



# Bible Basics

New Testament Part 2



# Review of Goals

- Foundational understanding/overview of the New Testament
- Understanding of New Testament Composition
- Awareness of New Testament Content



# We affirm...

- All Scripture is inspired
- All Scripture is authoritative
- Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation



- This is why interpretation matters so much
- This is why we study the Bible
- This is one of the reasons we come to church



# 2 Timothy 2:15

- Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. *KJV*
- Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. *NKJV*
- Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. *NIV*
- Make an effort to present yourself to God as a tried-and-true worker, who doesn't need to be ashamed but is one who interprets the message of truth correctly. *CEB*



# The New Testament

- Christian Scriptures
- Second Testament
- 27 books



# Books of the New Testament

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

Romans

1 & 2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 & 2 Thessalonians

1 & 2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Hebrews

James

1 & 2 Peter

John (1,2,3)

Jude

Revelation



# Genres

- Gospels
- History
- Letters/Epistles
- Apocalyptic Literature





# Synoptic Gospels

Synoptic: to “see together”

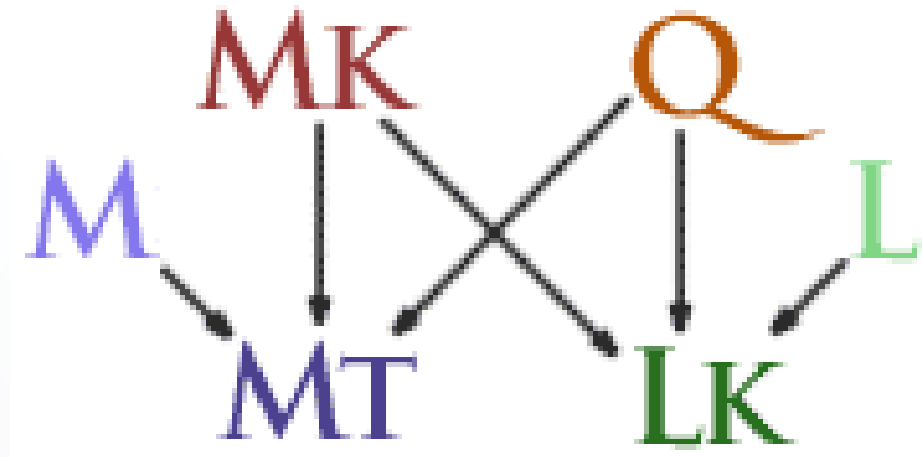
Matthew

Mark

Luke



# Four-Source Hypothesis



# Parable – a definition

- *Parable/parabole* – “putting things side by side.”
- *Proverb/masal*
- Loosely defined, a parable and a proverb/*masal* refer to a non-literal saying or utterance
- A parable is an extended metaphor or simile frequently becoming a brief narrative, generally used in biblical times for the purpose of teaching



# Symbolic Language

Is necessary in the Bible because:

We are using words to talk about the divine

How do we talk about, and think about things that are beyond us or unknowable?

Simile, allegory, metaphor



# The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:21–35



# Other Elements in the Synoptic Gospels

- Birth Narratives (Matthew and Luke)
- Miracle Accounts
- Teaching
- Encounters with others, such as the Pharisees
- Passion Narrative
- Resurrection Narrative



# The Gospel of John

- The Spiritual Gospel
- Origen (Church father, early theologian), called the Gospels the “first fruits of all scripture” and John “the first fruits of the Gospels”
- Augustine of Hippo (St. Augustine) said the synoptic Gospels were the Gospels “of the flesh” but John was the “Gospel of the Spirit.”



# What's Unique about John?

- Writing style is philosophical and metaphorical
- Influenced by Gnosticism
  - A religious/philosophical tradition in antiquity
  - *Gnosis* = knowledge
  - Radical dualism: light and darkness, wisdom and foolishness, spirit and body
  - Gnostics believed that the true self was a spark of light in the body
  - At the end of time, when the cosmos was dissolved, the human sparks of light would return to the kingdom of light





- What's not in John

- Jesus' birth
- Jesus' baptism
- Jesus being tempted by the devil
- Jesus eating with tax-collectors and sinners
- Transfiguration

- Content unique to John

- Changing water into wine
- Nicodemus
- Samaritan woman at well
- Crippled man at Bethesda
- Rescue of woman caught in adultery
- Healing of man born blind
- Lazarus
- Washing of disciples' feet
- Resurrection appearance to Thomas



# Act of the Apostles

- Written by the author of Luke – addressed to Theophilus and refers to the “first book”
- Luke/Acts often studied as a unit
- History of the birth of Christianity
- History in the Hellenistic sense – it recounts events in an attempt to find the meaning in them. In other words, it interprets the events as it goes along, and possibly organized events according to that interpretation



# Pauline Epistles/Letters

- Apostle Paul in Acts 9:1–22
- Martyrdom 65 CE
- Missionary Journeys
- Missionary, Pastor and Theologian (Romans)
- With John, had significant influence on the church



# Pauline Epistles

(undisputed)

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Philippians
- 1 Thessalonians
- Philemon



# Pauline Epistles

(disputed/deutero-Pauline)

- Ephesians
- Colossians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus



# Non-Pauline

- Hebrews
- James
- 1 & 2 Peter
- 1, 2 & 3 John
- Jude



# Rhetoric in the Pauline Epistles

- Rhetoric: The art or study of using language effectively and persuasively. Skill in using language persuasively  
*(American Heritage Dictionary)*
- When reading Paul, it is helpful to think about the rhetorical elements. What point is he trying to make? What argument is he trying to make?
- Example: the rhetorical question: Romans 6:1



# Revelation

- Author: John
- Date of Authorship: Written in the last days of the Emperor Domitian (95 CE). Other possibilities: Nero (54–68) or Trajan (95–117)
- Genre: An Epistle filled with apocalyptic content
- Audience: 7 churches in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicia
- It addresses a specific community and context – a suffering, harassed and marginalized community of outsiders in Greco-Roman culture





# Characteristics of Apocalyptic Material

- Transcendent world is presented in symbolic language
- Reality is presented in dualistic terms: good and evil, light and darkness
- The expectation of the near-end of history and the kingdom of God

Symbolic language must be interpreted and is open to multiple interpretations



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# A Dialogic Reading of Scripture

- The many voices in scripture are in conversation with each other
- Meaning comes from the conversation
- The meaning is theological
- Surplus of Meaning/Unfinalizability

