

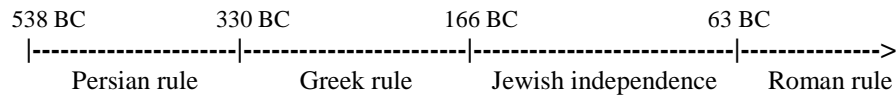
THE WHOLE BIBLE: 66 BOOKS IN 10 WEEKS

Gospel of Matthew – Acts of the Apostles

INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD AND CANONICITY

- 400 years between Old Testament and New Testament
- Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha written in period | but not *canon*

Disappointment of post-exile and waiting for the Messiah



GOSPELS

In context of Roman rule, story begins as juxtaposition of two kings

Luke 2

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Purpose of the Gospels is so that we would believe in Jesus

John 20:31

These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

“Synoptics”

- Matthew, Mark and Luke | many of same stories, even similar wording

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

- written to a Jewish audience | “Kingdom of Heaven”
- one distinctive – Jesus as fulfillment of OT promises
- “that it might be fulfilled” is a favorite phrase
- contains longest and most extensive quotes from OT

Matthew 2:14-18

¹⁴ And Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” [Hosea 11:1]

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted,
because they are no more.” [Jeremiah 31:15]

GOSPEL OF MARK

- widely considered the first Gospel
- written to Gentile audience | Mark 7:1-4, explanation of washings
- characterized by fast-paced action, less teaching, lots of miracles
- “Messianic secret”: frequent commands to silence

Mark 1:9-15

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

GOSPEL OF LUKE

- written by doctor who travelled with Paul (1:1-4)
- special attention to poor, weak, outsider

Matthew 5

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

GOSPEL OF JOHN

- heavy on discourse | feeding of 5000 – only John gives us long discourse
- many unique stories: Nicodemus, women at well, raising of Lazarus
- whereas Synoptics show us divinity of Jesus largely in what he did
- Gospel of John has these high, elevated self-attesting statements
- seven “I am” statements of Christ
- upper-room discourse: extensive teaching on Spirit (compare w/ Synoptics)

John 14

¹ “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

- begins with ascension of Jesus and ends with Paul in prison in Rome
- volume II of Gospel of Luke (Luke and Acts is a single work)
- story of Christianity’s origins, includes Jesus and church (linked)
- distinctive of Gospel of Luke is emphasis on gospel for outsiders and in Acts, this is fulfilled in gospel going out to Gentiles
- issue of precedence | how much of Acts is a model for us today?

Acts 1:8 | thesis statement

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 10:9-16, 34-35 | Gospel for Gentiles

⁹ The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰ And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

¹² In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.

¹³ And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” ¹⁴ But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” ¹⁵ And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”

Introduction

- think transition from OT (Malachi) to NT was “silent” period
- but very active period with a lot of documents and writings
- Apocrypha (“secret/hidden”) and Pseudepigrapha
- Protestant – interesting, encouraging, helpful, historically valuable
- but not canonical

Canonical

- Greek, “rule” | list of authoritative books of Bible – 39+27
- Catholic and Protestants agree on 27 books of New Testament
- but disagree on Old Testament | Catholics add 7 Apocrypha
 - Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch

Septuagint

- Greek translation (~200 BC), included assorted Apocrypha
 - widely read by Greek Jews and Christians, quoted in NT
- Latin translation, Vulgate (~400 AD), included 7 Apocrypha
- Roman Catholic Church adopted as canon in Council of Trent

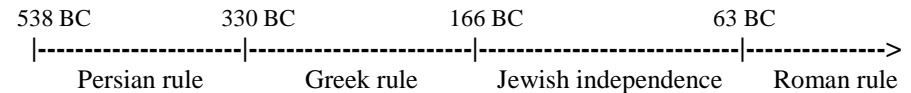
Why do Protestants reject Apocrypha?

- because not part of Hebrew canonical Bible – not Jesus’ Bible
- not quoted anywhere by Jesus or NT writers

Where does canonicity come from?

- two basic answers: *human authority* and *divine authority*
- Roman Catholic answer – church councils (human authority)
- Protestant answer – short answer and long answer
- short answer: Jesus attests to Old Testament Scriptures
 - Hebrew Bible canon already existed in Jesus’ time
 - “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35)
 - “not jot or tittle will pass away” (Matthew 5:18)
- long answer: Scripture is self-authenticating
 - Jesus, “my sheep hear my voice and follow me” (John 10:27)
 - church councils recognize the consensus already formed

Background context to New Testament



Return from exile fell far short of expectations

- prophets promised restoration and national greatness
- but post-exile, almost under continual foreign rule and oppression
- then Romans with King Herod as client-king | waiting for deliverer

Introduction to Gospels

- chronologically, among last of the NT written
- earliest were Paul’s epistles
- misconception b/c Gospels veiled, divinity of Jesus is latter invention
- Gospels written down because eyewitnesses were starting to die
- previously, the life of Jesus was in oral tradition
 - Mark: Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus
 - John: Peter cut off ear of servant of high priest, Malchus

