

UNDERSTANDING THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

REMINDER:
CANONICAL CRITICISM

THE GOOD NEWS, EUANGELION, KERYGMA

THE GOSPELS



THE GOSPELS AT A GLANCE: FACTS

- 4 "Books" + 1 "Outlier"

- 3 "Synoptic" Gospels

"syn" = together
"optic" = view

- 1 Gospel according to John

- The "Outlier" = the Book of Acts (but we'll talk about that one later)

EXEGETESIS - DIGGING DEEP

THE GOSPELS: INTENT

- The unifying theme of the gospels is to tell a story
- The way the story is told and the background information helps us understand who the "original audience" probably was
- Stories and sayings of Jesus - NOT writings of Jesus
- Two primary concerns in each gospel
 - historical account of Jesus
 - needs of later communities

THE GOSPELS: METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

- Historical Context
 - Of Jesus
 - General setting - First century Judaism
 - Particularity - the space and structure of Jesus' life and sayings (can be different in each gospel because of the nature of oral tradition)
 - Of the evangelist

THE GOSPELS: METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

- Literary Context - the order and placement of the stories
 - Understanding *pericopes* - a complete unit of thought
 - Thinking horizontally - the gospels in parallel
 - Think vertically -
 - historical context of Jesus and the writer
 - placement with other pericopes and narrative elements
 - *selectivity, arrangement, adaptation*

THE GOSPELS: THE SYNOPTICS - MARK

- Mark
 - Mark is commonly dated as the first of the gospels to be written - AD 66-70
 - Presumably written for a gentile audience as evidenced by explanation of Jewish customs

THE GOSPELS: THE SYNOPTICS - MATTHEW AND LUKE

- "The Rewrites"
 - Matthew and Luke seem to share stories from Mark's gospel and from another source - Q or *quelle* that contained sayings of Jesus
 - Both have retold the gospel story to fit the needs of their audiences

THE GOSPELS: THE SYNOPTICS - MATTHEW AND LUKE

- Matthew
 - Most scholars date this gospel to between AD 80-90
 - Written for a primarily Jewish audience by a presumably Jewish author
 - focus on Jesus' fulfillment of OT prophecy
 - focus on Pentateuchal structure and Jesus as the "new Moses"

THE GOSPELS: THE SYNOPTICS - MATTHEW AND LUKE

- Luke
 - Part of a two-volume work along with Acts
 - Most scholars date this gospel to between AD 80-110
 - Written to encourage faith for those who already believed
 - "Theophilus" - God lover
 - to be read aloud by those who were celebrating eucharist together

THE GOSPELS: JOHN - THE ODD ONE

- Johannine Literature Corpus
- Probably completed in its present form in AD 90-110
- Jewish-Christian Audience in Asia Minor, probably near Ephesus
- “Largely” independent from synoptics

THE GOSPELS: JOHN - THE ODD ONE

- Themes in John
 - Logos and Wisdom Literature
 - "Signs Gospel"
 - "I Am" sayings

THE GOSPELS: JOHN - THE ODD ONE

- Foci in John
 - Christology
 - Sacramental Imagery
 - Gnostic Concerns
 - Individualism

HERMENEUTICS - APPLICATION

GUIDING THOUGHTS FOR APPLICATION

- The Teachings and Imperatives in Modern Life - context and purpose
- The Narratives - attention to the teachings around them
- A Crucial Reminder - the eschatological Kingdom!

"In a certain sense, therefore, the Gospels are already functioning as hermeneutical model for us, insisting by their very nature that we, too, retell the same story in our own twentieth-century contexts."

–GORDON D. FEE AND DOUGLAS STUART