LECTURE ONE
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE NT

Lecture Outline
1.1 Introduction.
1.2 Objectives.
1.3 Scope and Limitations.
1.4 Arrangements of the 27 Books/Documents.
   1.4.1 Introduction: Arrangement Not Chronological.
   1.4.2 Narrative Accounts.
   1.4.3 Documents Focusing On Jesus’ Apostles.
   1.4.4 Letters or Epistles.
   1.4.5 Visionary Narrative.
1.5 The Oldest N.T. Document: St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians.
1.6 Double-pronged Authorship.
1.7 Summary
1.8 References

1.1 Introduction
In this lecture, we will examine the 27 Books of the NT each of which is autonomous. You will learn about the 4 canonical Gospels and we shall compare the Synoptics with the Fourth Gospel. We will also identify and briefly elaborate St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians as the oldest written NT Document which was put into writing in the year 50 or 51 AD. The lecture will also explain the peculiarity of NT Books as compared to other books and monographs in the sense that these NT Documents have two authors namely, divine author and human authors.
1.2 Objectives
At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify the 27 written Books/Documents of the NT.
2. Identify the three Synoptic Gospels i.e., Mt, Mk, and Lk and why they are called by that name.
3. Distinguish between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel i.e., John’s Gospel.
4. Discuss the oldest NT written Document i.e., St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians.

1.3 Scope and Limitations
There are 27 distinct written documents of the N.T. These separate compositions are called Books. Obviously, some are like what we today call articles while others are like today’s real books. For instance, St. John’s Third “Book” has 15vv., 1 Chapter and 220 words. Yet it is “equated” with real books e.g., the Gospel According to Evangelist Luke with 24 Chapters, 1149vv and 2670 lines in the Greek text OR with the Gospel according to Evangelist Matthew with 28 Chapters, 1068vv., and 2500 lines in the Greek text.

1.4 Arrangements of the 27 Books/Documents
1.4.1 Introduction: Arrangement Not Chronological
The sequence of the N.T. books as they appear in our Bibles is not chronological. They follow a classical order, an artificial ancient grouping in view of mode and category of writing namely:

1.4.2 Narrative Accounts
Narrative accounts of the works and deeds of the Person of Jesus of Nazareth:

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John
The first three Gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark and Luke) are called Synoptic Gospels. The term Synoptic is derived from the Greek word “synopsis” meaning- “seeing together” or “seeing in the same way”. The last Gospel i.e., John is technically referred to as The Fourth Gospel. The latter is very different from the first three though inter-related. WHY?

**Intext Question**

Why is the Gospel of John different from the Synoptics?

Because when the 4 canonical Gospels are compared to one another it is obvious at once that Mt., Mk and Lk have much in common. They, in general, present the life and teaching of Jesus from the same point of view. These three are, therefore, called the SYNOPTIC GOSPELS because of “seeing together” OR “seeing in the same way” the life and ministry of Jesus. They are thus grouped together. Actually, they differ considerably from John’s Gospel in many particulars. Let us look at a few of the fundamental differences:

1) The Synoptics take for their chief theme Jesus’ ministry in Galilee while John gives prominence to his work in Judea.

2) The Synoptics contain much teaching on the Kingdom of God with many parables; John only refers once to the Kingdom of God (3:5) and has no parables.

3) What John does is to record at length Jesus’ teaching about Himself in the form of extended Discourses, which have little in common with the discourse material of the Synoptics.

4) This 4th Gospel marks a definite stage of theological development over the three Synoptic Gospels. It has preserved the main kerygmatic (proclamation/preaching) message, but shows greater interest in the theological significance of Jesus’ words and deeds (signs), and is more concerned than the Synoptics with worship and sacraments.

5) The only incident all 4 have in common before the Passion is the miraculous story of the feeding of the 5,000.

1.4.3 A Document Focusing On Jesus’ Apostles, The Holy Spirit And First Generation of the FOLLOWERS and DISCIPLES of Jesus called CHRISTIANS:
This is the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

**Intext Question**
What diverse significant titles do scholars use in reference to the Acts of the Apostles and why?

Among the attributes are:

1. Pneumatological Gospel i.e., the Gospel of the Holy Spirit;
2. Book of mission;
3. Book of the birth of the Church;
4. Book of the establishment and growth of the Church;
5. Book of the first history of the Church.

### 1.4.4 Letters or Epistles

The **Letters** or **Epistles** were written to address specific groups of people by specific people of authority. These documents respond to diverse people’s needs, worries, anxieties… and concerns. All with the finality of giving people hope, deepen faith, catechesis… and apologetics. These are the following 21 Letters or Epistles, namely:

**Activity 1.1**
From your Bible, identify the 21 Letters.

1) James, Jude, Peter and John have left us some short Letters according to very early tradition. These were not addressed to specific communities and are, therefore, called universal or “catholic” Letters.

**Take Note**
The main purpose of these Letters is to deepen faith and to encourage as well as comfort Christians in times of trial and to warn against false teachers. That is why they are highly pastoral.

2) James and Jude make use of the Gospels as well as certain apocryphal books of Judaism (Jude 6, 14).

3) 1st and 2nd Peter seem to have been written from Rome to the Gentile Christians of Asia Minor (1Pet 1:1). They made liberal use of specific Pauline themes in
Romans and Ephesians, and even alluded directly to Paul’s writings: 2 Peter 3:15-16).

**Take Note**
All these Letters contain a valuable summary of the Apostolic teachings around 70 AD.

### 1.4.5 Visionary Narrative

A kind of visionary narrative circular message addressed to SEVEN COMMUNITIES technically called “CHURCHES”. This is the 21st Book called:

- The Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse.

**Take Note**
All the 27 N.T. Books were written in KOINE/COMMON Greek not CLASSICAL Greek. They were documented in writing mostly within 100 years after the crucifixion of Jesus (C.30 A.D.).

### 1.5 The Oldest NT Document: St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians

As pointed out earlier, the order of the 27 Books of the N.T. as they appear in our Bibles is rather artificial. It is not chronological but classical. That is why it would be highly misleading to assert that the Gospel According to Matthew is the very first to be written in the N.T. because it appears as Book number one in the framework of our Bibles.

Historical Critical Method of N.T. Study elaborates that the first N.T. Document to be put into writing is the Book titled: **St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians**.

**Intext Question**
What invaluable introductory remarks would you give concerning the oldest written Document in the NT using Biblical commentaries?

These are some of the important introductory remarks about First Thessalonians:

1. It is the oldest N.T. Book and it has FIVE chapters;
2. It was written by St. Paul between 50AD and 51AD;
3. It thus precedes the Gospels by about 20 to 40 years;
4. It enlightens us on what went on in the first century Church;
5. The Letter accentuates Jesus who lived, suffered, died, was raised and returned in glory where He was established as Kyrios (Lord) and Christos (Christ);
6. The document conscientizes us on Jesus’ *parousia* (*second coming*) *as the Judge par excellence*;
7. A critical perusal point to the pastoral worth of the Letter. One is initiated into its pastoral-mindedness: he does a commendable job in handling people’s needs, crisis, worries, anxieties and concerns thereby strengthening their faith and hope;
8. Best of all, this concrete, historical existential Document bring to our awareness that oral traditions preceded the writing of the documents. In other words, the Person came before the written Bible.

**1.6 Double-Pronged Authorship**

Their authorship is double-pronged: human-creative agent of writing; and Divine-the author *par excellence*. This is thanks to Divine inspiration making the resulting product be qualified as Sacred/Holy Scriptures (cf. The New Jerome Biblical Comm. Section 65).

They wrote as inspired by the Holy Spirit as Ecclesial/Church members the Gospel/Good News of Jesus Christ to diverse communities. This is a mission to various people with the finality of their redemption, salvation, *Didache* (catechetical instructions) and *kerygma* (preaching or proclamations).

It should further be noted that the 27 written Books/Documents of the NT are not dichotomized entities. Despite their diverse independent authors and respective specificity, nevertheless, these Books/Documents have a convergence in theme, belief, outlook, vision and mission.
1.7 Summary

In this lecture, we have identified the 27 written Books of the NT and explained that each of them, no matter the size, is autonomous. It has been explained that they do not follow a chronological order but are thematically arranged. The lecture has also discussed and compared the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. It has further explicated St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians written in 50/51 AD as the oldest NT written Document. We have, moreover, shown the specificity of the NT in the sense that these Books have two authors i.e., divine and human.

The lecture, moreover, brought to awareness that, though we have various N.T. Books or Documents owing to diverse authors, nevertheless, these books have a convergence in theme, belief, outlook, vision and mission.

Activity 1.2

Give the 27 Books of the NT indicating the classical grouping in view of mode and category.

1.8 References


LECTURE TWO
NT AND OT NECESSARY INTER-RELATIONSHIP

Lecture Outline
2.1 Introduction
2.2 Objectives
2.3 A Brief Analysis of the NT Use of the OT
   2.3.1 Introduction
   2.3.2 External Data
   2.3.3 Basic Assumptions
   2.3.4 Methods
2.4 Some Insights into How Jesus Used the OT
2.5 Some Ideas on the Church Use of OT
   2.5.1 Focus on Issues of Oral Tradition
   2.5.2 Patristic Interpretation
2.6 Summary
2.7 References

2.1 Introduction
In this lecture, we will explain that the Bible has TWO major sections namely: The OT and the NT. It will be clarified that the OT has 39 books originally written in Hebrew while the NT consists of 27 books written in Koine (common) Greek (not classical Greek). The lecture will elaborate that to understand the NT thoroughly well, a reasonable background knowledge of the OT is indispensable. The justification is that the TWO are very much intertwined. They are necessarily inter-related. Each i.e., the OT and NT necessarily shed light unto the other. Hence the rationale of not ignoring the OT in our NT course for a strong rooting.

2.2 Objectives
At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain how the OT and NT are indispensably mutually related.
2. Give and explain some insights into how Jesus used the OT.
3. Elaborate the Christian Church’s use of the OT for a better understanding and propagation of the Good News.
2.3 A Brief Analyses of the NT Use of the OT

Take Note
There are numerous occasions in which the NT quotes from the OT.

2.3.1 Introduction

Activity 2.1
Give and briefly explain some Biblical texts to justify the interdependence of the NT and OT.

To be more practical, let us critically analyzes the above i.e., NT use of the OT as a vivid rationale behind the inter-dependence of the two Testaments hence the strong stance in basing our course on OT insights. For practical purposes, let us accomplish this task thematically, namely:

- External data;
- Basic assumptions of NT exegesis
- Methods.

2.3.2 External Data

Materially speaking

1) 1600 quotations of OT in NT and many more allusions.
   239 introduced by formulas stating OT authority e.g., “as it has been said by the Bible”.

2) Types of introduction- introduction formula-
   a) Mk 1:2 “it is written in the Book of Isaiah”
   b) Mention of book or author.
   c) Mt 4: 1-11 “As it is written (as we have in Scripture- “Scripture says…Jesus
i. "devil"

ii. "also" Jesus

iii. for Scripture "Devil"

d) Prelude of fulfillment frequent in John and Mt (NB in Jerusalem Bible Version the fulfillment texts are documented in italics making it user friendly) e.g.
   i. Mt 1:22 “…to fulfill the words…” infancy.
   ii. Mt 2:15 “this was to fulfill…”
   iii. Mt 2:17 “…words spoken by Jesus…to fulfill…”

e) Combined quotations: whole range of quotations especially Paul
   i. Rom.15: 9-12- all in italics from Psalms and Isaiah
   ii. Rom.10: 5-13; Rom.9: 25-33.

f) Not only quotations from Scripture, but seen as God speaking-though rather few
   Mt 1: 22
   Acts 4:25

2.3.3 Basic Assumptions and Perspectives of NT Exegesis

1) Basic fundamental presuppositions/assumptions: the OT finds its full meaning in relation with Jesus Christ and His Church.
   a) Christ: opens up OT (and OT explains Christ)-their theology book = OT through Christ experience. Christ is key to understanding Scripture in the light of the OT e.g., Lk 24: 44-47; Jn 5:39-47; and Rom. 15:3-4.
   b) Charismatic: need the spirit of Christ to understand OT.
(i) 2Cor. 3: 14-18 - about Jews
(ii) Mt 22:29 - Christ tells, you do not understand Scripture
(iii) You do not understand me

2) NT reads OT with particular understanding of:

a) History
   i. **history** – Greeks and Gnostics wanted escape from history to eternity
   ii. Jews: creation- OT - Christ, age to come judgment; within history;
   iii. See history as God’s saving act.
   iv. Because of the above conception of history, have **TYPOLOGY** - words telling, words telling about events e.g. EXODUS (death and resurrection of Christ); words as expressing events; looks only at history of Israel not other tribes; identify as: historical correspondence and escalation (fullness of meaning)
   v. Creation typology: Adam- Christ.
   vi. Redemption: Moses- Christ.

b) Man (+ Israel):
   i. Corporate personality- (Adam sinned, therefore, all sinned).
   ii. Man is seen as creature and responsible.
   iii. Man is understandable on/in relationship with God.
   iv. Man is both historical being and redeemed creature.

3) The purpose and aim: what were they looking for in OT (re-interpretation)?
   Affirming; Clarifying; Defending (apologetic because of attack by Jews) the following-
   • Christ.
   • Church
   • Christian life.

a) **Christ**:
   i. **Titles** - mainly in OT- Shepherd, Messiah…Some used in OT for God now applied to Christ.
   ii. **Birth** - mainly from OT- Mt and Lk.
iii. **Public life**-programmatic aspect + ministry (Lk 4:16-21; Mt 12:17-21).

iv. **Passion and death and resurrection** (1Cor.15-one of the oldest creeds).

b) **Church:**

i. Identification of Church as the New Israel, Vine, Children of Israel, Bride.

ii. 1Pt 2:9-10 “You are a chosen people, a royal people, a consecrated…

c) **Christian life:**

i. The basic ethical behavior/conviction is to do God’s will- to obey God submitting totally. Christ: I come to do God’s will (summary of people’s attitude towards God).

ii. Basic moral law- Decalogue summed in two commandments of loving God and neighbor.

iii. But they ignored most of economic, cultic issues. Yet there is a tendency to solve concrete problems of behavior by appeal to the OT.

- Relation (ship) between men and women: marriage and divorce
  Mk 10: 2-12 (Christ cf. Genesis); subordination of women to men 1Cor. 11:3-12 (cf. OT without showing).
- How far the Christians were obliged to obey the Sabbath- Mk 2: 23-27; Acts 1: 15-26 (election of Judas); 1Cor.9:9 (missionaries, apostles’ right to be supported by Christians.

### 2.3.4 Methods

1) **Similar:** prophecy fulfillment-fact, formula, quotation-Rom.9: 7-9; Acts 4:10…

2) **Combined quotations:** Rom. 15: 9-12; John 12:33-40; *Rom.3:10-18- merge quotations of 5 or 6 texts though look like one quotation without a break.

3) **Testimonia:** series of quotations as proof texts of Christ’s messiah-ship. Hb 1:5-14
4) **Typology:** Basic conception of two ages. Now is age of fulfillment but began in the past.

5) **Allegory:** (cf. Philo)- Gal. 4: 21-31.

6) **Midrashic:** -interpretation and actualization of Scripture.

   a) Implicit: interpretative rendering of the text – Mt 2: 23 (Christ be Nazarene-one wonders where this prophesy is from); Rom. 10: 11 (adds-all those who believe for clarity, change of text).

   b) Explicit: give the text and then the midrashic.

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**2.4 Some Insights into How Jesus Used the OT**

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**Take Note**

There are numerous occasions in which Jesus made reference to the OT.

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**2.4.1 What is this question linked in/with?**

1) Quest for the historical Jesus;
2) Quest for the *Ipsisima Verba Christos* (Jesus, very words)
3) Question of messianic awareness of Christ.

