with Mk and Lk).
2. Attempt to discover those differences which are the result of editorial activity of the writer under study (say Matthew):
 - a. Assume some particular order and relationship of Gospels (almost invariably, this is 2-document theory, which holds Matt used Mk and Q).
 - b. Assume that writer has no other sources or at least that his own contributions can be distinguished by his style.
 - c. Compile statistics on style to recognize author's contributions in areas where otherwise uncertain.
3. Study these detailed differences to determine author's theological motivation for introducing these differences
 - a. Locate texts expressing these motivations.
 - b. Interpret whole Gospel in terms of these motivations.
4. Reconstruct author's outlook, circumstances, group, and audience, i.e., *Sitz im Leben*.

Marxsen typical in seeing 3 *Sitzen in Leben* in a given Gospel passage:

- a. Ministry of Jesus;
- b. Background of Source (Mk and/or Q);
- c. Background of Gospel writer.

H. Some Results of Redaction Criticism

1. In Liberal circles:

We know very little about life of Jesus, but we can reconstruct lots of diverse theological groups in early Christianity!

2. In Conservative circles:

Redaction criticism is much more restrained among evangelicals, but with work of Gundry and others, beginning to introduce idea that not all narrative describes events which really happened.

Matthew for Gundry becomes a kind of "Midrash" C an imaginative retelling or invention of events to make various theological points.

I. An Evaluation of Redaction Criticism

1. A Few Favorable Comments:

a. The Gospel writers did select materials about Jesus which they chose to record. Presumably they also condensed this material (Jn 20:30-31; 21:25; Lk 1:1 reference to compiling an account).

b. Any detailed study of the Gospel text is bound to produce some valuable insights. This approach does study the Gospels in great detail.

c. The Gospel writers apparently did emphasize various features of Jesus' ministry in their selection & presentation, as we may see by comparing their Gospels:

Matthew: Jesus as king-Messiah; coming in fulfillment of OT prophecy; to set up kingdom of heaven; parallels between Jesus and Israel; discourses.

Mark: emphasis on Jesus' actions (& brief words) to answer question: who is this man? (answer: Messiah, Son of God).

Luke: emphasis on historicity; eyewitness testimony to Jesus Christ; interest in social relationships: Gentiles, women, poor; illustrative parables.

John: emphasis on Jesus' significance (cosmic & individual); his person as revealed in his words & miracles; more symbolism, allegorical parables.

d. These emphases do give us insight into theological concerns of writers.

2. Some Serious Problems:

a. Some Results are Alarming

1) Rejection of Recorded Historical Details

a) Wrede: Jesus never claimed to be Messiah

b) Perrin:

(1) know little of Jesus:

"That redaction criticism makes Life of Jesus research very much more difficult is, of course, immediately obvious. With the recognition that so very much of the material in the Gospels must be ascribed to the theological motivation of the evangelist or of an editor of the tradition, or of a prophet or preacher in the early church, we must come to recognize that the words of R. H. Lightfoot were fully and absolutely justified: the Gospels do indeed yield us 'only a whisper of Jesus' voice.' This means in practice that we must take as our starting point the assumption that the Gospels offer us directly information about the theology of the early church and not about the teaching of the historical Jesus..." (69)

(2) don't base faith on him:

"The real cutting edge of the impact of redaction criticism is the fact that it raises very serious questions indeed about that which normally motivates Life of Jesus research: Life of Jesus theology. It raises above all the question as to whether the view of the historical Jesus as the locus of revelation and the central concern of Christian faith is in fact justifiable..." (72)

c) Gundry: visit of wise men, flight to Egypt never happened
(26,32,34-5)

2) Generation of Hypothesized Historical Details

a) Marxsen on setting of Mark (Perrin, 38,39)

b) Gundry on background of Matt (Gundry, 5-6)

3) Addition of Genre "Historical Fiction" to Scripture

a) Perrin:

"The Gospel of Mark is the prototype which others follow and it is a mixture of historical reminiscence, interpreted tradition, and the free creativity of prophets and the evangelist. It is, in other words, a strange mixture of history, legend, and myth. It is this fact which redaction criticism makes unmistakably clear..." (75)

b) Gundry:

Gundry calls it "midrash" or "haggadah," but compares it to modern historical novels which combine truth and fiction (630-32)

b. Some Methods are Suspect

We categorize these under various headings called "fallacies." The terminology is my own, but the methodological problems have also been noted by others, of whom C. S. Lewis, a professional literary critic, is a prominent example.

