

## WORSHIP LEADER TRAINING: THE NEW TESTAMENT

The goal of this training is to review in very broad strokes the scope of the New Testament. Each of the three sessions is very full, especially reviewing the source theory, but time beyond the hour was included for questions to be discussed. Personal notes and a couple of favorite texts were used to create the outline, including Norman Perrin & Dennis C. Duling's The New Testament: An Introduction (1982: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, NY); and Pheme Perkins' Reading the New Testament (1988: Paulist Press, NY.)

### Session 1: The 4 Gospels

#### General background

- “gospel” from Old English *godspell* = “good discourse”
  - Godspell = translation of Latin *evangelium* from Greek *euangelion* “good news”
- Product of a religious movement having origins in Judaism
  - Quickly moved out into the larger Greco-Roman world
  - Written in common Greek of the period (koinē Greek)
- 1 Book: single entity of foundational importance to Christians
- Collection of books: variety of documents of different literary forms & different religious/theological viewpoints
  - E.g. justification by faith in Romans is faith + works in James (ref.ch2)
  - E.g. Salvation history (God saving His people thru historical events) present in Luke-Acts and absent in Gospel of John
  - Differences represent different understandings of what it means to be a Christian

#### Oral tradition to canon

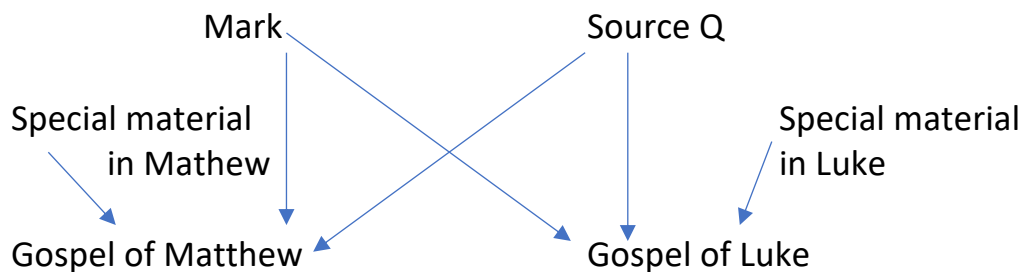
- Greek *kanon* = something made of reeds, or straight like reeds
  - Metaphorically = a rule, or standard
- 27 books of 4 types
  - 4 gospels
  - Book: Acts of the Apostles tells about spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome
  - 21 letters
  - Book: Revelation
- Deciding on what books became canon took ~3 cent in West, more in East
  - Begins with the first collection of the letters of Paul

- Continues to 367AD when Athanasius (Bishop in Alexandria) writes a letter listing the books that are canonized and handed down as believed to be divine
  - List: books of OT + 27 books of NT
- Authorship
  - 4 gospels not written by eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus
    - Written AD 70-100
    - First circulated anonymously – then important names attached\*\*
    - AD 70-90: Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews written by unknown Christians
    - AD 80-100: Gospel & Letters of John written by Johannine School
    - AD 90-100: church leader named John writes Revelation while in exile on island of Patmos
  - 13 letter traditionally ascribed to Paul: 7 written by him
    - 1Thess, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, Romans
  - Other 6 letters written by:
    - followers of Paul: 2Thess, Colossians, Ephesians
    - “Pastoral Letters” written ~AD 90-140

#### Gospel parallels

- Viewed side-by-side see likenesses and differences: Two-Source Theory:
  - Can see where all 3 gospels are related to one another
  - Some in which Matthew and Luke are related, but not to Mark
  - e.g. Baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:13-17 = Mark 1:9-11 = Luke 3:21-22)
    - Matthew and Mark agree vs. Luke
    - Jesus came from Galilee, but not in Luke
    - Mark and Luke agree vs. Matthew
      - Spirit descends like a dove on Jesus in Mk & Lk
      - Matthew: Spirit descends like a dove and lights on Jesus
    - Mark & Luke: voice of heaven says, “Thou art my beloved Son with thee I am well pleased”
    - Matthew: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”
- But Matthew and Luke do not usually agree vs. Mark where they share the same material