**2.4.2 Types of Answers**

1) Conservative: Jesus very carefully thought out in OT- thought of His suffering… as FULLFILMENT of Scripture. He knew He was the Messiah (consciousness
 - especially Isaiah).

2) Radical: OT quotations are the result of the interpretative work of the early Church to prove Jesus’ Messiah-ship (against the Jews).

3) Was Jesus Aware of His Messiah-ship explicitly? Did He foretell it explicitly?

   a) If YES, say He did foretell in reference to the OT and mainly the Suffering Servant of Deutero Isaiah.
b) If NO, say it was added. Among the authentic words of Christ, you hardly have an explicit reference to the Suffering Servant.

Hanson 1983: -To narrow to Suffering Servant is narrow;

i. One should ask whether have reference to RIGHTeous SUFFERING (this comes from Isaiah, plus Psalms...In Qumran, brought Righteousness and Suffering together);

ii. He mentions the text on Jesus referring to Himself to Servant/foretelling. Mk 10: 44-45- I came to serve.


iv. Psalm concerning the just suffering- Zech.9-14.

All These Historical Attempts are Very Minimal

**Intext Question**

What would you say about Jesus use of the OT?

1) Not sure whether others are modified by the Church;
2) Also, the words are not all (in proving);
3) However, those kept as *ipsisima*...are Christ’s otherwise, the Church could not keep these shocking words to embarrass Her;

4) The historical never pretend to give full meaning. That is why it keeps interpreting.

**2.5 Some Ideas On the Church Use of the OT**

**Intext Question**

How did the Church use OT?

**2.5.1 Focus on Oral Tradition**

- Focus on the issue of the Oral Tradition of the Church enlightens us on how the Church used the OT:
1) Between Jesus and OT = ORAL

2) Let it be remembered that the period of 175 BC and 200 AD was the formative period of not only Judaism, but also Christianity. This period saw the rise and extinction of the Sadducees and Essene sects, and the rise of the Pharisees, whose theology and piety were to become normative for latter Judaism—the Pharisees were exemplary in Judaism.

3) Let it also be remembered that Judaism is the Jewish faith and practice of the post-Maccabean times (the intertestamental period), in which the Law and the Synagogue were central, further characterized by various sectarian groups.

**2.5.2 How did the Church use OT...in oral tradition?**

1) *Testimonia*—(intermediary sources)—a series of collection of texts refer mainly to Christ put together maybe in written form and used by itinerate preaching. Remember there was diversity even in *Kerygma*.

2) Harris (book): Protestant Church had one testimony book written and widely used in the Church.

3) Dodd (important exegete-NT):
   a) Harris has good points but cannot say it is ONE book.
   b) There was a kind of stable TRADITION and consensus in the Church about OT.
   c) Texts that were important; texts interpretation.
   d) They were interpreted in relation to *Kerygma*.

4) Linders takes from Dodd.
   a) Dodd forgets that there was the element of development/evolution even in the primitive Church and that they brought other texts.
   b) 1 Cor.15: Jesus has risen from death—deduced from OT.
   c) Apologetic of Passion developed—how say Messiah be raised.
   d) Public ministry—Questions of:
2.5.3 Patristic Interpretation

Crucial issue on- how to cope with question of OT

1) How to cope with question of newness of Christ
2) Book: Cambridge History of the Bible.

2.6 Summary

In this Lecture, we have explained that the Bible has TWO major sections namely: The OT and the NT. The Lecture clarified that the OT has 39 books originally written in Hebrew while the NT consists of 27 books written in Koine Greek (common Greek). The lecture elaborated that, to understand the NT thoroughly well, reasonable background knowledge of the OT is indispensable. The justification the lecture spelled out is that the TWO are very much intertwined. They are necessarily inter-related. Each i.e., the OT and NT shed light unto the other. Hence the rationale of not ignoring the OT in our Introduction to the NT Unit, for a strong rooting.

To impress on you the inevitability of a strong setting on the OT as a necessary condition/requirement for our Unit the Lecture found it of immense importance to create an awareness of the numerous occasions whereby the NT utilizes OT texts or pericopes – and many passages at that-and how Jesus and the Church make use of the OT. A pointer to the Patristic Interpretations was provided too.

Activity 2.2

Discuss how the NT and the OT are intertwined.
2.7 References


LECTURE THREE
NT TRANSLATIONS, INTERPRETATIONS AND EXPLICATION-
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Lecture Outline
3.1 Introduction
3.2 Objectives
3.3 Justification of Ongoing Translations, Interpretations and Explication of NT
  3.3.1 Modern Accurate Translations
  3.3.2 Further Rationale of Translations, Interpretation and Explication Process
3.4 Exegesis and Hermeneutics: NT
  3.4.1 Introduction
  3.4.2 Explanation of Terms
  3.4.3 Crucial Process/Sequence in Exegesis
  3.4.4 Invaluability of Constant Exegesis
  3.4.5 Flavius Josephus
  3.4.6 Philo: Famous For His Allegorical Exegesis with Valuable
        Insights into NT Exegesis
3.5 Summary
3.6 References

3.1 Introduction
This lecture, taking into account what we learned in Lecture One and Two, will explain
that there is a constant NEED to make the 27 Books relevant, useful, readable and
understandable to the readers of multi-faceted races, languages, cultures, philosophies,
changing generations and geographical localities and spread. It will define the terms
“exegesis” and “hermeneutics” thereby explicating the crucial process involved in the
never finished task of exegesis. Flavius Josephus and Philo will be identified and examined for their effort in doing exegesis.

### 3.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Analyze the process and rationale behind the unfinished business in the process of translating, interpreting and commenting on the NT texts.

2. Explain and distinguish the term “exegeses” and “hermeneutics”.

3. Identify and explain the crucial steps involved in exegeses and the ongoing task of the exegetes exemplified by scholars like Flavius Josephus (the Jewish historian) and Philo (popular for his allegorical exegeses).

### 3.3 Justification of Ongoing Translations, Interpretation and Explication of the NT.

#### Intext Question

Why is there a need for a continuous interpretation and translation of the New Testament?

#### 3.3.1 Modern Accurate Translation

As we saw previously, any kind of interpretation, translation and explication has for its finality/goal the making of the Bible more real, more understandable and more relevant. Such an undertaking is critical since the NT, as earlier explained, was written in Koine Greek while the other Bibles we have are translations. There is also an awareness that any translation waters down something. That is why it is prudent to be assiduously picking and choosing more authentic versions.

#### Activity 3.1

Briefly explain the “formal correspondence” and “dynamic equivalence” trends of translating the NT.
1) Those belonging to the category of **formal correspondence**: Here, the translations adhere closely to the original vocabulary and to the original thought-patterns. Though the interpretation here is less yet there is proximity to the essence of the original language, original author etc. As such, there is more harmony to the original text and more accuracy at that. Nevertheless, despite this creditability in concurrence, the shortcoming is that of sacrificing **CLARITY** for the text owing to too much rigidity and literalness. Here we have versions like:

   (a) NRSV (New Revised Standard Version)- an excellent solid literary translation;

   (b) NAB (New American Bible) - very readable and close to the original text.

2) Those in the realm of **dynamic equivalence**: Here, the translations endeavor to transfer and reconstruct and restructure the original message into the vocabularies, idioms…and speech patterns more comprehensive to modern people. Sometimes this is done rather carelessly. In some, it does not quite correspond to the original text where the effort is very free and somehow uncritical. They try to translate the text in such a way that there is equivalence to our modern contemporary language etc. To the credit of this category, there is more clarity but at the expense of the text. Here we have versions like:

   (a) NJB (New Jerusalem Bible)- sound but a little bit free. It has commendable footnotes making it a kind of commentary too and is very reader friendly;

   (b) NGNB (New Good News Bible)- quite clear and understandable as well as reader friendly but sometimes sacrifices the text for clarity.

3) Those grouped as **Biblical paraphrases**: From the scientific and technical sense, these hardly qualify as Bible translations and interpretations. They are extremely free and not quite Biblically intelligible. There is a careless insertion of farfetched ideas and language said to be more intelligible to contemporary people. The catch
point or the common denominator in this classification is that they are in principle PARAPHRASES! Logically, therefore, they should be treated as such.

**Intext Question**

Which Bibles do you know that belong to Biblical paraphrases category?

Here we have works like:

(a) BBE (Bible in Basic English)- as one writer puts it, “these are intelligible but not Biblically intelligent”;

(b) TW (Bible called The Way)- this is said to remove ambiguity and incomprehensible language in the Sacred Book to assist novices appreciate and enjoy the Word of God. But at the cost of adulterating the Bible.

### 3.3.2 Further Rationale of Translation, Interpretation and Explication of the NT

With the above in mind, it must be appreciated that the PROCESS of translating, interpreting and explicating the NT remains an unfinished business. The process is constant and must go on. Below is an analysis equipping us with the rationale or justification of the endeavor being an ongoing task:

1) To cater for the numerous people who are guided, guarded, inspired and illumined by the NT- especially the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ called Christians. To appreciate this, consider the following statistical documentation of the tremendous numerical growth of Christians in Africa as scientifically presented in David B. Barret (ed.) *Word Christian Encyclopedia* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982): “In 1912, in the whole of Africa, there were 1,300,000 Christians; 3,750,000 in 1924; 14,000,000 in 1949; 53,000,000 in 1962; 97,000,000 in 1969 and 203,000,000 in 1980…350,000,000 baptized Christians in 2000.” With this kind of progressive increase and growth, one can imagine the enormous number of Christians –all in need of the NT.

2) To make the NT truly African in our African homes. Do so in our effort to make the Church be self ministering, self propagating and self supporting.
3) To encourage the people to read and source from the NT intelligibly, meaningfully and fruitfully in their diverse situations in life. By so doing help the Good News give them HOPE in their needs, aspirations, worries, concerns, existential problems…and today’s ubiquitous fears.

4) To help the readers appreciate that the NT is the greatest Sacred Book in history. No other book has been distributed so widely, translated into so many languages and taken most seriously even by Devil Satan and by a pluriformity of authors cum writers cum film makers.

5) To have a good setting since the NT is a “foreign product” requiring a constant elaboration of, for instance, the Roman Empire and Palestine, Jewish insurrection against Roman colonizers, Hellenistic civilization in Palestine, the Jewish world, the historical Jesus and the Apostolic Age, the formation of NT Documents/Books…and the impact of the discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls in NT scholarship.

6) To understand better Jesus Christ, the Word of God disclosing and teaching with exousia (authority) the Good News and the Kingdom of God/Heaven in view of the redemption, salvation and Divinization of all through His pedagogy, attitudes, miracles, parables, allegories, words, deeds.. PASSION, resurrection and re-establishment as Kyrios.

7) To dispose us well in our world religious pluralism. An epoch of inter-religious dialogue. A period that constantly demands of us to be well equipped and to have an ecumenical bend to reach out prudently to other religions like African Traditional Religions, Hinduism, Islam… and atheists.

3.4 Exegeses and Hermeneutic

3.4.1 Introduction
Intext Question
Why do we have Exegeses and Hermeneutics?

1) To understand, present, elaborate and concretely interpret the Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms, mentality and milieu of the people in their *Seitz em leben* (situation in life).

2) It is a lifelong project mainly because:
   a) Language grows or dies (Philosopher Wittgenstein).
   b) Life situations are not only diverse and diverging but also do change.
   c) Scholarship improves hence the constant emergence of numerous commentaries now and then.
   d) People too change each generation with own specificity.
   e) Ongoing archeological discoveries e.g. that of Qumran keeps shedding more light and insights with regard to NT study.

3.4.2 Explanation of Terms

1) Hermeneutics
   a) It comes from the Greek term *hermeneuein* literally meaning “to express, to interpret, to translate”.
   b) Etymologically, it is more or less the same as Exegeses meaning- to scientifically and systematically interpret and explain the Biblical texts.
   c) It is theoretical knowledge and the rules or science or THEORY of the rules of interpretation of the Bible.
   d) It is also the SCIENCE and ART of transmitting the meaning into modern language(s). Hence RULES of interpreting the text in original meaning, SCIENCE of discerning how a thought or event in one cultural context may be understood in a different cultural context, ART of making the transfer.

2) Exegeses
a) It comes from the Greek term *exegeomai* meaning “to expose in, to explain, to interpret, to elaborate”.

b) Etymologically, it is “making come out of the text, to bring out of the text”.

c) It means: ACTUAL interpretation, explanation, elaboration, commentally on….in a systematic and scientific manner-REAL interpretation and explication of Biblical texts.

3) The distinction between exegeses and hermeneutics: While hermeneutics is THEORETICAL knowledge and the RULES/SCIENCE/THEORY of interpretation…, Exegeses is the PRACTICAL application of these rules, the ACTUALISATION or APPLICATION of Hermeneutics.

**Activity 3.2**

Read: *The New Jerome Biblical Comm. Section 71* to explain the process involved in exegesis

### 3.4.3 Crucial Sequence/Process in Exegeses

1) Understanding the text: This involves:

   Reading the text **OBJECTIVELY**. Reading AS IT IS (not a commentary of it). Do so using at least three good Bible Versions.

   **WORDS** e.g. centurion, Samaritan; **LANGUAGE** e.g. hyperbolical-Nicodemus and being born again Jn 3, Jesus giving his fresh to eat Jn, cutting off organs if cause to sin…, commanding the Mountain to move if have even minute faith.

   **CONTEXT** e.g. if pronouncement stories (narratives leading up to significant pronouncements) treat them as such, if miracle stories treat them as miracle stories, so with parables, allegories, stories about Jesus, I-sayings/logia, legends, prophetic proof texts, early missionary preaching (especially in the Book of Acts), sermons (esp. Peter’s, Paul’s, Stephen’s), liturgy, catechetical instructions, controversy, apologetical sermons and disciplinary measures.
2) Understanding the author: his life, culture, difficulties, his audience, how he selected and redacted his material, goal and finality - who he wrote for and to what end…world view..e.g.

   a) Matthew- a tax collector wrote to convince the Jewish readers that Jesus is the Messiah they have been awaiting hence many Jewish features and elements …

   b) Mark- a reporter hence art of telling even whole story in one verse, for Gentile readers especially Romans therefore translated Aramaic and Hebrew terms, stress on Jesus, Divinity not make his polytheistic readers include Him as one other god…

   c) Luke- a physician therefore a lot of medical issues, to Greek cultured readers, universality highlighted, Pneumatological ( Spirit blowing all over) like Acts, social Gospel…

3) Judging the correctness of one’s interpretation: Do I have enough data to interpret? Use biblical tools effectively. Like process of intuition, hypothesis, test/check hypothesis, theories…test by self correction (what must I do about it?). Remaining, also, open to verification and falsification.

4) Stating the meaning of the text: major task/role of the exegete-you exegete.

3.4.4 Invaluability of Constant Exegesis

1) A painstaking worthy effort in making the NT more real, relevant, understandable and more fruitful.

2) Exegesis is indispensable since, among other reasons, the Bible emanates from different Cultures, ethnic group, world view, historicity and historiography.

3) Growth (and death of elements) of language(s) hence the need to dispel ambiguity and enhance comprehensibility.

4) The very exercise of doing exegeses is the best way of getting insights, illuminations and inspiration from NT. It perpetuates enrichment from the Good News and the fruitfulness thereby.
3.4.5 Flavius Josephus: Jewish Historian Gives Jewish World Setting Crucial in NT Exegeses

1) His Brief Biography:

(a) A Jewish historian. Born c.37/38 A.D; Lived up to 100 A. D. He is, therefore, a real contemporary as regards writing NT. He was Aristocrat (Royal family). A very intelligent man. Very precocious- at 16yrs old, he started seeking the truth- three different philosophical schools i.e. Pharisaic, Sadducee, Essence. He appreciated them.

(b) Taken captive at Jewish/Roman war c.60 A.D. This war July 26, 67 A. D., Jews surrendered for 47 days. When they wanted to eliminate him, he presented himself as a Joseph (dream-wise interpreter).