Story begins in context of Roman rule

- Caesar Augustus emerged out of 3 decades of civil war
- began with Julius Caesar and ended with defeat of Mark Anthony
- at end of massive and traumatic civil war – Augustus is first emperor
- Augustus called “Prince of Peace,” “savior of world”
- news of his victory called “euangelion” (gospel)
- given title, “Son of God” (since Julius Caesar was divinized)

Juxtaposition of two kings

- same titles and claims to authority – but one is pretender-king
- in contrast, real king born in humility and lowliness
- now understand why Romans saw early Christians as threat
 - gospel had political ramifications | same titles as Caesar
 - Yesu Kyrios, not Caesar Kyrios – if Jesus is Lord, then Caesar not

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“Synoptics”

- Matthew, Mark and Luke
- syn – same | optics – look, view
- many of same stories, sequence, even similar wording
- Gospel of John is very different from Synoptics

Gospel of Matthew

- written by Matthew (Levi), the tax collector
- written to a Jewish audience | “Kingdom of Heaven”
- one distinctive – Jesus as fulfillment of OT promises
 - Luke’s genealogy (Adam), Matthew’s genealogy (Abraham)
- “that it might be fulfilled” is a favorite phrase
 - Greek, *playrao* – “fill up” (like cup)
 - narrative arc and ending of story
 - harmonic tension and resolution
- contains longest and most extensive quotes from OT

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Jesus going down to Egypt “fulfilled” Hosea 11:1

- puzzled people – Hosea doesn’t seem related to Jesus at all
- context of Hosea 11 is exile | God is reminding his people of his love
- just as God rescued his people out of Egypt, so God will rescue again

Change our understanding of prophesy

- not only prediction (Micah 5:2 – ruler born in Bethlehem)
- but also “typology” – patterns and models (like bronze serpent)

Story of Israel is “a type” that is fulfilled in Christ

- Israel is called God’s son to be a light to Gentiles
- first, taken into wilderness to be tested as God’s faithful servant
- Jesus is true Israel, who tested in wilderness, and became true light

Jesus fulfills Jeremiah 31:15

- at first, seems like loose association – babies killed
- poetic imagery, Israel’s mothers personified as Rachel, weeping because of the destruction of Jerusalem, many babies killed
- again, Jesus is one, true Israel – reliving story of Israel
 - in Jeremiah’s day, Babylon | in Jesus’ day, Rome and Herod

Gospel of Mark

- written by John Mark in Acts, nephew of Barnabas
- widely considered the first Gospel | shortest Gospel
- written to Gentile audience | Mark 7:1-4, explanation of washings
- characterized by fast-paced action, “immediately,” less dialogue
- “Messianic secret” – frequent commands to silence
 - “Messiah” freighted with political and militaristic meaning
 - also, prematurely bring conflict with Roman authorities
- other Gospels much longer prologues, but Mark jumps into action
- no stories of Jesus’ infancy, no genealogies | starts Jesus’ baptism

Mark 1:9-15

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, *immediately* he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² The Spirit *immediately* drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Notice density of action

- v. 12-13 is whole wilderness temptation narrative
- compare with Matthew (11 verses) and Luke (13) – 3 temptations

Gospel of Luke

- written by doctor who travelled with Paul | 1:1-4, eyewitnesses
- special attention to poor, weak, outsider
- many unique stories only in Luke
 - Parable of Good Samaritan
 - Parable of Pharisee and Tax Collector
 - Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus
 - Story of Zacchaeus
 - Story of Nativity shepherds
- major theme of reversal – “first will last, last will first”

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Gospel of John

- written by John, youngest disciple | “beloved disciple”
- heavy on discourse | feeding of 5000 – only John gives us long discourse
- many unique stories focusing on Jesus’ identity
 - Nicodemus, women at well, raising of Lazarus
- whereas Synoptics show us divinity of Jesus largely in what he did
 - forgives sins, walks on water, calms sea
- Gospel of John has these high, elevated self-attesting statements
 - “I and the Father are one”
 - “if seen me, seen Father”
 - “before Abraham was, I am”
- upper-room discourse: extensive teaching on Spirit

John 14

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⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Very strong statement

- not, there is a way; I am showing you the way
- not just telling truth | not just telling how to have life

Acts of the Apostles

- volume 2 of Luke’s Gospel – telling us origins of Christianity
 - not just life, death and resurrection of Jesus
 - but also the beginnings of church
- distinctive of Gospel of Luke is emphasis on gospel for outsiders
- in Acts, this is fulfilled in gospel going out to Gentiles

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Gospel breaks down racial and cultural barriers

- Gentile believers do not have to adopt Jewish religious practices
 - huge controversy over circumcision
- central importance of Paul’s conversion (3x)
 - Paul is called as an Apostle to Gentiles

Issue of precedence

- how much of Acts is a model for us today?
- debate whether Acts is blueprint for all churches or redemptive history
 - gifts of Holy Spirit: tongues, miraculous healings

Acts is “redemptive history”

- unique, unrepeatabe events in salvation history
- apostolic age was foundation to church
 - Eph. 2:20 – church is built on foundation of apostles and prophets

– age of “signs and wonders” | prophesy, healings, miracles