- So compare actual words → determine that Mark is common factor
- Verbal interrelatedness + order of events presented puts Mt & Mk in parallel, and Lk & Mk, but not Lk and Mk
- LEADS US TO SAY THAT MARK IS A COMMON FACTOR
- Material common to Matthew and Luke but not in Mark almost always = teaching material, sayings
  - Believe common source in addition to Mark = 'Q' (German *Quelle* = "source") – no written copy ever found
- In addition to material from Mark & Q, Matthew and Luke present a good deal of special material of their own
- Summary of Two-Source Theory (that is answering question @priority of sources):



- Therefore, talk about Mark as the earliest gospel

## Session 2: Synoptic Gospels & John

- Synoptic from Greek *synoptikos* = seeing the whole together
  - Because they tell much of the same story in the same way
- Mark
  - Originally circulated anonymously
    - Tradition claims that it was written ~AD 70 in Rome, given an important person's name in 2<sup>nd</sup> century
  - Writes with realistic narrative with special concern for the Gentile mission
  - Intent of evangelist is found in discourses of apocalyptic seers in for instance Mark 13 (and Revelation)
  - Divine human drama
    - Began when John the Baptist preached and was then delivered up

- Continued when Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God → then was delivered up & rose from the dead
    - Church then preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God
    - Moving now toward the church being delivered of and Jesus' coming on the clouds of heaven
  - Mark desires to prepare his readers for the Parousia by teaching correct understanding of Christology and a true understanding of Christian discipleship
    - Does this by telling the story of the ministry of Jesus so that the concerns of the risen Jesus for His church in the present are highlighted – leaving audience at the empty tomb awaiting the parousia in fear and trembling in the *gar*-ending at 16:8
      - 16:9-20 has different syntax from rest of Gospel so believe not part of original
        - Not in some of important early manuscripts
- Matthew
  - Built on Mark
  - Is a “church book” written to meet needs of church as a developing organization
  - Believe also (like Mark) first circulated anonymously
  - Presupposes destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 – and cited by Ignatius of Antioch in early 2<sup>nd</sup> century → probably written about a generation after Mark..... around AD90
  - Focus: deep concern for the mission of the church to the world at large; climax of Gospel = Great Commission (make disciples of all nations 28:19)
  - Focus also: Matthew's Jesus states His mission is to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:5, 15:24)
  - Structural/content focus on time of Jesus being one of fulfillment & revelation
    - Jesus' teaching organized into 5 discourses
      - Each ends with a formula
      - first takes place on a mountain to claim is new Torah
    - Miracle stories are abbreviated but always highlights the miraculous (e.g. his source has 1 healed but Mt makes it 2)

- In constant dialogue with what is going on in Judaism → so reflects much that is Jewish (e.g. concern for Torah and also for Jesus as fulfillment of Scripture)
- Gospel of Matthew represents continuing links with and concern for the Jewish element in the early development of Christianity
- Matthew's Gospel isn't just Christianized Judaism
  - Strongly important = concept of risen Christ present in the Church
- Luke-Acts
  - Originally written to be read together as one work in two volumes
  - Author of Luke-Acts is also (like author of Matthew) a man of Hellenistic Jewish Christian mission
    - However unlike Matthew's focus on Jewish element the author of Luke-Acts is focused on the movement of Christianity into the Hellenistic Jewish community
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christians identified author as Luke, follower of Paul and physician
  - Author knows/uses Mark, and view of church and its faith shows movement toward institutionalism and theology characteristics of a later date
    - Therefore believe was written ~85AD, +/- 5 years
  - Author interprets Jerusalem as place of passion of Jesus and regards its destruction as a consequence of Jesus' Passion
    - Rome is the new center of gravity for Christians
    - Jerusalem and its Temple are gone
    - Preaching of the Gospel in the world of which Rome is the center continues on...
  - In Luke-Acts Jesus is portrayed as the center of time
    - Fulfillment of OT prophecies
    - Fulfills prophecies when condemned by the Jews, suffers and dies – then vindicated as Christ, Lord, Son of God in Resurrection and Ascension to God's side
    - Portrayed as Son of God by a human mother
      - Also supernatural agency as full of Spirit
      - Also as a wandering teacher and healer whose ways of life, teaching and healing were bequeathed to disciples/followers