(c) He went into the desert for 3years with hermit Bannus. His discipline was influenced by Pharisees. He became one of them.

(d) He was sent to Rome in 64 (he was 27yrs) to plead for liberation of Jewish Priests imprisoned by the Roman Procurator. In Rome he made friends with V,I,Ps. He befriended the wife of Papyrus. The Roman power impressed him. This convinced him that it was useless to pick a fight with the Romans.

(e) Year 66A.D marked the beginning of the Jewish rebellion. Josephus was against it. Yet he became commander of Galilean forces. They surrendered diplomatically after the siege.

(f) He was freed in yr 69 because of interpreting. He became Emperor Flavian client, hence his name. He was given royal favors.

2) His writings:

(a) The Jewish War: Written in late 70s (75-79) in Greek (writing in Aramaic but was interrupted, therefore, wrote in Greek). The purpose was to avoid uprising.

(b) Jewish Antiquity: Broad view of Jewish history from creation to Nero.
Book 1-10: Up to exile (re-writing the Septuagint- was later rejected by Jews- was accepted by Christians).

Book 11-20: Information in Greek and Roman history 64A.D.

(c) Autobiography: His life. A kind of self justification.

(d) Against Apion: Two volume book. Apion was the symbol of enemies of the Jews- the prototype of his enemies.

3) His importance in NT exegeses:

(a) Except for Acts and Gospels, he is the only one dealing with EVENTS. He provides also material about after exile. N.B. one should not interpret him as would a contemporary historian.

(b) Historical geme- views outside Bible (history confirmers).

(c) Jerusalem- historical justification of the Jews not just as a nation but also as a people of God. Jesus’ death, resurrection- parallel with Gospels and Acts.

(d) Testimonium Flavianus: about the man called Jesus. Quoted by Jerome…”In that time appeared a wise man…if he can be called man…”- external witness about Christ…May be He was the Messiah…N.B. But what he exactly wrote is difficult to know- Year 90- Jews meeting at Jamir- They took a strong stand against the Septuagint. J. Flavius was ignored by them.

3.4.6 Philo: Famous For His Allegorical Exegesis with Valuable Insights into NT Exegesis

1) Brief biography:

(a) We know more about his writings than his life- c.25BC.- 13BC (after 4AD?)- Spiritually and intellectually, he was rather contemporary.
(b) Wrote treaties praising two kinds of people: Therapeuter (cenobites-common life) and Essence. He was attracted to their contemporary life. He was a totally Hellenised Jew. He knew Stoics, Plato…and they influenced his exegesis. He was a real believer. He made an effort in inculturating the message to the Jews. A great theologian cum philosopher but Jewish in faith.

**Intext Question**

How is Philo famous for ALLEGORICAL EXEGESIS.? Beyond the text, Philo went for the hidden meaning.

2) His main writings:

   (a) Historical Writings: They deal contemporary events-e.g.

   i. *Ad Flavium* (Roman governor, persecutor of the Jews).

   ii. *Legatio ad Gaium* (Gaius / Caligula).

   (b) Philosophical: Different themes-

   i. Eternity of the World.

   ii. Providence.

   iii. *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* (to be an honest man to be free).

   iv. Soul of animals.

   (c) Exegetical Works:

**Take Note**

Beyond the text, Philo went for the hidden meaning. For exegesis, Philo’s influence on the Church fathers especially those of Alexandria is great.

i. Questions and Answers on Genesis (4 books) and Exodus (2 books).

ii. Exposition on the Law: developed according to themes from the text.

iii. Allegory on Jewish Law- follows the 40 Chapters of Genesis (21 books?). Remember Philo is the father of ALLEGORY. He is famous for Allegorical Exegeses.
3) Philo’s Exegesis:

(a) His worldview:
   i. Influenced mainly by his Jewish Biblical faith.
   ii. Different Greek philosophy- eclectic philosophy- more of a philosopher-
        mainly Plato and Stoics (virtues and laws).
   iii. His monotheism cum his thoughts: Influenced by the Bible but mainly by Plato (God needs intermediaries because God is too high for the Universe). Intermediaries are kinds of logos. Among logos is THE LOGOS. Image/shadow of God- close but distinct to God- is transcendent in the side of God and is immanent in creation. NB. Though has similarities with St. John, one should not conclude that John copied. Remember Philo was Jesus’ contemporary.
   iv. As a Jew, and like Stoics, he dealt also with virtue and law.

(b) Basis of his exegesis:
   i. Faith in Scripture was main source of his authority (not philosophy).
   ii. Plato exemplarism - this world is a shadow of reality- gave philosophy thematical basis. Allegories- the real is not the words, facts..The words we hear are stepping stones to the real. For exegesis, Philo is important for Allegories.
   iii. Allegorism- was before him (Greeks , especially Stoics, had it). Allegorising was a way out.

(c) His (background for) interpretation:
   i. Moses was a wise man par excellence. Moses, author of the Pentateuch/Torah was his model.
   ii. His reverence for Scriptures was remarkable. He saw the Bible as the finest human possession.
   iii. He insisted on observing the laws (no interpreting away the law) in their literal sense.

(d) His allegorical exegesis:
i. His aim when writing to: GENERAL PUBLIC- reflections on men, world and morality (anthropology, cosmology…and ethics); INITIATED PEOPLE- mystical realities, soul towards God, soul deeper relationship to God.

ii. Gen 12:1, e.g.- leave your country, family, father= (for Philo) earth (symbol of body), family (sensation), father’s (world).

iii. Gen.7: 17 e.g.- closing the ark= (for Philo) everything in the ark represents human body.

iv. Ex.12: 9 e.g.- don’t eat it raw= (for Philo) when you convert be hot.

(e) Distinguish between Allegory and Allegorical exegesis:

i. Allegory- Is already in the text e.g. “this is the lamb of God”; Is an extended metaphor e.g. “I am the good Shepherd. I care for sheep…”.

ii. Allegorical Exegesis- No basis in the text; e.g. three sons of Noah- the good, the bad, the indifferent…you won’t find this in the text.

3.5 Summary

This lecture has explained that there is a constant NEED to make the 27 NT Books relevant, useful, readable and understandable to the readers of multi-faceted races, languages, cultures, philosophies, changing generations and geographical localities and spread. It has defined the terms “exegesis” and “hermeneutics” thereby explicating the crucial process involved in the never finished task of exegesis. Flavius Josephus and Philo were identified and examined for their effort in doing exegesis. Thanks to the insights triggered by the lecture one has to always bear in mind that:

1) All methods of exegesis are RELATIVE. They are time conditioned and rather SUBJECTIVE.

2) As Philosopher cum theologian Bernard Lonergan explains: “Method is normative pattern of recurrent and related operation yielding cumulative (synthetic/put together) progressive results.”
Method then is not a rule to be followed blindly. It is a framework for creativity (and objectivity).

3) Social settings, epochs, paradigms etc. are diverse and diverging. These necessitate taking exegesis with the seriousness it deserves to cater for such necessities. WHY?

i. Since Scripture is God’s Word to human beings, there is always something NEW and GOOD to discover. As documented in Matthean Gospel, there is the obligation to blend New and Old (Mt.13:52).

ii. It, therefore, has to be read and re-read interpreting and re-interpreting…actualizing the Good News among the people. Do that to give them HOPE, relevant homilies/sermons and preaching. Do that also to help the People of God to be transformed by the Word of God to live authentically and persevere in the realm of SALVATION.

4) The OT and NT shed light unto each other. It is indispensable, therefore, to have some background knowledge of the OT to understand the NT- as we saw in Lecture Two.

5) Although there are varieties, a pluriformity of exegesis’ methods and prominent desire to understand and use the NT to answer people’s needs, the Bible still remains the Word of God – ever NEW, always CHALLENGING and GOOD.

6) The NT must be explained in such a way that it remains at home in respective people’ homes and with the finality of enhancing FAMILY SOLIDARITY.
Activity 3.3
Explain the process involved in exegesis. Using the above, do an exegesis of the Emmaus episode (Lk 24:13-35).

3.6 References


LECTURE FOUR
CRUCIAL TOOLS/AIDS FOR NT SERIOUS STUDY

Lecture Outline

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Objectives
4.3 NT Texts
4.4 Lexicons (Dictionaries)
4.5 Encyclopedia’s and Dictionaries
4.6 Concordance
4.7 Synopsis (Gospels)/Gospel Parallels
4.8 Biblical Commentaries
4.9 NT Geography cum Atlases and Archeology
4.10 Summary
4.11 References

4.1 Introduction
Just like any other academic discipline, a scientific study of the NT has its own tools of study. Reference books and works that one must not only be aware of but must also be able to use effectively. Among the most crucial ones which you will learn in this Lecture are: NT Texts; Lexicons (Dictionaries); Encyclopedic Dictionaries; Concordance; Synopsis (Gospels)/Gospel Parallels; Biblical Commentaries; and NT Geography cum Atlases and Archeology. The lecture additionally discusses the diverse NT Bible Versions through the lenses of “formal correspondence” and “dynamic equivalence” (and “Biblical paraphrases”).
4.2 Objectives
At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the invaluable tools for NT study.

2. Give and evaluate the diverse NT Bible Versions through the lenses of “formal correspondence” and “dynamic equivalence” (and “Biblical paraphrases”).

4.3 NT Text
Here we are talking and speaking of the Bible Text itself- not a commentary or commentaries:

4.3.1 Greek:
(a) Nestle, *E Novum Testamentum et Latine*.
(b) Alland, Black, Metzger, the Greek N.T. (Bible Society)

4.3.2 Translations:
Here one has to be aware of translations belonging to formal correspondence category and those of dynamic equivalence group (AND NEVER biblical paraphrases).

1. Formal correspondence ones are very close to the original text, vocabularies. They have strict concurrence with the original thought patterns. Nevertheless, owing to the rigidity involved, clarity is somehow minimized. Examples of these are:

   NRSV, REB and NAB.

2. Dynamic equivalence ones have an inclination of somehow sacrificing the TEXT for CLARITY. They are reader friendly and modern. Examples of these are:

   NJB and NGNB.

friendly serious Bible version puts side by side FOUR versions namely, NRSV, REB, NAB and NJB such that one is able to read them together.


5. *The Holy Bible: With Illustrations from The Vatican Library* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996). This colorful masterpiece huge Bible is based on the NRSV and has 700 full color illustrations. It also has a well set family records cum paternal/maternal ancestral genealogical tree. “The overall design of this Bible is based on one of the supreme masterpiece of fifteenth century Italian bookmaking..makes use of all the major illustrations in the Urbino Bible.”

### 4.4 Lexicons (Dictionaries)

These are consulted as one consults any other dictionary – only that these are Biblical dictionaries.


4) P.J. Achtemeir et al. (eds.), *Herpers Bible Dictionary*, 1996.


### 4.5 Encyclopedia’s and Dictionaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intext Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do we need encyclopedias and what are the names of the Biblical Encyclopedia that you know of?</td>
</tr>
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35
Like any other encyclopedia, Biblical Encyclopedias provide real facts, dates, history, explanations and related scholarly essays. The following are some of the famous ones:


4.6 Concordance

It is like a dictionary only that a concordance gives biblical references after each word:

4.6.1 Greek:


4.6.2 English:

1) Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Douay/ not up to date), 1945.

2) Cruden, *Cruden’s Concordance to the Bible*.

3) Cruden’s *Handy Concordance*, 1963 (paperback).

4.7 Synopsis (Gospels)/ Gospel Parallels

Here, the Synoptic Gospels are arranged side by side in three parallel columns. At a glance, one is able to compare and contrast the three. With this aid, it becomes very easy to find out – the **material peculiar** to each Gospel, the material belonging to **double tradition** and that under the category of **triple tradition**:  


4.8 Biblical Commentaries
Take Note
Biblical Commentaries give important Biblical interpretations, explications …and elaborations BUT they are not the Bible as such. They do this book by book, page by page, chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph and verse by verse. They also provide highly scholarly essays in relation to the Bible. Their list and depth keeps on growing as scholarship evolves with its erudition complexity.

Activity 4.2
Mention the Biblical Commentaries you are able to find in your College/University Libraries.

The following are some of the monumental Biblical Commentaries:


4.9 N.T. Geography and Archeology
We have aids like maps e.g., that of HOLY land to help us locate and grasp the world of the Bible. For this we have tools like:

### 4.10 Summary

In this Lecture you have learned that, just like any other discipline, a scientific and systematic study of the New Testament has its own crucial study tools. The lecture has identified and analyzed these tools namely: NT Texts; Lexicons (Dictionaries); Encyclopedic Dictionaries; Concordance; Synopsis (Gospels)/Gospel Parallels; Biblical Commentaries; and NT Geography cum Atlases and Archeology. The lecture additionally discussed the diverse NT Bible Versions through the lenses of “formal correspondence” and “dynamic equivalence” (and “Biblical paraphrases”). Awareness was created that one must not just know that these tools exist. It is a necessary condition that one must know how to consult them. By so doing, you will be a teacher to yourself too.

### Activity 4.2

1. Explain: Triple Tradition; Double Tradition; and Material Peculiar to a respective Gospel.

### 4.11 References


LECTURE FIVE
GEOGRAPHICAL ROOTING

Lecture Outline

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Objectives
5.3 Theology of Geography
5.4 Canaan.
5.5 Trans-Jordan
5.6 Jordan Valley
5.7 The Dead Sea
5.8 Cris-Jordan Palestine
5.9 Mount Carmel
5.10 The Coastal Plain
5.11 Summary
5.12 References

5.1 Introduction

In this lecture, we are going to explain that Geographical localities, physical features, vegetations and other related geographical issues are of great interest in the study of the NT. While outlining the main Geographical/physical features that are of interest for a
deeper understanding of the NT, the lecture discusses how NT writers use Geography to tell and elaborate their theology. To take but two examples: knowing the geographical location and harsh climatic conditions around the Dead Sea helps us realize the high degree of the Essenes’ mortification and segregation; also, geography helps us understand St. Paul’s missionary journeys in the cause of propagating the Good News better. The same can also be said of the itinerant Jesus Christ e.g. Galilee as the centre of His ministry in the Synoptic Gospels and Judea as the focal one in the Fourth Gospel. The lecture will thus outline the main Geographical/physical features that are of interest for a deeper understanding of the NT.

5.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Discuss how NT writers use Geography to tell and elaborate their theology.

2. Give and explain the spiritual cum historical reasons that compelled the Essenes to settle on the Western shore of the Dead Sea/Sea of the Arabah.

3. Outline the main Geographical/physical features that are of interest for a deeper understanding of the NT.

5.3 “Theology of Geography”

Take note

NT writers use geography also to tell their theology. You find them for instance, documenting Jesus journeying through the Samaritan territory, going to the desert to be tempted by Satan, crossing the River Jordan and agonizing on Mount Calvary.

Intext Question

What Geographical feature can you find in the Bible that assist you to understand the Bible?
5.3.1  Mk 4-8: Jesus makes 6 boat trips; He does this to link the Jews and the Gentiles- Jesus does something to the Jews, He then crosses to do something to the Gentiles; Here we have a geographical symbol of unity between the Jews and the Gentiles.

5.3.2  Acts 1-8: Geographic table of content of which the whole Book is going to be about, namely, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth/world i.e., witness in Jerusalem (1-8); throughout Judea and Samaria (9-12) ; ends of the world -as far as civilized world was concerned- (13-28).

5.3.3  Mt15:21ff- “Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sodom. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out …(15: 21-22)…”After Jesus had left that place, He passed along the SEA OF Galilee, and He went up the mountain, where He sat down.” (15: 29). All these and some others, show the value of geography for NT study. Remember also, in His preaching, Jesus used a lot of geographical illustrations and examples.

5.4 Canaan

Intext Question
What do you know about Canaan?

This is the famous land where the Israelites settled. This is a land lying behind Syria and Egypt.