1) The "Sand-Foundation" Fallacy

The problem of building an elaborate methodology on questionable assumptions which should be carefully re-examined when they produce such results.

a) 2-document theory

b) (for Gundry) total dependence of Matthew on Mark and Q

2) The "Explanation" Fallacy

Any explanation is to be favored over ignorance. This is a problem for both Redaction Criticism on the liberal side and harmonization on the conservative side. Sometimes we just don't know the answer.

See comments of Lewis, *On Stories*, pp 132-33.

It is better not to know the answer (and know that we don't know) than to "know" the wrong answer!

3) The "Dissertation" Fallacy

The PhD industry drives this problem. The need of PhD candidates for something new and academic can lead to:

- a) rejecting a straight-forward explanation for an involved one;
- b) rejecting recorded history for reconstructed history;
- c) rejecting direct evidence for indirect evidence; the result is a new sort of "allegorizing"

See Perrin, 42

Note response of Lewis, 140-41

4) The "Argument from Silence" Fallacy

If a particular incident or detail appears only in one Gospel, the writer must have invented it rather than having additional information (cp Lewis, 131).

5) The "Psychoanalytic" Fallacy

The critic can infer the author's motivation from his writing. Differences between the Gospels are tendentious rather than accidental or matters of emphasis (cp Lewis, 134).

Examples: Lewis on origin of Perelandra, *On Stories*, 144.

6) The "Intellectual Snobbery" Fallacy

We all tend to envy those w/ more prestige (here university liberals), and tend to look down on those w/ less (conservatives).

3. Conclusions on Redaction Criticism

The comments above should not be taken as an argument for anti-intellectualism. Rather it is a call for a sober assessment of our own abilities, and for a fear of God, who "takes the wise in their craftiness" (1 Cor 3:19) and against whom "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel" (Prov 21:30).

J. Conclusions on Gospel History

We have looked at several topics relevant to the matter of the historical accuracy of the Gospels, in particular the Synoptic Gospels.

1. Modern Views about Jesus

We have seen that people have all kinds of views about Jesus: e.g.

Jehovah's Witnesses	Jesus is not God.
Mormons	Jesus was God, but you can be too.
Old Liberals	Jesus was divine, like all men are.

All these views have only tangential connections with the Bible. All are new forms of idolatry, which may be comfortable but are not any good to help you in a jam, since the Gods made to endorse these views do not actually exist.

We also looked at various "historical views" (of which the Jesus Seminar is the current fad). They claim to use the historical data, but in fact they pick and choose the points they like from it.

2. Historical Data about Jesus

In your reading (e.g., Gregory Boyd, *Cynic Sage or Son of God*, Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*), you may have noticed that early pagan sources tell us rather little about Jesus. We do see them admitting as historical some things which liberals would not like to admit (messianic claims, miracle working, etc.).

Jewish materials reflect a negative reaction against Christ, just as the NT says Jewish opponents of Jesus responded (and just as the OT predicted they would). They were not able to deny his existence and profound impact, and still cannot explain away the fulfillment of OT prophecy in Jesus.

Why so little about Jesus in non-Christian sources? We don't know for sure. Perhaps it is like the media situation today. We frequently see the media avoiding reports on things which they don't like, particularly when it is difficult to give them a negative spin.

As regards the NT testimony about Jesus, Paul is in the mid-50's and very tough to get around. His testimony provides fine details about Christ in places, within a general picture that is consistent with the Gospel pictures.

3. The Gospels, our Principal Sources about Jesus.

The Gospels contain over 100 pages of details about Jesus. By size, age and provenance, they are our principal sources for any kind of historical study about him.

The external evidence is quite firm regarding their authors, matching the names we find on the titles of each, with no evidence for any other suggestions. Except for John, these are not the names one would have chosen if names were being invented.

The external evidence for the dates and order of writing of the Gospels must be discarded by liberals in order to maintain the two-document theory. Even so, that theory does not really do a better job of explaining the internal evidence than the suggestion we have proposed, which anchors the Gospel content in the Apostolic teaching.

At nearly 2000 years distance, we cannot answer all alleged contradictions in the Gospel material, but can make suggestions for them which are consistent with historical reliability. We should not let concerns over such matters lead us into adopting views with far more problems, thus becoming like those "straining out a gnat to swallow a camel"!

