

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #2

9/19/23

Synoptics 23 – 24

- Presented 9/12/23

Review of the Synoptic Gospels

- Gospel

- From the English word – *gospel*, “Good News”
- From the Hebrew word – *bsorah*, meaning *from the Battlefield*
- From the Greek word *euangelion*, meaning *good news*

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- “*Gospel*” is a term found in the Old Testament, meaning the information brought from the battlefield by a runner related to victory in battle
 - “Let me run, and carry **tidings** to the king that Yahweh has delivered him from the power of the enemy” (**2nd Samuel 18:19**)
- This imagery takes on an eschatological emphasis by the time of the ***Prophet Isaiah***

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings **good news, tidings***” (Isaiah 52:7)
- This was about “salvation” (being saved from your enemies; restoration of the kingdom)
- Winning battles was the duty of the king
- In the New Testament, this is about being ***saved from sin and death***
- There is only one gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is presented in four different versions
- The RSV uses “tidings or news,” but the Septuagint used “*euangelion*” – good news

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- Just a couple of centuries ago, a runner (or the postman) was the principle means of delivering information
- This is important to grasp as the idea of the good news was an actual concept that appeared in the Old Testament
- It is through that lens that we should understand it in the New Testament

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- The first century Christians, like Matthew, understood the term “gospel,” as a lens for understanding the scripture, (which at that time was understood as what we now call the “Old Testament”)
- When Matthew throws out the word, “good news,” we must understand how he and his 1st century audience viewed it
- Understanding these concepts will enable us to make a little more sense out of the gospels

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- Synoptic:
 - To be looked at together
 - Lined up in columns, compared, or contrasted because they are so similar
 - Matthew, Mark, and Luke

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- For every book in the Bible, you need to ask three questions:
 - Who was the author?
 - Who was his audience?
 - What was the purpose of him writing to that audience?

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- Matthew
 - Tax collector and Apostle known as Levi
 - Provided information already known by members of the early church in Jerusalem and Judea
- Mark
 - Young secretary to Peter in Rome
 - Jewish and Gentile members of the church in Rome
 - Provided a copy of Peter's message
- Luke
 - Medical doctor and traveling companion of Paul
 - Gentile converts to Christianity in Asia Minor
 - Helped Paul bring others to Christianity

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- For this course, the majority of the Gospel readings will be from the **Gospel of Matthew**
- Then, we will look at Luke and a bit of Mark
- Father pointed out that no synoptic course can look at all three equally
- Matthew is the easiest, and most Semitic gospel, and presents the best introduction (for those who have a background in the Old Testament), and the best early Christian worldview depicting things as they were happening

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- The term synoptic is relatively recent being popularized in the 19th century (just before the development of what Bible Scholars call “synoptic problem)”
- Books were developed that presented Matthew, Mark, and Luke laid out in columns on pages so one could compare and contrast them
- The term synoptic also helps the reader realize that these three were significantly different than the Gospel of John

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- Disciple – Greek – *Mathetes* - One who engages in learning through instruction from another (*pupil, apprentice*)
- Apostle – Greek – *Apostolos*, meaning “one who is sent”
 - 12 Apostles (for the 12 Tribes of Israel) were sent by Jesus to proclaim the gospel to the whole world
- To better help understand the gospels, we need to take a brief look at how the Jews worshipped

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- Father requested that, as we go through this course, we pay attention to when *Jesus* was in *Galilee* and when He was in *Judea*
- Knowing the geography will help make sense about why He was doing, what He was doing, and where He was going
- Matthew was writing for an audience who knew that geography well

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- **Author:**
- The phrase, “*The Gospel According to Matthew,*” was not part of the original manuscript but added later, most likely by a scribe
- Not much is known about Matthew beyond the information contained in the New Testament
- Its authorship has been attributed to Matthew the tax collector, also known as *Levi*, the son of *Alphaeus*, since the early church
- He is also known as one of the 12 Apostles

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- Even though the text does not say that Matthew wrote this gospel, it is important to know why many scholars support it today because:
 - The early Christians said that he was the author
 - It comes from the Apostolic Tradition

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- **Composition:**
- ***Eusebius*** (Bishop of *Caesarea* - AD 314-340) quoting from ***Papias*** (Bishop of *Hierapolis* – AD 100-110) said Matthew wrote his gospel in “the dialect of the Hebrews and everyone translated it as he was able”
 - This most likely referred to *Aramaic*, the dominant language among the Jews of Palestine
 - Based on the author’s assumption of his audience’s knowledge of the OT, and Jewish customs, it has long been held that it was written for a Palestinian Jewish/Christian audience
 - Although, there are no extant copies of the original *Hebrew (Aramaic)* text, a Greek translation was accepted by the Church at a very early date

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- The *Pontifical Biblical Commission*, in 1911, concluded that the date of composition was most likely before AD 70
 - Some scholars suggest that it was written as early as AD 50
- *Bishop Papias*, who lived in *Ephesus*, Asia Minor (within the apostolic territory of Saint Paul) was a very important early witness
- Almost all of the inhabitants from Syria to Egypt spoke *Aramaic* (not *Hebrew*)

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- Matthew highlights this by his use of *Aramaic* as spoken by Jesus
 - *Eli, eli, lama sacach thani (Ps 22)*
 - *Simon bar Jonah*
- As mentioned, Matthew assumed that his audience knew most Jewish customs
 - He tells what the Pharisees or Jesus did, but not why because he assumes you are a local of that region
 - Thus, this gospel was written for Palestinian Jewish Christians and not in an attempt to convert Jews to the New Way