The coastal strip of the Fertile Crescent was comparatively fertile owing to an abundant winter rainfall and thus it was an attraction to the desert nomads (Amurru). Moreover, it formed a line of communication between Mesopotamia and Egypt, and it was also in touch with the world round the Aegean Sea through numerous ports strung along the coast to the North of Carmel. Archeological discoveries show that the Canaanite culture was a mixture of Babylonian, Hurrian, Hittite, Aegean and Egyptian elements.
This elongated area, with Palestine forming its Southernmost end, is really a mountainous belt, made up of 2 ridges with a deep channel running between them. This geographical structure shows up very clearly in the central sector, dominated by the Lebanon, the “white mountain”. In ancient times, the Lebanon was entirely covered with mighty cedars and was one of the greatest attractions of Canaan and Phoenicia for the Kings of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Lebanon is separated from the other ridge, the Anti-Lebanon, by the majestic valley of the Beqa, famous today for the ruins of Baalbek. The Southern part of the Anti-Lebanon is formed by the imposing snowcapped mass of Mount Hermon, 9232 feet high. The Jordan rises at the foot of Hermon and flows down towards the South with capricious detours, following the continuation of the Beqa, into which it plunges ever more deeply till it reaches the Dead Sea.

5.5 Trans-Jordan

This is an extension of the Rift Valley that cuts across Kenya.

The mountainous region to the East of the Jordan is intersected by 3 deep clefts namely:

The most Northerly is called the YARMUK; the plateau North of the Yarmuk is the fertile high plain of Bashan, which falls away in a steep slope toward the Sea of Galilee.

The 2nd cleft is formed by the river JABBOK. The mountainous area between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok is heavily wooded to this day. This area lies at 2,000 ft with peaks reaching the 3,000 ft, while the Jordan Valley there reaches 800 to 900 ft below the sea level. This is the land later of Manasseh and of the Gileadites.

The 3rd cleft is formed by the canyon of the river ARNON. This cleft forms the natural boundary between Ammon North of the river and Moab South of the Arnon.

5.6 Jordan Valley
It is a phenomenon unique in the geography of our planet! For it is farther below sea-level than any other valley in the world. It must in prehistoric times have been the bed of a very extensive lake, which has disappeared through evaporation, leaving only 3 stretches of water at its deepest points:

1) Lake Huleh: 6ft above sea level.
2) Lake Gennesaret= Sea of Galilee: 700ft.
3) Dead Sea: 1300ft below sea level.

The Northern part of the Valley is luxuriant. In spring time, the well watered plain around little lake Hulch, and above all, the Western shores of the magnificent Sea of Galilee are a veritable garden with flowers as far as the eye can see and the white splendor of Hermon on the horizon. These two lakes abound in fish, and one may drink freely of their crystal-clear water without fear of infection.

Towards the North, the Valley, which widens up to 12 miles near the Dead Sea, grows less and less fertile. Below the confluence with the Jabbok, it may be described as a desert; vegetation is restricted to the vicinity of the springs.

5.7 The Dead Sea

What do you know about the Dead Sea and which other names is this Sea known?

Other names for it are: Salt Sea; Sea of the Arabah (Deut. 3:17); and Asphalt Lake (Flavius Josephus).

It fully justifies its name of Dead Sea, for owing to the very high mineral content of its water (6 times the ordinary salt content of the ocean-cf. Indian Ocean), all the fish brought down by the Jordan die within a few moments.
It has no outlet, and the enormous quantity of water carried in by the swiftly flowing Jordan and other rivers (6 million tons of water) evaporate under the fierce heat of the sun, concentrated between the precipitous sides of the great lake.

**Activity**
Find out who the Essenes of Qumran were and why they chose to settle at the shores of the Dead Sea?

One can understand why the Qumran sect of the Essenes, living in the times of Christ, chose to withdraw to the shores of this sea for a life of penance, purification and meditation. Qumran is situated on the North-West cliff of the Dead Sea and there the famous “Dead Sea Scrolls” were discovered in 1947, containing extensive fragments of the OT (1complete Isaiah scroll), as well as the prayer and rule-books of the Qumran Essenes. As these scrolls are dated as belonging to the first century BC they offer us an existing Manuscript 1000 years older than the oldest text we possessed before 1947.

5.8 Cris-Jordan = Palestine

The mountainous ridge west of the Jordan, running from North to South, is perhaps geographically speaking the continuation of the Lebanon.

To the North-West of the Sea of Galilee, the peaks rise to more than 3,500 ft in Upper Galilee. Then the ridge falls away in the direction of Nazareth, where it finally descends to the fertile plain of Jezreel, also called sometimes the Plain of Esdraelon. It forms an irregular triangle between the Carmel, the Tabor and Mount Gilboa.

The most striking sight in this region is Mount Tabor, which, though not very high, dominates the surrounding country.

From very ancient times, important cities were built in this valley; of these Megiddo was of particular significance, because it guarded and controlled the pass which permitted the easiest movement of caravans and troops from the Plain of Sharon to the Plain of Jezreel.

5.9 Mount Carmel
It pushed its foot within 200 yards of the shore of the sea, and if its slopes were manned by a hostile army, the use of the shore road around the point was impossible. To save time and distance and to secure safety of passage, it proved necessary to keep control of the pass which led directly into the Valley of Jezreel. Megiddo was thus a location of strategic military importance (2 Kings 23: 29); it became a decisive battleground.

After the Plain of Jezreel, the ridge reappears, rising progressively on its way South through Samaria, with the two most conspicuous peaks: Mount Hebal and Mount Gerizim (rem. Samaritan woman) which stand in heart of the district of Samaria. These two mountains were always heights of great military importance, because the mouth of this pass on the North and South run between them, and at the Eastern mouth of this pass was a crossroad from which highways run in all directions. Religious significance was soon attached to these twin peaks, and in later days the Samaritan religious group had its center on Mount Gerizim (John 4: 20).

The ridge continues into Judah, where the hills are not quite so lofty as in Samaria. Approaching Jerusalem, the hills descend to 2,500-2,600 ft above sea level, and then rise as they go South until the highest point (3,370 ft) is reached just North of Hebron. On the Western, more gentle slope considerable rainfall comes from the clouds brought in from the Mediterranean and thus has plant life on a reasonably adequate level. To the East of the watershed, however, is found the bleak “Wilderness of Judah” or wasteland, deprived of adequate moisture, deeply cut by the valleys leading to the Dead Sea, and dropping down so sharply as to offer little opportunity for agricultural development.

The natural result of this contrast was that population and history centered much more upon the fertile Western slope of the Judean Hill Country, called the Shephelah or Lowlands. The Shephelah was important to Judah, not only because of the grain of its valleys and the vineyards and olive groves of its hills, but even more for defensive reasons. In Israeliite times such strongly fortified towns as Lachish, Debir, Libnah, Azekah and Beth-shemesh were situated in it.

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1 Condensed from The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible, p. 17.
To the South, the hills gradually descend to the Negeb or Southland, which centers in the area between Beersheba and Kadesh-barnea. In this broken, semi-arid country people can exist only with the most careful conservation of the water supply.

5.10 The Coastal Plain
The almost unbroken coast line of Palestine distinctly discourages commerce on the Mediterranean Sea. In this respect, Palestine was in a quite different position from her Northern neighbor Phoenicia with its harbor facilities at Tyre and Sydon. Inevitably, therefore, the Phoenicians became a sea fearing people. The coastal plain can be divided in 3 parts:

To the North of Mount Carmel was the plain of Accho (Acre), a small but fertile area.

Between Mount Carmel and Joppa lay the Plain of Sharon, a well watered region, with marshes and thick woods in ancient times, which kept it from being thickly settled. Its maximum width was a little over 12 miles.

By far the most important section/part was the Philistine Plain or Philistia, the land of those ancient enemies of Israel, who gave their name to the whole land! In this well-watered and generally level plain there were few trees, almost everywhere the rich brown soil invited for agriculture. The coastal Plain was never a center of Israel strength: that was in the Hill Country! Distances:

1) From Dan to Beersheba is about 150 miles as the crow flies.
2) From Accho to the Sea of Galilee: 28 miles.
3) From Gaza to the Dead Sea: about 54 mile

5.11 Summary
This lecture has explained that Geographical localities, physical features, vegetations and other related geographical issues are of great interest in the study of the NT. It has outlined and elaborated the main Geographical/physical features that are of interest for a deeper understanding of the NT. The lecture further discussed how NT writers use
Geography to tell and elaborate their theology. To help clarify the above, two examples were given as follows: knowing the geographical location and harsh climatic conditions around the Dead Sea helps us realize the high degree of the Essenes’ mortification and segregation; also, geography helps us understand St. Paul’s missionary journeys in the cause of propagating the Good News better. The same can also be said of the itinerant Jesus Christ e.g. Galilee as the centre of His ministry in the Synoptic Gospels and Judea as the focal one in the Fourth Gospel. The lecture thus outlined the main Geographical/physical features that are of interest for a deeper understanding of the NT.

Activity 5.2
Discuss the importance of the discoveries of the “Dead Sea Scrolls” in 1947 for today’s NT studies.

5.12 References


LECTURE SIX
THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND PALESTINE:
HELENISTIC CIVILIZATION IN PALESTINE

Lecture Outline
6.1 Introduction
6.2 Objectives
6.3 Short Survey
   6.3.1 Historical Setting
   6.3.2 Further Historical Setting
   6.3.3 The 1st Roman Emperor
6.4 The Roman Emperors of the NT Times
   6.4.1 27 BC – 14 BC Caesar Augustus
   6.4.2 14 – 37 Tiberius Caesar
   6.4.3 37-41 Caius
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6.5 Political History of Palestine: The Herodians; the Roman Procurators
   6.5.1 Introduction
   6.5.2 37 – 4 BC Herod The Great
6.5.3 Herod’s Successors

6.5.4 The Roman Procurators

6.6 Insurrection Against ROME: Downfall of Judea 66-70

6.7 The Final War of 132 Under Simon Bar Cochba

6.8 Hellenistic Civilization in Palestine

6.9 Summary

6.10 References

6.1 Introduction

The political background of the NT is that of the Roman Empire. Rome had in successive stages made herself the mistress of the Italian peninsula, of both shores of the Western Mediterranean, of Greece and Egypt, and finally of the coastlands in Asia Minor. The Mediterranean had become a Roman Sea! From its foundation in 753 BC till its fall in 476 AD it shaped the destiny of many peoples and its influence was tremendous. The period that concerns the NT is that of the first 5 Emperors: the golden times of imperial Rome.

With the above setting, this lecture explains how Palestine came under the influential control of the Roman Empire. It identifies the five famous NT Roman Emperors and explain their importance in the historical setting of the NT. The lecture will also discuss the political cum religious history of Palestine from the point of view of the Romans, the Herodians and the Roman Procurators and explain who the Roman Procurators were and their administrative roles in Palestine.

The lecture will furthermore discuss why the arrested Jesus had to be tried in the Sanhedrin and then taken to the Roman Procurator’s Pretorium for another trial in view of capital sentence. It will analyze and assess the importance of the 66-70 AD Jewish insurrection against Rome and the final revolt of 132AD under Simon Bar Cochba and the consequences e.g. emergence of Diaspora Jews and yearning for a Messiah. Additionally, the lecture will evaluate the reality and impact of Hellenistic Civilization in Palestine and how the NT came to be written in Koine Greek.
6.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain how Palestine came under the influential control of the Roman Empire.

2. Identify the five famous NT Roman Emperors and explain their importance in the historical setting of the NT.

3. Discuss the political cum religious history of Palestine from the point of view of the Romans, the Herodians and the Roman Procurators.

4. Explain who the Roman Procurators were and their administrative roles in Palestine.

5. Discuss why the arrested Jesus had to be tried in the Sanhedrin and then taken to the Roman Procurator’s Pretorium for another trial in view of capital sentence.

6. Analyze the 66-70 AD Jewish insurrection against Rome and the final revolt of 132AD under Simon Bar Cochba and the consequences.

7. Evaluate the reality and impact of Hellenistic Civilization in Palestine and how the NT came to be written in Koine Greek.

6.3 Short Survey

755 BC: Foundation of Rome. Legendary tradition holds that Rome was founded by Romulus, its first king. Slowly it absorbed the neighboring tribes of the peninsula. First the patrician families ruled the country, but slowly the plebeians acquired more and more rights in the republic. From the third century the Roman conquest extended all around the Mediterranean Sea and finally succeeded Alexander’s world empire.

6.3.1 Historical Setting

1) 263-146: The Punic Wars
2) In 241: Sicilia fell to Rome and became the 1st Roman Province.
3) 231: Corsica and Sardinia were captured from Carthage.
4) 197: Hispania was captured.
5) 190: The Battle of Magnesia, where Antiochus 111, the Great, king of Syria was defeated. Rome assumed protectorate over certain important cities in Asia Minor (1 Mac. 1:10).
6) 146: Destruction of Carthage- “Carthage must be destroyed”.
7) 133: Asia was bequeathed to Rome by Attalus of Pergamon.
8) 121: Southern Gaul (France) was captured.
9) 96: Cyrene (Libya) surrendered to Rome.
10) 64: Pompey’s victorious march through Asia Minor and conquered the rest of the Seleucid kingdom.
11) 63: The capture of Jerusalem by Pompey and the of the Maccabean rule.
12) 58-51: Caesar (Julius) marches victorious to the Rhine (from Israel through German to Holland) and invades Britain. Is conquered by Claudius in 43.
13) 47: Julius Caesar invades Egypt, which became a Roman Provence in 30.

6.3.2 Further Historical Setting
1) 1st Triumvirate (Three): Caesar, Pompey, Cassus (48-44).
2) 48: Cassus died. Pompey was defeated at Pharsalia by Julius Caesar, and died.
3) 44: Caesar was assassinated.
4) 2nd Triumvirate: Antony, Octavianus, Lepidus (44-27).
5) 31: Octavian defeats Antony at the battle of Actium. Antony and Cleopatra commit suicide in Egypt (30).
6) 27: Octavian proclaims himself EMPEROR with the title of Augustus. End of the republic and the beginning of the Empire (end of the democracy- now one man dominating).

6.3.3 The First Roman Emperors
1) 27 BC -14 AD: Caesar (Emperor/ the name of function) Augustus (honorally title by the state) also called Octavianus.
2) 14-37: Tiberius.
3) 37-41: Gaius (“Caligula”).
4) 41-54: Claudius.
5) 54-68: Nero.
6) 69: Year of the 4 Emperors namely-Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian.
7) 69-79 Vespasian.

6.4 The Roman Emperors of the NT

InText Question

Who are the five most famous Roman Emperors of the NT?

The five Roman Emperors who concern us most for our NT study are as follows:

6.4.1 27 BC – 14 BC Caesar Augustus (Octavianus)
Grandson of Julius Caesar’s sister, Julia and adopted by Caesar as son and heir. He consolidated the Roman frontiers along the Rhine and Danube and inaugurated a period of peace-PAX ROMANA- as the Mediterranean world had not known for centuries. He was a great peace maker. Jesus Christ was born during his reign; Lk 2:1ff probably in 7 or 6 BC.

Take Note

Our system of reckoning time by years BC and AD was established by Dionysius the Little, a Syrian monk in the 6th century. Modern chronographers are agreed that Dionysius unfortunately fixed his starting-point, the birth of Christ a few years too late. Thus in the year 1 AD Jesus was already 6 or 7 years old.

Augustus was a very able ruler, the first and in many ways the greatest of the Roman Emperors. He was acclaimed as the savior King who brought peace to the world. (Kee, p. 9ff). He favored Herod the Great, kept him in office and confirmed his last will: to divide his kingdom among his 3 sons. He latter deposed Archelaus for misbehaving g and appointed Roman Procurators in Judea.
6.4.2 14- 37 Tiberius (Caesar)
He was the stepson of Augustus; an able general and administrator, but severe with an unfriendly character. Eventually he retired to Capri from where he ruled the Empire. In 26 he appointed Pontius Pirate as procurator over Judea till 36. Christ’s public ministry took place during his reign; the coin of tribute bore his image (Mt 22: 15-21). Tiberius allowed divine honors to be paid to Augustus, but refused them himself.