These matters are not just academic. They have influenced all liberal pastors, most large denominations, the secular media, and many of the people you will try to reach for Christ, especially those who have received a university education. They have caused many Xns who have been exposed to such materials to live in doubt of the Gospel data about Jesus. They have led many people to reject Xy altogether, and are used by most religions in opposition to Xy. We must press the evidence and call people to live responsibly in light of it.

XIII. Exegeting Controversy Passages

Controversy passages may take the form either of a narrative (Jesus responding in dialogue fashion to opponents) or of a discourse (report of Jesus' speech dealing with some controversial matter). In either case, there are certain things we need to think about in order to be sure we don't misunderstand what is happening.

A. Some Items to Keep in Mind

1. Jesus may not be addressing the particular controversy you are concerned about, since His first concern is with the controversy going on at His own time.
2. Thus you need to see what the controversy was at that time.
3. Who are the opponents? Where are they coming from (ideologically, not geographically)?
4. What is Jesus' view of the matter? Be careful, it may not be your view of the matter!
5. How is Jesus arguing for His position? Remember that Jesus' opponents do not accept His claims, and therefore are not about to take His word for it. Can we understand His words as actually arguing from where they are to where He is?
6. Jesus may leave out some steps of an argument as they would be easily understood by His original audience or opponents. It does not follow that we will understand Him unless we can supply those steps.
7. Once we understand what Jesus is saying to His original opponents and audience, we are then ready to see how this carries over to us and others living today.

B. Controversy & Dialogue Accounts in the Synoptics

Here is a list of passages that more or less fall into this genre in the Synoptic Gospels. One of them is a controversy between John the Baptist and the Pharisees rather than between Jesus and His opponents.

PERICOPE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
John B's Preaching	3:7-12		3:7-18
Temptation	4:1-11		4:1-13
Sermon on Mt	5:17-47		
Man w/ Leprosy	8:2-4	1:40-44	5:12-14
PERICOPE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE

Cost of Following	8:19-22		9:57-60
Healing Paralytic	9:1-8	2:3-12	5:18-26
Calling Matthew	9:9-13	2:14-17	5:27-32
Question re/ Fasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-38
Dead Girl & Sick Woman	9:18-26	5:25-43	8:40-50
John B's Question	11:1-6		7:18-23
Lord of Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5
Shriveled Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11
Jesus & Beelzebul	12:22-37	3:23-27	11:17-22
Sign of Jonah	12:38-45		11:24-32
Jesus' Mother/Bros	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21
Clean & Unclean	15:1-20	7:1-23	
Canaanite Woman	15:21-28	7:24-30	
Demand for Sign	16:1-4	8:11-13	
Peter's Confession	16:13-20	8:27-29	9:18-20
Jesus Predicts Death	16:21-28	8:31-9:1	9:22-27
Demonized Boy	17:14-22	9:14-28	9:37-42
Temple Tax	17:24-27		
Who is Greatest?	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48
Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12	
Little Children	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17
Rich Young Ruler	19:16-29	10:17-30	18:18-30
Mother's Request	20:20-28	10:35-45	
Cleansing Temple	21:12-16	11:15-18	19:45-47
Jesus' Authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8
Taxes to Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26
Marriage & Resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40
Greatest Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-31	
Son of David	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44
Anointing @ Bethany	26:2-16	14:1-11	
PERICOPE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE

Peter's Denial Pred. Gethsemane	26:31-35 26:36-46	14:27-31 14:32-42	22:31-34 22:40-46
Jesus' Arrest Sanhedrin Not Against Us	26:47-56 26:57-68	14:43-50 14:53-65 9:38-40	22:47-50 9:49-50
Jesus at Age 12 Rejection @ Naz. Great Catch			2:41-50 4:14-30 5:1-11
Jesus Anointed Good Samaritan Mary & Martha			7:36-50 10:25-37 10:38-41
Six Woes Rich Fool Repent or Perish			11:37-53 12:13-21 13:1-9
Crippled Man Narrow Door Herod the Fox			13:10-17 13:22-30 13:31-35
Jesus @ Pharisee's House Lost Sheep, Coin, Son Pharisees & Money			14:1-24 15:1-32 16:13-15
Ten Lepers Zacchaeus Daughters of Jerusalem			17:11-19 19:1-10 23:26-31
Two Thieves Road to Emmaus Appearance to Disciples			23:39-43 24:13-35 24:36-49