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- Father suggested that no book of the Bible was ever written to be stuck in a drawer of a Hilton Hotel in the hopes that someone will read it and have a “come to Jesus moment!”
- They were all written for an existing audience that most likely knew the bulk of the information

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- Although we do not know who wrote the 1st *Greek* version of Matthew, it is obvious that one was determined to be authoritative and subsequent copies were made from it
- When looking at quotations from the writing of the early Church Fathers, we find it is very close to the Greek text we use today
- Finally, the gospel records Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Mt 24) with no reference to its fulfillment

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- Father indicated that the average commentary (Protestant or Catholic) on Matthew today will indicate that Matthew was written after AD 70
- This came about when **post-enlightenment rationalists** (who do not accept the possibility of miracles) decided that the detailed prophecies of Matthew 24 did not happen and that Jesus was not really God
- Thus, the passage must have been written after the fact (AD 70)

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- If, on the other hand, you believe that *Jesus* is the God man, and the prophecies happened, you would go with traditions of the early Church
- This highlights the importance of the Pontifical Biblical Commission's report
- This view was held universally among Christians (especially Catholics) and serious scholars until relatively recently
- Fortunately, the most recent serious scholars are returning to this earlier dating

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- **Canonicity:**
- The Greek text of the Gospel of Matthew was also accepted from a very early date as it appears in every early canonical list and its authorship has always been identified with the Apostle Matthew

Introduction to Matthew (Cont)

- **Structure**
- **Prologue:** The Genealogy of Jesus and the Infancy Narrative (1-2)
 - **Book I:** John the Baptist and the Early Ministry (3-7)
 - **Book II:** Miracles and the Commissioning of the Twelve (8-10)
 - **Book III:** Controversy and the Kingdom (11-13)
 - **Book IV:** Instruction of the Disciples (14-18)
 - **Book V:** The Journey to Jerusalem (19-25)
- **Conclusion:** Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus (26-28)

Bible Writing Techniques (Cont)

- **One form of Chiasms include:**
 - A series of repetitions that brings our attention to the center

A
B
C
B'
A'

Structure of Matthew's Gospel

Narrative about Jesus' Baptism, John the Baptist, Jesus being tested –
Mt 3-4

A. Discourse on Sermon on the Mount – Mt 5-7

Seven beatitudes/blessings

Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be known as
the children of God

Narrative on 10 Miracles – Mt 8-9

B. Discourse to the 12 Apostles on Authority - Mt 10

Narrative on the mysteries of the kingdom – Mt 11-12

**C. Discourse on the Seven Parables – Mt 13 most
important – like meat in a sandwich (bread,
mustard, meat, mustard, bread) – the parables begin
here**

Narrative on the Church, First Fruits of the Kingdom of Heaven –
Mt 14- 17

B' Discourse on the Church to the 12 Apostles – Mt 18

Narrative on the Approaching Advent of the Kingdom of Heaven – Mt
19-22

A' Discourse on the Temple Mount – 23-25

Woe to you blind guides

Woe to you brood of vipers, you children of hell

Overview of Matthew 1-12

- The Prologue
 - The Genealogy and Nativity – (Matthew 1-2)
- Book I (Matthew 3-7)
 - Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3)
 - Temptation in the Desert (Matthew 4)
 - Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)
- Book II (Matthew 8-10)
 - Early Teachings and Miracles in Galilee (Matthew 8-9)
 - Calling and Commissioning of the Twelve (10)
- Book III (Matthew 11-13)
 - Controversy and Rejection of the Kingdom (11-13)
 - Seven Parables (Matthew 13)

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- The **Infancy Narrative** of Jesus is presented in
 - **Matthew 1-2**
 - Genealogy
 - Betrothal
 - Birth in Bethlehem
 - Visit of wise men
 - Flight to Egypt
 - Killing of innocents
 - Return to Nazareth

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- **Luke 1-2**

- Zechariah's encounter with Gabriel
- Call and fiat of Mary
- Mary's journey to Elizabeth and birth of John
- Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem
- Birth of Jesus in cave
- Visit of angels and shepherds
- Presentation of Jesus
- Loss of teenage Jesus for three days

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Cont)

- Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist (Matthew 3)
- The testing (temptations) of Jesus (Matthew 4)
- Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)
 - Beatitudes
- Teaching in Galilee (Matthew 8-12)

Review of Matthew 3-12

- Baptism of Jesus -**3**
- Temptation in the desert, call of 1st Disciples **4**
- Sermon on the Mount - **5-7**
 - Beatitudes - 5:3-12
 - Teachings - 5:13-7:28
- Ministry in Capernaum – **8**
 - Centurion
 - Peter's house
 - Calms storm on the Sea of Galilee
 - Healed 2 demoniacs in Gadarenes

Review of Matthew 3-12 (Cont)

- Teachings and Healings -**9**
 - Healed the paralytic
 - Calling of Matthew
 - Teaching on fasting
 - Healed the official's daughter (woman ill for 12 years)
 - Healed 2 blind men and another demoniac
- Commissioned & sent out the 12 Apostles -**10**

Review of Matthew 3-12 (Cont)

- Jesus taught throughout Galilee -**11**
 - Praised John the Baptist
 - Upbraided the cities for rejecting His teaching
- Major teaching section – **12**
 - Grainfield incident on the Sabbath
 - Healed the man with withered hand on the Sabbath
 - Pharisees decided to kill Him
 - Healed a blind and dumb demoniac on the Sabbath
 - Made a final appeal for all to be with Him