6.4.3 37-41 Gaius (Caligula = Small Boots)
He is better known as “Caligula”/ small boots because he was small and a nuisance. He was the grandson of Tiberius brother, Drusus. He was a despotic ruler who claimed emperor worship for himself. This tyrannical ruler ordered Petronius, governor of Syria, to set up his own statue in the Temple of Jerusalem. This was a real sacrilege which may be equated to commanding people to slaughter pigs in a Mosque. When Petronius refused to do this, Gaius ordered him to commit suicide, but Gaius was himself assassinated before the orders ever reached Petronius. Gaius tried and condemned Pilate in 37 and Herod Antipas in 39.

6.4.4 41-51 Claudius
He was the uncle of Gaius a very able ruler. In 41 he interrupted the series of procurators in Judea by appointing Herod Agrippa 1 as King of Judea till Agrippa’s death in 44. In 48 the great famine took place in the empire as he reigned (Acts 11:27-28). In 49 Claudius made the edict banning all Jews from Rome (Acts 18: 1-2) because of constant riots instigated by a “Chrestus”. Possibly the arrival of Christianity split the Jewish community and led to riots. Paul’s 1st and 2nd missionary journeys took place during his reign.

He was the adopted son of Claudius; notorious for his tyrannical rule, cruelty and licentious life.

6.4.5 54-68 Nero
In 61 St. Paul arrived in Rome to appeal to this Caesar. In 64 the fire of Rome which was blamed on the Christians was said to have been started by Nero to have an excuse to ruthlessly persecute the Christians. Indeed, he had very many martyred.
Take Note
He may well be the “Beast” of the Apocalypse/Revelation (13:18), since the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew consonants of “Neron Caesar” adds up to 666.

In year 66 the Jewish war broke out: Nero ordered the newly appointed governor of Syria to cruelly suppress the rebellion with his legions.

6.5 Political History of Palestine: The Herodians and The Roman Procurators

6.5.1 Introduction:
The year 63 BC (capture of Jerusalem) marked a turning point in the history of the Jewish people, for they lost their independence to the Roman Empire and became part of the Roman Province of Syria. It was the last period of their existence as a nation (63 BC – 135AD) till recent times.

Take Note
Israel as a Nation was proclaimed on the 4th May 1948 through the intervention of the United Nations (UN)

Pompey marched on Jerusalem in 63, laid siege to it and captured it. He abolished Jewish kingship, liberated the Greek cities and gave them autonomy in the form of the Decapolis (=free cities). He declared the Samaritans free from the Jews and Samaria a free city. Galilee and Judea were joined together under the high priest Hyrcanus 11 as ethnarch (people’s ruler).

Palestine was a border country of the Roman Empire: at the S. E. was the independent Nabatean kingdom with its capital at Petra; at the N.E. was the Parthian Empire, which in 40 BC tried to invade Palestine. Close supervision by the Syrian Legates was necessary against any uprisings.

6.5.2 37 – 4 BC Herod The Great
Under Hyrcanus there arose to power an Idumean general and chief minister: Antipater. His son by an Arab princess was Herod who was to become the future puppet King of Palestine. At the Partian invasion (40 BC) he had fled to Rome, where he shrewdly gained the favor of Octavianus/Augustus Caesar, who declared him “King of the Jews” (not of the Romans or others). He returned to Palestine to re-conquer it and became de facto King in 37 BC.

Herod first consolidated his power by exterminating all his rivals; he then began a slavish and costly building project to spread the Hellenistic culture in his territory, which included Idumea, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea and Trachonities.

He built Greek gymnasia, stadia and temples to please his Roman masters in Caesarea Sebaste and Pannia.

To please the Jews he started to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem at twice the size of the former Temple. But in spite of this effort he was still despised by the Jews for his Idumean origin (“half-Jew”), his adherence to Rome and Hellenism, and finally, for his cruelty. He executed one of his 10 wives and 2 of his sons: see also Mt.2:16.

Jesus was born (Mt.2:1ff) during his reign. This was shortly before Herod’s death at Jericho (Mt. 2:19ff): he was buried in the Herodianum. All these are of immense importance because it gives crucial historical setting of the birth of Jesus.

6.5.3 Herod’s Successors

In his last will he ordered 3 of his sons to succeed him. People did not like it. Yet for his royalty to Rome and in spite of a delegation of protest to Rome, Augustus Caesar confirmed Herod’s will except for the title King. When he was about to die, it is said that Herod ordered the killing of a considerable number of people to make them mourn. Below are Herod’s successors (ie. His sons):

1) 4BC – 6AD Archelaus

Ethnarch (people ruler) over ½ the Kingdom: Judea, Samaria and Idumea. He was totally incompetent, very autocratic and unpopular: hence Augustus deposed him and gave the territory a special status under Roman Procurators, supervised by the Legate of Syria: Quirinus.
2) **4 BC – 39AD Herod Antipas**

Tetrarch (ruler of 1/4th) of the Kingdom: Galilee and Perea. He repudiated his 1st wife and took his half-brother’s wife Herodias mother of Salome. He did this as he disowned his own wife. John the Baptist had criticized him for the incest: Mt.14:3ff. Jesus called him once a fox (Lk 13:32-read 13:31-33). He was in Jerusalem during the trial of Jesus: Lk 23:12ff. In 39 Herodias persuaded him to go to Rome and ask the Emperor Caligula for the title of King. He was instead accused of subversive actions and banished to Gaule. His territory was added to Herod Agrippa1

3) **4 BC – 34 AD Philip**

He was the Tetrarch of the Eastern territories namely: Iturea, Trachonitis and Abilene. He married Salome, daughter of Herodias, and was a good ruler. He built Bethsaida as his capital and Panea as Caesarea Philippi (Caesar’s name and his name). As he had no children, his territory was added to Judea under a Procurator till 37 by Tiberius.

4) **Herod Agrippa I 37 – 44 AD:**

A grandson of Herod the Great; won the favor of Caligula, who gave him the territory of

Philip (4 Eastern territories) in 37. When Herod Antipas was banished in 39 he received also Galilee and Perea. In 41 Claudius added – as a favor to the Jews-Idumea, Judea and Samaria. Thus Herod Agrippa reigned over almost the same territory as Herod the Great.

He was a pious but insignificant King, loved by the people since he was a Pharisee in heart. At home he supported pharisaism: hence he persecuted the nascent Church (Acts 12:1-9) and beheaded James, son of Zebedee in 44 AD. Abroad he advocated Hellenistic culture: temple at Beirut. He died suddenly at Caesarea during the games of 44 AD (Acts 12:20ff). His son would regain reign of his kingdom 8 years later in 52. In the mean time Procurators ruled again the whole territory.

5) **Herod Agrippa11 52 -70:**
He was son of Agrippa 1, was educated in Rome. In 48 he inherited the small kingdom of Chalcis (Anti-Lebanon) from his uncle, but gave it up when Claudius in 52 gave him the former tetrarchy of Philip: Iturea, Trachonitis etc. In 54 Nero added Galilee and Perea.

His incestuous life with his sister Bernice caused scandal even in Rome. St. Paul appeared before him and Bernice in 60 at Caesarea: (Acts 25: 23-25). When finally the Jewish war broke out in 66, Agrippa still tried to dissuade the Jews to fight the Romans, then he fought by the side of Vespasian against his own people! At the fall of Jerusalem in 70 by Titus, he withdrew with Bernice to Rome where he died around 93.

He was the last Herodian ruler: and the end of the Herodian dynasty was far from glorious! The real rulers of Palestine were in fact the Roman Procurators.

6.5.4 The Roman Procurators

1) When Archelaus was deposed in 6 AD, his territory was placed under a governor, who had the title of “Procurator” and was subject to the supervision of the governor of Syria (always a senior general with the title of “Legate”). They were not nobles of senatorial rank, but members of the equestrian order of “knights”. They came from successful business families. They resided in Caesarea, but would come down to Jerusalem occasionally especially at festival times to suppress possible uprisings.

2) Their duties were:

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<td>What Role did the Roman Procurators play that make them so important in NT study?</td>
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   a) To keep peace and suppress rebellion. To do this, they had 5 cohorts (3000 soldiers, recruited from Syria). One cohort was stationed at the castle Antonia across the Temple.
b) To administer justice in capital cases. The Sanhedrin and local Jewish courts dealt with most cases. Nevertheless, the death penalty was reserved to the Procurator.

**Activity 6.2**

Familiarize yourself with the episode of the senior chief tax collector called Zacchaeus indicating from Biblical sources.

c) To collect taxes for the imperial treasury (= to procure). This was under the Procurator who engaged the tax collectors. No wonder the latter were so hated as traitors and corrupt.

**Take Note**

The regime of Procurators lasted from 6 AD till the Jewish war of 66, with a short interruption from 41- 44 (reign of Agrippa 1).

3) List of Procurators:

**Activity 6.3**

Mention some of the Roman Procurators

a) Coponius 6- 9 AD. Census of Quirinus- the top Legate in Syria); revolt of Zealots.

b) Marcus Ambibilus 9- 12.

c) Annius Rufus 12- 15.

d) Valerius Gratus 15- 26. He deposed 3 High Priests (Annas e.a.). He appointed Joseph Caiphas in 18 (-36).

e) Pontius Pilate 26- 36: Both Philo and Josephus accuse him of intolerable cruelty. Soon after his arrival he caused an uprising by bringing his troops to Jerusalem with all standards uncovered (images!). After a 5 days’ protest and an order from
Tiberius were the standards returned to Caesarea. He was such a proud, arrogant and corrupt Procurator. Again he infuriated the Jews by taking money from the Temple treasury for building an aqueduct to bring water to Jerusalem. The Jews wanted water but not from Temple money. In 29 some pilgrims from Galilee were massacred in the Temple (Lk 13: 1ff). Pilate lost his procuratorship in 36 because he had ordered the execution of Samaritans assembled on Mt. Gerizim by some pseudo-messiah. Gaius (Caligula) condemned him.

f) Marcellus 36- 37.
g) Marulleus  37- 41.
h) 41- 44 no Procurators: Herod Agrippa 1.
i) 44- 47?
j) 48- 52 Cumanus; Massacre of Galilean pilgrims to Jerusalem.
k) 52- 60 M. Antonius Felix: Jewish uprising developed into open hostility. Various independent movements rose up: the Zealots (national parties?) of which Felix crucified a number; the Sicarioi (after a weapon they hid) mentioned as assassins in Acts 21:38. Paul awaited trial in Jerusalem for two 2 years from 58 till 60; Acts 23:33- 24:27.
l) 60- 62 Porcius Festus: an honest administrator; takes Paul’s case up immediately: Acts 251ff and at Paul’s appeal to Caesar (Nero) sends him to Rome (60- 61).
m) 62- 64 lbinus: a very corrupt officer.

6.6 Insurrection Against Rome: Down fall of Judea: 66- 70

The revolt of 66 can hardly be called Messianic, for it was not led by a Messianic pretender, as was the revolt of 132 AD under Bar Cochba.

A riot broke out in Jerusalem. The solders of the Roman garrison were unleashed on the population and many people were massacred. The uprising spread throughout the country and the Legate from Syria sent his Syrian troops. But the Jews defeated the Roman troops and proclaimed the independence of the Jewish State in 67!
Then Nero appointed Vespasian, who subdued Galilee and Perea and arrived near Jerusalem. Then Nero died and there was a lull in war since war could not go on without an Emperor. When Vespasian became Emperor in 69, he entrusted the war to his son Titus, who besieged Jerusalem in 70. After 4 months of bitter fighting, the Temple was captured and destroyed. A very cruel sacrilegious act indeed! Titus received a triumph in Rome, in which the seven-branch lamp stand was carried as booty. The triumphal arch of Titus (there even today) near the Colosseum shows this triumphant procession.

The fortress of Masada (near Qumran) held out 2 years longer. In order to capture it, the Roman engineers built a huge causeway from the nearest mountain to the top of Masada. When the Romans finally gained the summit, only one old woman remained alive: the rest of the brave defenders had killed themselves in pairs for they had sworn never to surrender to the Romans! Today it is the National shrine of the Jewish army of Israel.

The war of 70 AD destroyed the Temple and with it the Sadducees (the Priestly party). It also destroyed Qumran and with it the Essenes. Pharisaism (saved the survival of Judaism religion) was preserved at Jamnia.

At the beginning of the war, the Christian community of Jerusalem fled to Pella, a city of the Decapolis. From this time, Jerusalem ceased to be the visible centre of the Church.

6.7 The Final War of 132 under Simon Bar Cochba

Nationalism did not end with the destruction of the Temple. There was a messianic war since Simon Bar Cochba/Son of Star was taken to be a messiah but when he died they realized that he was not.

However, the disaster of 70 did not crush the Zealot spirit: it regarded as a part of the eschatological tribulation: the Jews continued to hope for the Messiah, and more stings of revolt rose up. The most serious occurred when in 130 Emperor Hadrian ordered that a new city, to be called Aelia Capitolina, be built on the ruins of Jerusalem. To do such a thing exactly on the Holy Temple site was harsh and cruel indeed! It was to have a temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus in which Emperor Worship would be practiced. This provoked the final revolt under Simon Bar Cochba (Son of the Star), a messianic title given him by one of the leading Rabbi’s (Numbers 24:17).
The war broke out in the mountains of Judah. Once again it was a struggle to death between Jews and Romans. At the end, the strong Romans prevailed. The consequences were disastrous on the side of the humbled dejected Jews.

After the war, Aelia Capitolina was built as a Roman “colony” with a temple to Jupiter and a statue to Hadrian (imagine the sacrilege!). Hadrian forbade the Jews to enter the City; circumcision (their indispensable link with their ancestors- and their very identity) was abolished under the pain of death; Sabbath observance (the core of their religiosity) was forbidden under capital sentence. This amounted to declaring the Jews non-existent. It was like virtually wiping them out of the earth. It amounted to destroying the heart of the Jews. Men felt it more because women and children did not count much. But what could they do against such overwhelming brutes! They had to content themselves with an earnest yearning for an authentic redeeming cum triumphant Messiah.

But Rome could not crush Judaism altogether. The flames of the national faith continued in the Diaspora communities. They retained their very strong spirit under the leadership of the Scribes (the scholars of the Law) especially in Babylon.

6.8 Hellenistic Civilisation in Palestine

In spite of the heroic effort of the Machabean wars, Hellenism had finally gained ground under the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great.

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<td>Hellenistic civilization in Palestine and its effects on the formation of the Gospels.</td>
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Hellenism penetrated various domains of the public and private life of the population: buildings, architecture, philosophy, language, history, habits of life, sports etc. The Jewish communities of the Diaspora could hardly resist the Hellenistic impact. The urban population of Palestine and the well- to- do followed Hellenistic ways, but the ordinary Jewish peasants and Pharisees continued to live their own ancient ways and despised Hellenism and Hellenists.
Except for Greek language, the Synoptic Gospels reflect almost nothing on any Hellenistic influence.

On the hand, St. Paul, educated in the Hellenistic town of Tarsus, used frequently Hellenistic terminology, rhetoric form of speech and examples and images derived from the Hellenistic city culture.

St. John too shows signs of some Hellenistic influence: Gnostic dualism (images e.g., light/darkness; spirit/matter, celestial/terrestrial)-Read Kee and Young, pp. 15- 24.

The Greek language used in the Hellenistic world was not the classical Greek of the 4th century BC. It was a more course or common form. A mode called Koine (koine= common/easier, vulgar), differentiated into various local dialects with new words borrowed from local vernaculars.

The intellectual influence of Hellenism on Palestinian Judaism has left no profound trace in Jewish literature, and it was probably never more than superficial. This is the contrast to the Judaism of Alexandria, the principal intellectual centre of the Diaspora: the writings of Philo and Wisdom both exhibit an acquaintance with Greek thought. Philo tried to show that the Law was the sum of all wisdom for the Jews, and that it was a philosophy like Platonism or Stoicism and capable of producing the same intellectual growth.