- Also as a figure who appeared after death and taken up to heaven
    - Also as a Savior who offered peace and salvation to the whole world
  - Message of Luke-Acts: Jesus and heroes of the early church are models of the challenge and possibilities of Christian existence in the world
    - Gospel is an example to be followed in the world
      - What Jesus, Peter, Stephen, and Paul did, so must we also do
- John
  - Traditionally written by apostle John: fourth gospel, 3 letters
    - Also Revelation, but has tenuous relationship to others
  - Style and content: use same language in the same way
    - Present stark contrasts between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, life and death, faith and unbelief
    - The long discourses attributed to Jesus use “spiral structure” of thinking: state a thought, contemplate it from every angle, appears to end where began.... But there is a perceptible movement of thought
  - Author noted as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”
    - Never named – church tradition in 2<sup>nd</sup> century named him as John, son of Zebedee
    - But author of 2John and 3John identifies self as “presbyter”
      - Figure in early Christian tradition
    - So unknown
  - Differences bet John and Synoptics
    - John has Jesus’ ministry beginning with joint activity with John Baptist and has several extended ministries in Jerusalem
      - Synoptics have Jesus begin His ministry only after John was imprisoned; lasts one year; includes only one visit to Jerusalem
    - Many events/stories are in John but not Synoptics, and vice versa
    - John doesn’t have Synoptics’ KofG teaching, no exorcisms, no developed parables

- Above lead us to say that John's author may not have known @Synoptics – but not definitive; he may have just not been following their order, etc.
  - 3 special sources believed to exist for John
    - 1.A discourse source derived from Gnostic revelation discourses
      - Gnosticism = heretical movement of 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian Church teaching that personal spiritual knowledge (gnosis) more important than orthodox teaching/traditions/authority of church
        - Material existence is flawed/evil
        - Supreme, hidden God differentiated from malevolent, lesser divinity
      - Not well supported because language of discourses is very Johannine – not other source
    - 2.A collection of miracles called a "signs source"
      - Very possible
    - 3.A passion story
      - Undecided – knowledge of synoptics was possible
  - Johannine theological concepts
    - Christology: Jesus fulfills all OT messianic expectations
      - And Jesus is the mysterious Son of Man & reveals God's glory
      - Central theme is "I Am" = revelation of God
    - Dualism
      - Many symbolic opposites
        - Light/darkness; life/death; God/Satan; above/below; heaven/earth; spirit/flesh
      - Contrast between heavenly world above and earthly world below
        - Continues into human dimension in that the way of the world is a sinful, inauthentic experience compared to God's plan
    - Signs & Faith
      - Miracles lead disciples to faith & prove Jesus to be Messiah
      - Not all who see signs truly "see" and believe

- Some do “see” and believe, or perhaps see because they are open to faith
- Some who “see” see more than the mere performance of a sign – but see spiritually
- Some may not need signs at all “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” Jn 20:29
- Eschatology
  - Normally associated with acts associated with the future (coming of the Messiah, resurrection, judgement, eternal life) are already present for the believer in the encounter with Jesus
  - Past, present, and future collapse into a focus on the present
    - Realized eschatology
- Spirit, Church, and Sacraments
  - Spirit is present among believers
  - Spirit called “Paraclete” from Greek *parakletos* = the one called beside; Advocate; Intercessor; Comforter; Counselor; Exhorter; Proclaimer
  - Paraclete is rejected by the world, as Jesus was
  - No interest in institutional church – focus is on believers

### Session 3: the Epistles

- Authors: Paul; others may be “Pauline school” but unknown
  - Called “Deutero (Secondary) Pauline Letters
- Romans
  - Author: Paul
  - 1:18-2:29 Christ saved all so all were in need of salvation
  - Justified by faith vs. works of the Law (if Law, wouldn’t have needed Christ)
  - Gentiles’ sin = idolatry
  - Dualism between sin/death/law and faith/promise/grace
    - Death vs. righteousness
  - Baptism = participation with Christ in death and resurrection
  - 10:8 ref. Deut. The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart
- 1 & 2 Corinthians



- Author: Paul
- 1: 3:16 temple = Christians (pl!) who form the Body of Christ filled with the Spirit
- *koinonia* = to share fellowship
- nothing is unclean for the Christian, but at the margins where one believes in clean/unclean, perceptions of others must be considered and respected
- 12 -Spiritual gifts vv 8-10 & 28
  - Know them by fruits of the spirit
  - Manifested in some signs of power (e.g. conversion experience)
  - Recept marked by peace and enlightenment
- *Glossolalia*: speaking in tongues = more vague than *xenolalia*
  - *Xenolalia* = speaking in a language not learned but someone else has
- Galatians
  - Author: Paul
  - 3:26-29 finally no distinctions
  - 5:16 ff explains basis of Gnosticism: fruit of Spirit vs. acts of the flesh
- Ephesians
  - Author unknown
    - Different from Paul's undisputed letters in language, style, content
    - Although has Pauline justification by faith in it
  - Focus on church as a universal entity – no specificity
  - 4:11 spiritual gifts
  - Relationship in marriage = model for Christ and Church
    - Mutuality, equality, loving self-giving
  - 6:10 ff Armor of God
- Philippians (Philippi)
  - Author: Paul
  - 2:1-11 (Philippian hymn)
  - Have subordination of Jesus to Father vs. Christ's equality in Trinity (John)
- Colossians (Colossae)
  - Author unknown