The Hellenistic world offered favorable conditions for the diffusion of Christianity; a universal civilization which had brought together peoples of widely differing religions and cultures into a common way of life was sympathetic to a universal religion which imposed no particular national or racial conditions upon its members and taught the unity and equality of all under one Divine Father. In addition, the community of language and the easy communications of the Hellenistic world made it easy for the Apostles of Christianity to spread the Gospel rapidly over a surprising wide area.
6.9 Summary

In this Lecture, you have learned how Palestine came under the influential control of the Roman Empire and identified the five famous NT Roman Emperors while explaining their importance in the historical setting of the NT. The lecture also discusses the political-cum-religious history of Palestine from the point of view of the Romans colonizers, the Herodians, and the Roman Procurators. It also explained who the Roman Procurators were and their administrative roles in Palestine.

The Lecture furthermore discussed why the arrested Jesus had to be tried in the Sanhedrin and then taken to Pontius Pilate—the Roman Procurator—for another trial in view of capital sentence. It analyzed and assessed the importance of the 66-70 AD Jewish insurrection against Rome and the final revolt of 132AD under Simon Bar Cochba and the consequences, e.g., emergence of Diaspora Jews and yearning for a Messiah. The lecture further evaluated the reality and impact of Hellenistic Civilization in Palestine and how the NT came to be written in Koine Greek.

Activity 6.3

Discuss the five NT Roman Emperors indicating also their importance in NT studies.

6.10 References


2. Wright, A.G., Murphy, R.E. and Fitzmyer, J.A. “A History of Israel” in Brown, R.E., Fitzmyer, J.A. and Murphy, R.E. (Eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Burns and Oates,
LECTURE SEVEN
THE JEWISH WORLD

Lecture Outline

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Objectives.
7.3 The Law= Torah
7.4 Diaspora (Dispersion)
7.5 Synagogue (Assembly/Congregation)
7.6 The Scribes
7.1 Introduction

Take Note
You are expected to have covered Judaism in Comparative Religion Two Unit. Our Lecture will, therefore, be a brief reminder.

The period of 175 BC to 200 AD was the formative period of Christianity. This period saw the rise and extinction of the Sadducees and Essene sects, and the rise of the Pharisees, whose theology and piety were to become normative for later Judaism. The Pharisees were exemplary in Judaism.

Intext Question
When did Judaism as a religion begin and how?

Judaism is the Jewish faith and practice of the post-Macabean times (intertestamental period). This is a period in which the Law and the Synagogue were central. A period further characterized by various sectarian groups. With the above in mind, this lecture will examine in succession the main elements of Judaism namely: The Law/Torah; Diaspora (Dispersion); Synagogue (Assembly/Congregation); The Scribes; The Pharisees; The Essenes: Qumran; The Sadducees; The Zealots; and The Samaritans.
### 7.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain the Law/Torah as not only the sum total of Yahweh’s instructions but also as the “rule of life” of the Jews needing the Prophets to help guard, challenge and guide along this Godly path.

2. Identify the “Diaspora Jews”/the “Hellenists” and their relationship with the “Palestinian Jews”.

3. Discuss the Synagogues and evaluate the Synagogues’ importance in the survival of Judaism and the origin cum growth of Christianity.

4. Discuss the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots and the Samaritans and how they feature in the NT especially in their relationship with Jesus.

### 7.3 The Law = Torah

The Torah was the compendium of the will of Yahweh. It was the sum total of the instructions of Yahweh. As Philo puts it, the Law was the sum of all wisdom for the Jew, and that it was a philosophy like Platonism or Stoicism and capable of producing the same intellectual growth. It was a condition sine qua non in regaining Yahweh’s mercy and benevolence. It was actually their very identity.

A fervent return to the strict observance of the Law—so as to rediscover their identity— as the expression of Yahweh’s will, marked the rise of Judaism. To know the Law required having official interpreters or scholars of the Law: these were the Scribes (those who copied the Law). It also gave rise to the strict observers of the Law: the Pharisees. The Law was read and explained in the Synagogues all over Palestine as well as in Diaspora.

It is interesting to note that, in the NT, the Law and the Prophets are put side by side. They are so inter-related that they are documented as intertwined. Among the references
that run across the NT are: Mt 5:17, 7:12, 22:40; Lk 16:16, 24:44; Jn 1:45; Acts 13:15, 24:14, 28:23.

Take Note
The centrality and indispensability of Torah may, analogically be put thus: while Christians start with Jesus Christ, the Jews started with Torah. Let it be remembered also that Judaism inter-testamentary was not monolithic. It was pluralistic i.e., ORAL and WRITTEN.

7.4 Diaspora (Dispersion)
Although we have no accurate figures, it is generally accepted that more Jews lived outside Palestine than inside. All those Jews living outside Palestine were called the “Diaspora Jews”. That is, those who were dispersed. They were also referred to as “The Hellenists “or the Greekanised ones. The ones remaining in Palestine are called “The Palestinian Jews”. Even today, more Jews live outside Palestine and are among the richest –owing to their nationalism, in America.

The dispersion of the Jews all over the Roman Empire in the 1st c. BC had begun with the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations in the 7th and 6th c. BC. Only the Jewish community in Babylon survived and became large and prosperous, and retained its identity right into the Middle Ages.

Jewish communities settled in Egypt in the 6th c. BC. By the 1st c. BC Jews had settled in Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy (Acts 2: 9-10).

Jews of the Diaspora regarded Jerusalem as their capital and uniting factor; their religious life was centered round the Synagogue, where they read and studied the Torah. As they knew no Hebrew, they used translations of the Torah in Aramaic (Targum) or Greek (Septuagint = LXX; 250 BC at Alexandria).

In contrast to Palestinian Jews, the Diaspora Jews exercised fervent proselytism: by religious propaganda writings they attracted many sympathizers, called the “God-fearing”, who were not yet circumcised, and also real converts.
Diaspora Jews who returned to Jerusalem retained their own Greek speaking Synagogues. This triggered tensions. Sometimes there were conflicts with the Palestinian Jews (Acts 6: 1).

7.5 Synagogue (Assembly/ Congregation)

The synagogue arose as a result of the destruction of the Temple in 587 BC and of the dispersion of the Jews outside Palestine. It was a substitute for the Temple to maintain Jewish unity in faith and worship. It was not seen as a house where God dwelt. It was seen as a meeting place for prayer and study of the Law. There were no sacrifices since there was no Holy of Holies. The maintenance and management and order of services were under the archisynagogus (“rulers of the synagogue”). Officials like Jairus (Lk 8: 41) and Crispus (Acts 18: 8).

The synagogue had certain judicial and punitive powers: Mt 10: 17; 23:34. In Palestine, they were under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin (synedrion= council). This was the supreme Jewish court which can be likened to our High Court. It was composed of 71 members. The members were from 3 classes namely:

1) The Elders of the chief families;
2) The High Priest in function, the former High Priests and Elders of the 4 High Priestly families;
3) The Scribes (mostly Pharisees)- as the Law doctors.

The synagogue service was held on the Sabbath. It was also held on feast days like Passover, Tabernacle and Pentecost. The liturgy had a scrupulous framework or procedure. Below is the strict order it followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intext Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>What sequence did Synagogue service follow?</td>
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1) It commenced with the recitation of the Shema (rule of life): Deut. 6: 4-9. The accentuation is the creed on strict monotheism.
2) Followed by a long prayer said by a member of the congregation. Originally, it was simultaneous. Latter, instead of being improvised, it was in set forms.
3) Then a reading from the Law in Hebrew according to a 3 years’ cycle.
4) This was followed by a translation in Aramaic (Targum) or Greek (LXX).
5) Then followed a homily given by a member of the community on invitation.
6) Next a reading from the Prophets and singing of Psalms and more prayers.
7) Finally, if a Priest were present, it was ended by the recitation of the sacerdotal blessing: Numb 6: 24-26.

**Activity 7.1**

Visit a Synagogue to find out how it is arranged and reflect on the value of Synagogue service in early Christian worship by attending services cum Masses in different Christian Churches.

The synagogue often had an elementary school for religious instruction of children.

More than any other single factor the synagogue was responsible for the survival of Judaism as a religion. Also of the Jews as a distinct people against the powerful forces of Hellenism.

The synagogue was, furthermore, of vital importance in the origin and growth of Christianity. Jesus preached in the synagogues. It was a good venue for His Good News ministry. St. Paul always went first to the synagogues in the Diaspora. He actually made his first converts there. Also, the early Christians enriched their liturgy with synagogue service procedures/sequence.

**7.6 The Scribes**

The Scribes were originally men who made copies of the sacred writings. Due to the familiarity thus acquired with the text, they became the instructors and interpreters of the Law. Ezra was a Scribe (Ezra 7: 6).

In the NT times they were the scholars of Judaism. They were the learned ones who had received the title of “Rabbi”. They taught in the rabbinical schools. These were Institutions where future Scribes were trained. They had a respected position in the community.
The scribe as such was not a member of any sect, but in fact, most of the Scribes were Pharisees though not all the Pharisees were Scribes. They adhered to the very strict interpretation of the Law. The Scribes - who grew from being copyists- interpreted, applied and enlarged the Law: see Mishna, Talmud.

Activity 7.2

Refer to your Lecture in Comparative Religions Two and read about Talmud, Mishna and Gemara

There was a serious confrontation between Jesus and the Scribes cum Pharisees. Quite a good number of NT pericopes can be sited to confirm this. Among them is Matthew Chapter 23 where the furious Jesus had almost gone berserk. J.P. Kealy records that:

“Jesus attacks their vanity, and their love of signs of respect (Mt 23: 28; Lk 20: 46) and, in particular, the heavy burdens which they impose on people by their rigorous interpretation of the Law (613 precepts), thus effectively, by misinterpreting the Scriptures (Jn 5: 39f), closing the Kingdom of heaven to those who desire to enter (Mt 23: 2- 15ff).”

7.7 The Pharisees

Both Essenes and Pharisees seemed to have developed out of the Hasideans (= the pious ones). They are among those who stubbornly resisted the Hellenization of Palestine under Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc 2: 29- 42). That among the philosophical sects – namely: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Zealots- the Pharisees were outstanding. Their name signifies “separated” or “separatists”-for fear of being defiled perhaps: “Pharisees would not eat with ordinary people as they considered them immoral and irreligious. Neither would they marry ordinary women as they considered them unclean vermin.”

They separated themselves off from the common people, and still more from the gentiles. They did this especially by their rigorous observation of the Law and of their Oral

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3 Ibid., p.99.
traditions. They regarded all civil governments over Israel as a usurpation, since God Himself was their King; and the Law of Moses (in the extreme detailed and legalistic interpretation which they gave to it) was the only law they recognized: “They broke with Hyrcanus, considering him as a usurper with the result that he turned to the Sadducees, the aristocratic Priestly families. Later they refused to take the oath of allegiance to Herod the Great, but tended to avoid involvement in political affairs and to stress the religious destiny of the Jews.”

Additionally:

“It is interesting to note that the Roman intervention in Palestine (Pompey in 63 BC) and the loss of political independence was to some extent due to the conflict of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who both appealed to Rome for help. Generally, the Pharisees avoided politics except in such instances when they were provoked by Herod when he set up a golden eagle over the main entrance to the Temple (4 BC), and when provoked beyond endurance by the Roman Procurators, they joined the Zealot revolt against the Romans (66 AD).”

In the Gospels, the Pharisees as a party appear as bitter critics and adversaries of Jesus. This is mainly because they felt that He was belittling the authority of Moses and devaluing the Law. This was a challenge that, to Jesus, became an occasion to deepen and expound the Gospel.

But one does not have to be quick to generalize that all the Pharisees were anti-Jesus. There were some who were friendly having been impressed by Him. Among them are Nicodemus who actually helped in Jesus’ burial (Jn 3:1; 7:50; 19:39), Simon, Saul of Tarsus who converted and became Paul (Acts 23: 6-9) and Gamaliel who is said to later become Christian (Acts 5; 15:5). It is thus wise to be aware of the diverse categories of the Pharisees. One is also excited by the variety of the Pharisees the Jewish Talmud records:

1) The “wait-a-little” Pharisee, who was always postponing good deeds.

2) The bruised or “bleeding” Pharisee, who was always stumbling against walls to avoid looking at a woman.

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4 Ibid., p.94.
5 Ibid., p.94.
3) The “shoulder” Pharisee, who wore his good deed on his shoulders for all to see.

4) The “hump-backed” Pharisee, who walked with a stoop in mock-humility.

5) The “ever-reckoning” Pharisee, who was continually counting his good and bad deeds.

6) The “God-fearing” Pharisee, who stood in fear and dread of Yahweh.

The Pharisees distinguished 613 precepts in the Law. By elaborate casuistry they detailed the minutest applications of each, which were later circa 200 AD collected in the Mishna. The Torah was highly exaggerated:

“The Torah laid down, for example, that there was to be no work on the Sabbath day. Work was carefully defined under thirty-nine different classifications: Sowing, reaping, ploughing, binding, threshing, winnowing, cleansing, grinding, sifting, kneading, backing, shearing wool, washing or beating or dying it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying a knot, loosening a knot, sewing two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping or hanging it up, writing two letters of the alphabet, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking with a hammer and carrying anything from one place to another.”

The most important were:

1) The keeping of the Sabbath.

2) The observance of ritual purity.

3) The payment of tithes and dues to the Temple (Lk 18: 9ff.).

After the destruction of 70 AD, the reconstitution of the Jews was mainly undertaken by the Pharisees and the Scribes who composed the Law and its interpretation.

7.8 The Essenes: Qumran

Another offshoot of the Hasideans were the Essenes. They had much in common with the Pharisees. Nevertheless, they were ultra-rigid observers of the Law, especially of the Sabbath and ritual purity. However, they kept aloof from the Temple ritual as they neither acknowledge the Priesthood nor the official post-Maccabean calendar.

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6 Ibid., p.95.
Activity 7.3
What makes the Essenes of Qumran so important for our NT Unit while they hardly appear in the NT text?

1) They were even more separatists, for they lived away from people in the desert places:
2) They lived together as a monastic religious order.
3) They in principle observed celibacy.
4) They shared property.
5) They submitted themselves to a rigid religious discipline.
6) They devoted themselves to study and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.
7) They expected the coming of God’s Day of Judgment.

The lack of any clear reference to them in the NT is presumably due to their withdrawn existence. Josephus, Philo and Pliny the Elder give descriptions of them as living on the West shore of the Dead Sea.

Among the works proper to them are:
1) The manual of discipline, with 2 appendices. A very strict rule.
2) The war scroll: final conflict between good and evil.
3) The commentary on Habacuc.

Activity 7.4
You treated this Literature in your Comparative Religions Two Unit, therefore, you should revisit what you learned.

It has been suggested that John the Baptist’s preparation “in the desert” may imply his membership of this deeply religious group (Lk 1: 80). Parallels between the 4th Gospel and the “Two Spirit Theory” of Qumranic Manual of Discipline have been examined.\(^7\)

The Essenes have come to the forefront of modern interest because of the very important discoveries of the “Dead Sea Scrolls” in 1947.\(^8\) The crucial intricate discovery was near

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Qumran, and the excavation of the ruins of a monastic settlement there, most probably of the Essenes.

In the beginning of the Jewish war of 66 AD they sealed up their Sacred Books in earthenware jars and hid them in caves in the sand hills above the monastery. They did this hoping to recover them after the war. Some of them remained there till 1947, when a Bedouin shepherd boy accidentally made the first find of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

Since then many more scrolls have been found in this area. The manuscripts comprise most of the OT Books (often incomplete) of Isaiah, Deut., and Psalms. Furthermore, a number of apocryphal works, and a dozen writings belonging specifically to the sect have been discovered. Among these is the Manual of Discipline, which gives us a fairly detailed insight into the beliefs and practices of the Essenes.