- Different from Paul's undisputed letters in language, style, content
  - Christology: not just a likeness others can conform to but making God who was invisible now visible
  - Church as Body of Christ
  - Steps toward Church as institution
  - 1:15-20 Colossian hymn
  - 2:8 "philosophy" = occult
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians (Thessalonica)
  - 1 Thess: Author: Paul
    - 4:13ff the Rapture described
  - 2 Thess: Author unknown
    - Different from Paul's undisputed letters in language, style, content
    - Imitates 1 Thess but has different eschatology
    - Subtitle for letter: 2:3 = don't let anyone deceive you
- Pastoral Letters: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus
  - Author unknown
    - Not Paul – different language and style, as well as developed church organization not found in others
    - Prob early 2<sup>nd</sup> century
  - Should be read as orthodox teaching; manual for clergy
  - Titus: 3:4-7 Pauline summary of faith
- Philemon
  - Author: Paul
  - About a slave who ran away, became a Christian, now reincorporating into original community – how to deal with this
  - Tension between a private letter and public teaching
- Hebrews
  - Author unknown
    - Not Paul – high priesthood of Christ not found in his other letters
  - Fundamentally a sermon directed to believers needing exhortation, guidance, and comfort
    - References Psalm 110 & High Priest Melchizedek
  - Ch 9 worship in earthly tabernacle → Blood of Christ as offering

- V. 24 Christ; did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself
- James
  - Not a letter, but is *paranesis* = moral exhortation
    - 54 imperative verbs in the 108 verses w/constant baptismal theme
  - 2:26 as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead
- 1 & 2 Peter
  - 1: recognition that those being addressed have already accepted JC
    - Possibility that much of it is based on a baptismal homily
    - V. 15 be holy in all you do
    - Sanctify: move something that is profane to you through the marginal area into being something sacred to you, part of your world
  - 2: purpose: to reiterate hope for *parousia* (2<sup>nd</sup> Coming) against growing skepticism and combat false teachers in the church
- 1, 2 & 3 John
  - 1: prob not from author of Gospel
    - Style, thought differences on eschatology & sacraments
  - 2: written by member of Johannine school who calls self, “presbyter”=elder
  - 3: focus on moral/spiritual
- Jude
  - Apocalyptic texts used as a polemic against a group of heretics (probably Gnostics) within the church who are creating dissidence, claiming to be Christians
    - Ecstatic visionaries whom Jude calls false prophets
- Revelation
  - Written in poor Greek so author probably of Hebrew or Aramaic first language
  - 1:16 – sharp double-edged sword
    - The Word
    - Ref: Hebrews 4:12
      - Divides soul & spirit
      - Exposes everything to God
    - Ref: Ephesians 6:17

- Word of God = sword of the Spirit
  - 10:1 - angel of the Covenant = Jesus
    - Ref: Malachi 3:1 messenger of Cov
  - 12 - chapter illustrates that salvation is a historical event thru JC
    - Destruction of Satan is part of this salvation history
  - 17:5 - Babylon = Rome
  - 19:13 – “the Word of God” = Jesus Christ
  - 20:14 – Second Death: total, final separation from God without hope of reversal
  - 21:3-5 - He will live with them and be their God; wipe tears; make everything new
  - 22:17 – the bride = the Church
  - 22:18 – altering of books happened often!
- Gentile Christianity contributed significantly to Christology
    - Several Christological hymns have similar pattern of thought
      - Phil 2:6-11 / Col 1:15-20 / 1Pet 3:18-19, 22 / 1 Tim 3:16 / Eph 2:14-16 / Heb 1:3
        - Pattern = redeemer figure who descends to the earth from a higher sphere, achieves his redemptive purpose on earth, and ascends again to the higher, heavenly sphere