These Mss are dated by the scholars as 1st c. BC- 1st c. AD: that is a thousand years older than any other existing Mss of the OT.9

7.9 The Sadducees

The Sadducees were in many ways an opposition party to the Pharisees. Priests and the wealthy Jerusalem families belonged to this religious sect in Judaism. They had great power in the Sanhedrin.

The name is derived from a certain High-Priest Sadok. They followed a conciliatory policy towards the Romans and were inclined to adopt Hellenistic manners to a certain extent.

In religious matters they were conservative and “minimizers”: they recognized only the 5 Books of the Pentateuch and restricted their interest mainly to the Temple cult.

The Sadducees rejected the recently developed eschatological doctrines on judgment after death, bodily resurrection and the existence of angels, and the devils Mt 22: 23-33; Mk 12: 18-27; Acts 23: 1-11.

9 Kee and Young, pp. 41-45.
The ascendance of the Sadducees ended with the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. After this, the Pharisees enjoyed unchallenged pre-eminence in Judaism.

7.10 The Zealots
They were a political party of revolutionary extremists in the cause of Jewish nationalism. They refused any form of cooperation with the Roman authorities. They believed in the most violent method of assassination and bloody revolt. Their influence grew as the Roman rule became more oppressive and finally led the Jews into the war of 66 AD.

They maintained pockets of resistance in the country after the fall of Jerusalem, and the movement survived long enough to break out again in the rebellion of 132-135 against Hadrian.

Their belief in the messianism of the OT was entirely limited to the recovery of Jewish independency.

One of the disciples of Jesus, Simon, was called the Zealot. He was probably a former member of this fanatical sect.

7.11 The Samaritans
Their origin is described in 2 Kings 17: 24-41 as a people of mixed origin: Jewish and Babylonian immigrants. Since the exile, they were a community apart, living in a small area round Shechem. Due to the hostility of the Jerusalem Jews they had built their own temple on Mount Gerizim in the 4th c. BC, which was destroyed in 128 BC.

They regarded themselves as the authentic Israelites, accepted Moses and the Pentateuch only (no other sacred books). They expected a Messiah (Jn 4:25). The mutual contempt between Judeans and Samaritans was still vivid in our Jesus’ time, and that is the point of presenting the Samaritan as the model of charity. St, Luke presents the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria as a preliminary step towards announcing it to the Gentiles (Lk 10:29ff; Acts 8: 4-25).
7.12 Summary
In this lecture, we have examined the kernel of the Jewish world namely: The Law/Torah; Diaspora (Dispersion); Synagogue (Assembly/Congregation); The Scribes; The Pharisees; The Essenes: Qumran; The Sadducees; The Zealots; and The Samaritans. The lecture has conscientised you into the awareness that a thorough knowledge of these elements and characteristics of the Jewish world is indispensable in a serious understanding of the NT- more so when related to Jesus Christ and the issue of propagating the Good News.

Activity 7.5

1. Discuss: The Pharisees; the Scribes; and Torah/The Law.

7.13 References


LECTURE EIGHT
THE LITERATURE OF JUDAISM and THE JEWISH LITURGICAL CALENDER

Lecture Outline

8.1 Introduction
8.2 Objectives
8.3 The Apocrypha of Palestinian Judaism
   8.3.1 It is a Collection of very Diverse Compositions
   8.3.2 Enumeration
8.3.3. Apocalypses
8.4 The Essene Texts from Qumran
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8.6 Rabbinic Literature
  8.6.1 Introduction
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8.7 The Jewish Calendar
  8.7.1 Passover (1st Feast of the Months)
  8.7.2 Pentecost (50th day)
  8.7.3 Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur (10th Tishri)
  8.7.4 Tabernacles
  8.7.5 Dedication
  8.7.6 Further Insights
8.8 Summary
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8.1 Introduction
With the overthrow of Jerusalem in 70, Jews ceased to be an independent political state and became solely a religious community. This community had a living tradition in which beliefs developed as well as laws: these were written down at a later stage and constitute the vast literature of Judaism. This Lecture explains that one needs to be familiar with this literature to be able to place the NT writings in their proper literary background. Four main groups representing the 4 main currents of tradition will be identified and examined. The lecture will thus spell out and explicate the diverse and diverging Jewish Literature together with the crucial insights it furnishes NT exegetes with.
8.2 Objectives
At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Outline the Jewish Calendar and give its influence on the Christian liturgical sequence.
2. Spell out and explicate the diverse and diverging Jewish Literature together with the crucial insights it furnishes NT exegetes with.

8.3 The Apocrypha of Palestinian Judaism (within Judaism)

8.3.1 It is a collection of very diverse compositions:
These collections have in common the fictitious attribution to some famous person of earlier generations. This device was used to guarantee a hearing for these books. Part of this literature was taken over and/or adapted by later Christian writers and thus preserved. Some of them (Enoch, Jubilees, 4 Esdras) have occasionally been treated as canonical, especially in Ethiopia.

The legal traditions, called “halaka” occur mostly in the rabbinical literature, while the narrative embellishment of biblical themes called “haggada” or “midrash” were more in vogue in the other groups. Through these mostly legendary (and uncanocal) writings, Jewish spirituality taught precious lessons of morality, piety and Messianic hope.

8.3.2 Enumeration

Activity 8.1
You should revisit your Course on Comparative Religions Two to explain the following:

1) 3 Books of Enoch (on fallen angels and eschatology).
3) The Testament of the 12 Patriarchs.
4) The Psalms of Solomon: Pharisaic Messianism; 1st c. BC.
5) Hagada:- the life of Adam and Eve;
    -Ascension of Isaiah;
    -the lives of the Prophets

8.3.3 Apocalypses:
1) The assumption of Moses (Essenes or Zealots?).
2) 4th Book of Esdras (after 70 AD; parallels with canonical Apoc.).
3) Apocalyps: of Elias; Sophonias (2nd c. AD); Abraham; Sidrash.

8.4 The Essene Texts From Qumran

We mention here only those works proper to the Essenes:

1) The manual of discipline with 2 appendices- a very strict rule.
2) The war Scroll: final conflict between good and evil (remember St. John).
3) The commentary on Habacuc.

The literature furnishes NT exegete with first-hand documentation on one current of thought in vogue among generous souls at the NT period. It permits us to measure the change brought by Jesus’ Gospel to the Jewish mentality of that period, which tended to run off into the extremes exhibited by the Essenes or into the rigid legality of the Pharisees.

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Take Note
Contacts with the NT are really present, but should not be exaggerated. On the points such as the universality of Salvation the Essenes were the furthest removed from the Gospel.

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8.5 Literature of Hellenistic Judaism

The translation of the OT into Greek (LXX/Septuagint) stimulated the production of further literature. This included a number of inspired compositions that ultimately found their way into the canon (Deutero-can.).

Eventually the Diaspora scribes adopted more Hellenistic ways of writing: history, moral and philosophical reflections. Some of these are no longer anonymous.

Enumeration:

1) Apocrypha: 3rd Esdras
   a) 3 and 4th Macabees
   b) Prayer of Manasses.
2) Historical: **Flavius Josephus** (37+ 100 AD)
   a) -The Jewish War (75 AD)
   b) -The Antiquities of the Jews (93 AD)

**Flavius Josephus** was a Priestly member of the Pharisaic party. He at first participated in the Jewish War, but went later over to the Romans. It is strange that this best representative of Diaspora writers belonged to the Pharisaic group. His works are important historical works though they have an apologetic flavor and bias. For knowledge of Judaism in NT times, he is a primary and often only source.

Philosophico-religious: Philosophy (Jewish) of Alexandria (20 BC- 40 AD)

Born in Alexandria, he led a life of philosophical and religious contemplation: he left behind a considerable literary heritage:

   a) The life of Moses
   b) Scriptural commentaries on the Pentateuch: Here he applied the same methodology as the Alexandrians did for the Stoic or Pythagorean system. He discovered behind the (Jewish) history of Salvation moral and philosophical lessons by which the life of the wise man should be guided (highest= Wisdom of God). Thus he adapted Judaical thought to a Hellenistic philosophical mentality.

His influence can be seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and later it affected profoundly the theology of the School of Alexandria: Clement, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.

**8.6 Rabbinic Literature**

**8.6.1 Introduction**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>The activities of the Rabbis on the Torah aimed at:</td>
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a) **Making it relevant for the time i.e., people’s circumstances.**

b) Exalting/encouraging people to accept Torah and put it into practice.

**8.6.2 Deeper Setting**

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With the cessation of the Temple cult (cultic laws- laws belonging to the Temple) in 70 AD came the decline of the priesthood and the rise of the rabbinate (Pharisees). The study of the Law took the place of offerings, and the rabbi (teacher) supplanted the priest. As the teachers sought to interpret the Law, they codified the traditions (which were equally binding as the Torah), which had grown up around them and put them in writing. The Pharisees looked upon these traditions as contemporaneous with the ancient Law and equally as binding, while the Sadducees (who were referred to as “minimizers”) repudiated them entirely.

The vast collection of these traditions (Mishnah) with the comments upon them by early rabbi’s (Gemara) constitute the TALMUD (“teachings”) but contain materials of different periods from 2nd c. BC onwards. They present essentially the traditions of the Pharisees and thus can shed light on the milieu of the Gospels and Apostolic writings. But the late date of final redaction (2nd c. AD onwards) makes it imperative to use them with discrimination.

8.6.3 The MISHNAH (800pp)

The core of the Talmudic literature is a collection of casuistic rules, called Mishnah (“repetitions”), dating from the 2nd c. BC. It was codified progressively and written down in Hebrew by Rabbi Judah the Patriarch around 200 AD.

It has 6 major divisions and covers some 800 pp.! It is clearly not the source of the spirituality of Judaism, but only its jurisprudence of religious law in its widest sense, including civil Jewish law. The aim of providing in all instances firm principles of conduct did not exclude the preservation of contradictory opinions given over the centuries by leading rabbi’s in the rabbinical schools. The final codification of the Mishnah ends the period of the rabbinic doctors called the Tannaim.

The later supplement to the Mishnah is called “Tosephta” (additions): it contains further casuistic law and the oldest Jewish prayer formulas.

| Take Note |
| Remember Talmudic writings= Mishnah and Gemara |
8.6.4 THE GEMARA (much more like Haggadah): The Two Talmuds

The Gemara is the commentary on the Mishnah by the way of historical and legendary (midrash) narratives, stories of everyday life etc.

**Intext Question**

What are the two versions of the Gemara?

There two versions of the Gemara:

a) The Palestinian Talmud, which attained its present form in the 5th c. AD and was composed by the rabbinical schools of Galilee.

b) The Babylonian Talmud, which is 3 times more comprehensive and was finished in the 6th c. AD, and which is now generally acknowledged as normative.

**Take Note**

For NT studies the Talmudic works supply important documentation on the casuistry regarding the Sabbath, feast days, forms of ritual purification, and the Temple ritual.

8.6.5 The Targum (not attached to the very literal text/very free paraphrasing)

The Targum is the Aramaic translation (Aramaic spoken in both diaspora and Palestine) of the OT made by the Rabbi’s when Hebrew was no longer used as the spoken language (after the exile). For a long time they were improvised translations given after the reading of the Hebrew text. From the 1st c. AD they were written down.

There are two types: the Babylonian and Palestinian Targumim (Targums)
a) The Babylonian Targums are very literal but the Palestinian Targums are very free, paraphrastic, and sometimes rather commentaries than translations.

**Take Note**
Paraphrasing= freer description without being so literal. It is saying the same in other words.

b) The best known Palestinian Targums are the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch and the Targum of Jonathan on the Prophets (former and latter), dated from the 5th c. AD.

**Take Note**
They are useful to understand how the OT was interpreted in the NT, especially in the Pauline letters.

**Activity 8.3**

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**8.7 The Jewish Calendar**

The religious New Year starts with the new moon of the 1st month, called *Abib* in Canaan, and *Nisan* in the Babylonian calendars, which the Jews adopted after the exile. This is the first new moon after the spring-equinox in the months March/April. This determined the structure of the entire official Jewish calendar.

**8.7.1 Passover (1st feast of the month)**

This feast began on the evening of the 14th *Nisan* (full moon). On 13th *Nisan* all leaven was destroyed; from 14th till 21st only unleavened bread was used.

On the 14th the Pascal lamb was slain and the Passover meal eaten. If however, the 14th Nisan fell on the Sabbath eve, it was allowed to anticipate the Passover by one day. In the year of Jesus’ death this was the case and Jesus (probably) used this exception to eat the...
Passover on Thursday night, while the chief Priests would eat it on the Friday (John 18:25).

The unofficial calendar of the Essenes had fixed the Passover on the Tuesday night. It has been suggested that Jesus might have followed the Essene calendar, and His arrest took place on Tuesday night. But the majority of scholars does not accept this.

The offering of the “First Sheaf” was made on the day after the Sabbath during the Passover week. It was also the 1st Pilgrim’s feast.

8.7.2 Pentecost (50th day)
A week of weeks (7 x 7= 49 days) after the Sabbath of the Passover (a Sunday) was a harvest feast, in which the first fruits of the barley harvest were offered in the Temple. It was the 2nd Pilgrim’s feast.

After 70 AD the rabbi’s treated this feast as a commemoration of the law giving at Sinai.

8.7.3 Day of Atonement: Yom Kippur (10th Tishri)
It took place on the 10th day of the 7th month (Tishri) September/October. It was the day of the great sacrifice of expiation according to the ritual of Leviticus 16. The scapegoat was led out into the desert. The High Priest took the blood of victims into the Holy of Holies. It is not recorded that Jesus was ever in Jerusalem for this feast. In Rom.3:25 St. Paul indicates that the death of Christ is the anti-type of the sacrifice of this Day of Atonement. The contrast is elaborated in Hebrews 9.

8.7.4 Tabernacles (15th Tishri-Sept/Oct)
It was originally the feast of the wine and oil harvests. For a week the people lived in huts or “tabernacles” built of green leaves. Palms and other branches were waved during the singing of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118). This was the 3rd pilgrims feast (Deut. 16:16).

8.7.5 Dedication (25th Kislev- December)
It commemorated the re-dedication of the Temple in 164 BC after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. Flavius Josephus calls it: “the Feast of Lights”. Each evening of the week more and more lights were lit in the Temple. In John 10:22-24, during this feast, Jesus is challenged to say whether He is the Messiah.
8.7.6 Further Insights

For the Jews, everything, including their calendar, seems to be religious. Their liturgical calendar is structured round the moon- which is very Semitic. They have THREE pilgrim major feasts namely: Passover (1st feast of the month) and Pentecost (50th day). There was then the Day of Atonement/ Yom Kippur (10th Tishri) - “Yom” meaning Day, “Kippur” meaning Atonement. In this latter feast, the sins of Israel were laid on the scapegoat which was ritually chased away to ensure their solidarity and oneness with Yahweh/God. They also have TWO others i.e., Tabernacle (the third pilgrim feast) and that of Dedication- which were happy/joyful agricultural feasts. Let it be remembered also that the Jews do not reckon times with BC or AD but talk of CE meaning Christian era.

Let it be remembered and appreciated that:

1) HALACHAH (laws dealing with): Juridical (to walk with LAWFULLY).

HAGGADAH (narratives dealt with): make comment/ to tell stories/ homiletically encouraging NARRATIVES to exhaust.

2) HALACHAH is done in 2 ways.

   a) Staying very close to Scripture text- called MIDRASH;
   b) Done far from Scripture text- called MISHNAH (which is rather independent to Scripture)

   HAGGADAH is done by way of MIDRASH (which is very close to Scripture text).

3) MIDRASH has two kinds namely: Halachic (Mishnah) and Haggadic (Midrash).

4) MIDRASH can refer to:

   a) A task or method of Biblical interpretation linked with Scripture text to actualize Scripture text.
   b) Result of research.
   c) The Writings (Midrashic writings) i.e., books written Midrashic style.
8.8 Summary
This lecture has explained that one needs to be somehow familiar with the
literature of Judaism and the Jewish liturgical calendar to be able to place the
NT writings in their proper literary background. Four main groups
representing the 4 main currents of tradition were identified and examined.
The lecture, moreover, spells out and explicated the diverse and diverging
Jewish liturgical calendar and Literature together with the crucial insights it
furnishes NT exegetes with.

Activity 8.5
Discuss the Sabbath within the context of the Jewish calendar.

8.9 References

LECTURE NINE
THE HISTORICAL JESUS and THE APOSTALIC AGE
Lecture Outline
9.1 Introduction
9.2 Objectives
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9.4 Chronology of Jesus’ Life
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9.5 The Primitive Christian Community and the Apostolic Kerygma
   9.5.1 Introduction
   9.5.2 The Life of the Community
   9.5.3 The Break with Judaism
   9.5.4 Gentile Christianity
   9.5.5 Christianity Becoming Autonomous

9.6 Summary

9.7 References

9.1 Introduction
If Jesus had written something Himself, like St. Paul, then these documents would have been the starting point. But it was more than 30 years after His death before anyone began to write down what He said in an ordered sequence, and by that time His sayings had long been translated into Greek. It was inevitable that during this long period of oral transmission alterations took place in the tradition. A comparison of the 2 versions of the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:7-15; Lk 11:1-4) or the beatitudes in Mt (5:1 ff) and Lk (6:2ff) give some indications of this process, though at the same time they are also a warning that we should not exaggerate it.

With the above setting, this lecture will explain not just “Jesus of history” but also the “History of Jesus” imbued with biographical shortcomings since Jesus-unlike Paul-wrote nothing. The lecture will provide a deep rooting in discussing the ongoing issue of “Jesus of history” and “Christ of faith” i.e. Jesus proclaiming and Jesus being
proclaimed. It will explain the inter-relatedness of Judaism and Christianity and the gradual inevitable painful break between the two. The lecture will, furthermore, elaborate the sources of the Gospels going backwards i.e., from Jesus’ resurrection.

9.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain not just “Jesus of history” but also the “History of Jesus” imbued with biographical shortcomings since Jesus—unlike Paul—wrote nothing.
2. Have a good rooting in discussing the ongoing issue of “Jesus of history” and “Christ of faith” i.e. Jesus proclaiming and Jesus being proclaimed.
3. Explain the inter-relatedness of Judaism and Christianity and the gradual inevitable painful break between the two.
4. Elaborate the sources of the Gospels going backwards i.e., from Jesus’ resurrection.

9.3 A New Approach to NT Studies

9.3.1 Introductory setting/reflections

1. The modern approach to NT studies, and especially the Gospels, is to examine these writings critically in their proper background, namely that of Judaism of the 1st century AD. The literature of Judaism was the result of age-old oral traditions developed over the years by the living faith of particular parties or sects, which represented certain currents of thought within Judaism.

2. The NT Writings also are not a starting point (1st stage) but rather the result and outcome of yet another new trend of thinking and preaching within Judaism. The painful
break with Judaism is an intermediate stage (2nd stage) and the recording of the teaching of this “new sect “a 3rd stage.

3. Since Jesus, unlike St. Paul, wrote nothing it is a tedious and pragmatically “impossible to come up with a biography or autobiography of Him. The real starting point, therefore, is the rise of this new community which grew up round the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was also given the Messianic title of “Christ” (anointed one).

4. The old approach was to consider the Gospels as almost contemporary biographies of Jesus like eye-witness recordings. All the events were taken as historically authentic and accurate. All Jesus’ words were considered as the exact words used by Him: “ipsissima verba”. Endless efforts had to be made to harmonize the obvious differences between the Synoptic Gospels.

5. The new approach examines the sources of the Gospels in an inverted order, going backwards:

1) The teaching of the Apostolic Age: Didache.
2) The earliest Apostolic preaching: Kerygma.
3) The very words of the historic Jesus: Logia of Jesus.

The Pauline writings and later the Gospels belong to the Didache stage or type of further instructions to those already converted. The Apostolic speeches in Acts are summaries of the earliest type of proclamations (Kerygma) about Jesus to Jews and pagans in order to convert.

6. The very words of Jesus can be found scattered throughout the Gospels, but mixed with later Didache material. The differences between the Synoptics (and St. John) are no longer problems for harmonization, but the natural result of different types of instruction for different audiences by different though inspired authors. Through a critical and comparative study of the 4 Gospel traditions the scholars have attempted to find the earliest oral traditions about Jesus and eventually even the Logia or the very own words of Jesus: His Gospel.
Activity 9.1
Read: Leon-Dufour, c.c. pp. 17-39 (p.22 is a good example- that some can’t be discovered and decided) ; Kee and Young, c.c. pp.46-62.

9.3.2 Chronological Summary
1) Life and Gospel of the Historical Jesus: 28-30 AD.
2) Rise of an Apostolic community of the followers/disciples of Jesus, who witness to Him and proclaim His resurrection showing that death did not kill His message:
   Kerygma: 30-50 AD.
3) Growth of the community beyond Judaism especially through Paul’s apostolate:
   Apostolic preaching: 50-60 AD.
4) Collecting and writing down of the oral Apostolic traditions on Jesus and His Gospel: 60-100 AD.

9.3.3 The Person Coming Before the Writing:

Take Note
Not as Jesus preached, healed, performed miracles, exorcised, etc. that the material was put into writing.

It is not as Jesus preached, healed, performed miracles, exorcised, etc. that the material was put into writing. What we have is neither an auto-biography (since He himself, unlike St. Paul, wrote nothing) nor a biography (since actually the very 1st NT document to be written i.e., St Paul’s 1st Letter to Thessalonians was put down into writing in 50/51 AD). The material was transmitted orally not photographically or tape-like or written manner. Hence the “distortions” and the problem in tracing even Jesus’ very words. This is the underlying principle or the rationale behind the contemporary approach of reversing the order while tackling the NT sources: commencing with Didache (teaching) then Kerygma (preaching) and, finally, Logia of Jesus. It, moreover, justifies the chronological sequence we have indicated.
Take Note
The Person came before the writing. It is a tedious task to trace Jesus’ very words because He wrote nothing Himself and those who wrote did so after a long period of oral transmission. The documentation of so much on and about Jesus is a vivid reminder that death did not kill Jesus and His Good News and that His message is in vogue and un-paralled.

9.4 Chronology of Jesus’ Life

9.4.1 Introduction

Take Note
The study of the “historical Jesus” and His Logia is reserved to the Gospel studies proper. Here we present the bare facts of Jesus’ life and death as related to general (world) history. These facts form the core of the kerygma.

Activity 9.2

Exact chronology is impossible since the Gospel writers were just not interested in precise dates as we are nowadays. The Gospels do not contain sufficient information to date with certainty even one single event of Jesus’ life. Mark, Matthew and John relate events but without any attempt to relate them either to world history or even to the preceding events in their own story. Only Luke tries to place some events in the framework of general history: compare the beginning of Jesus public life in Mk1: 9; Mt 3: 1 and Lk 3: 1. For the Passion story there is an attempt to some precision: even Mk tries to give the events day by day: 14:1. The reason for all this is that the writers were more interested to record the teaching than the historical data. The historicity of the Gospels will be studied later, but read Lk 1: 1-4 and Acts 1: 1ff.
9.4.2 Jesus’ Birth

Take Note
The following events can be established with approximation based on a reasonable evaluation of the available data:

Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great (37-4 BC) as recorded by Mt 2:1-19 and Lk 1:5. Hence His birth occurred not later than 4 BC. Lk adds in 2:1ff that it was during the census of Augustus carried out by Quirinius. But according to Fl. Josephus this Quirinius was Legate of Syria only in 6-7 AD and no census was recorded then. It might have been the Legate before. There was a Roman census in 8 BC, but only for Roman citizens… Due to this unresolved problem, one may date Jesus’ birth between 8-4 BC; a fairly common opinion is 6 BC (Harrington, Record of Fulfillment, NT pp. 39-44).

9.4.3 The Public Ministry

In Lk 3:1 the Evangelist gives an elaborate synchronization to date exactly the ministry of John the Baptist in order to date the beginning of Jesus’ public life. Only one element is really useful: the 15th year of Tiberius, who began to reign on 19th August 14 AD. According to Roman calculation the 15th year is from 19th August 28 till 18th August 29. But according to Syrian calculation (which Lk probably followed) it runs from 1st Oct. 27 to 30th Sept. 28. Hence the common opinion of 28 AD. This is confirmed by John 2:20:46 years of building the Temple after Herod in 19 BC.

Lk 3:23 states that Jesus was about 30 years old. This is not to be taken as an accurate figure, rather as a parallel to great figures in Scripture who began their career at 30: David, 2 Sam. 5:4; Joseph, Gen. 41:46; Ezekiel, Ez. 1:1. Jesus must have been at least 32 or more.

Likewise the length of Jesus’ public life cannot be determined accurately. Mark gives the impression that it lasted only several months mostly in Galilee, and ended with Jesus’ one single journey to Jerusalem. John, however, mentions several visits to Jerusalem twice on the occasion of the Passover feast. This suggests more than 2 years of ministry before the 3rd Passover of Jesus’ death (Jn 2:13; 6:4; 13:1)

9.4.4 Jesus Death

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All the 4 Gospels agree that Jesus died on the eve of the Sabbath of the Passover week, is on Friday: Mk 15:42; Mt 27:62; Lk 23: 54; Jn 19: 31. But the actual date is not clear:

1) Synoptics: Jesus ate the Passover on the eve of 15\textsuperscript{th} Nisan and died on 15\textsuperscript{th} Nisan in the afternoon. Friday being the Passover Feast.

2) John: Jesus died on 14\textsuperscript{th} Nisan, the hour when the Passover Lambs were immolated in the Temple. Saturday being the Passover Feast.

The years 27, 30, 31 and 33 have all been defended as the year of Jesus’ death, but the year 30 seems to fit best the available evidence, when the Passover coincided with the Sabbath on 7\textsuperscript{th} April, 30 AD, as John suggest against the Synoptics.

9.4.5 Jesus is a Real person with Concrete Historical Existence

Elements of historical evidence verify that Jesus actually existed in human history. That He had a concrete historical existence as Jesus of Nazareth.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Intext Question}

How does the Syrian Monk Dionysius the Little make Jesus be born before Jesus was born?
\end{center}

Nevertheless, the apparent contradictory recording by the Evangelists cum respective omissions and additions complicate the scenario making it a tedious task to come up with a comprehensive chronology of Jesus’ life history. From the disputable date of birth (ridiculously being born before He was born i.e. BC- thanks especially to the Syrian Monk Dionysius the Little’s incorrect reckoning) the Evangelists jump to Jesus’ public life. In this way they leave a crucial lacuna with regard to Jesus’ childhood. In other words, after they vaguely indicate that He lived in Nazareth they virtually provide no data from when He was 12 years old to His public life. Also, while the 4 Evangelists have a consensus that Jesus died on the eve/after sunset prior to/ of the Sabbath of the Passover week, yet the Synopticists differ radically with the 4\textsuperscript{th} Gospel as to actual date.
Take Note
One is left wondering: who is right and on what bases do they differ? Did the Evangelists really intend to come up with a biography of Jesus the way we today understand history and historiography?

9.5 The Primitive Christian Community and the Apostolic Kerygma

9.5.1 Introduction
The main source for the history of the Apostolic Age is Luke’s Book of Acts of the Apostles: an unforgettable sketch of the “springtime” of the Church. It is by no means a complete history of the work of the Apostles: only two Apostles are really prominent in it and only a partial outline of their work is given. The bottom-line here is that Luke’s purpose was to show the establishment and growth of the new community, already called “Church” in Luke’s time.

Activity 9.3
Activity 2. Why do you think that the Acts of the Apostles is given titles like: the Book of mission?; the Book of the birth of the Church?; the Book of the establishment and growth of the Church?; the Book of the history of the Church?; Pneumatological Gospel i.e., the Gospel of the Holy Spirit?

This new “sect within Judaism observed Jewish Law and ritual like any other Jew: their distinctive mark was their messianic belief. Unlike other Jews, they believed that the Messiah (Christ) had already come, namely Jesus of Nazareth. They knew that He had been crucified and put to death, but far from considering this a defeat, they firmly witnessed to His resurrection: He had triumphed over death. He had been seen and met with truly alive, therefore, He was the long awaited/expected Messiah foretold by the Prophets. In this sense the Scriptures had been fulfilled and they proclaimed (kerygma) that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and soon after they were called “Christians” (Acts 11: 26).

The reaction to this new proclamation of Jesus the Christ was twofold:
1) Acceptance of the Apostolic witness in ever increasing numbers (Acts 2:41; 47; 4:4; 6:1) even a number of Priests (Acts 6:7).

2) Rejection especially by the Jewish authorities: the Highpriest and Priests, the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees, who saw in them potential rebels (Acts 4:1ff; 5:17ff).

There then followed a forced separation (Acts 5:12) and a sharp reaction from some Diaspora Jews (Acts:6:9ff) and finally an organized persecution (Acts 8:1). It was this persecution and consequent dispersal into Samaria, Syria and probably Egypt (Acts 8:4) that prepared for the break with Judaism.

9.5.2 The Life of the Community

The life of the Jerusalem community was summarized by Luke in 3 precious descriptions: Acts 2: 42-47; 4: 32-45; 5: 12-16. Though still within Judaism there were some distinctive elements which united them into a community and began to set them apart from other Jews.

1) **Primitive Communism**

The most radical and, therefore, short-lived element was the sharing of goods among themselves even through selling of properties. This idealistic situation had soon to be modified (Acts 6:1ff). The result was a lack of regular revenues in the Jerusalem community, which had to be helped by such collections as Paul made (1Cor. 16:1ff). The origin of this practice was the eschatological expectation and Christ’s preaching and example.

2) **Cult**

While they continued to pray in the Temple, they also met in private houses for prayer and common meals. Initially an expression of their communism, it was soon to become their distinctive liturgy of the “Breaking of Bread” in which they commemorated the Last Supper (1Cor. 10:16; 11: 23-25).

Faith in/ and acceptance of Jesus the Christ was visibly expressed by baptism “into the name of Jesus”, which later was to replace the Jewish initiation rite of circumcision.
3) **The Apostolic Kerygma**

This is the proclamation by the Apostles and disciples of Jesus as the Christ and Lord. The earliest resume is that of 1 Cor. 15:3-5; Luke later on tried to reconstruct it in his abbreviated sketches of Peter’s first sermons in Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 4:8-12. In the approach to the Jews the Scriptural argument of the fulfillment of the Scriptures is evident: Jesus’ death and resurrection is fulfillment of God’s plan. (To Gentiles another approach had to be made).

**9.5.3 The Break with Judaism**

The dispersal outside Jerusalem actuated the universalist tendencies that had so far laid dormant. In Antioch some fugitives began to proclaim the Good News about Jesus directly to the Gentiles and the response was amazing (Acts 11:19-21). A new situation arose in which Jews and Gentiles entered and met in the same community!

This new situation demonstrated liberation from the ethnic and historic limitations of Judaism. The community could no longer appear as just another sect within Judaism, and a new name, that of “Christians” was given them to mark them off both from Jews and pagans (Acts 11:26).

**At Antioch** the Jewish Christians began to abandon the scruples of the Law regarding avoidance of the Gentiles, but not without criticism (Gal. 2:11ff). This led to the first great controversy within the Christian community. The Jerusalem Christians (only Jews) continued to follow the Jewish way of life; and even when they accepted the principle that the Good News was to be proclaimed to the Gentiles, one party at least, the so called “Judaizers” maintained that in order to be good Christians the pagan converts must be circumcised and to observe the ritual requirements of Mosaic Law (Acts 15: 1ff).
St. Paul, who was commissioned at Antioch to preach to other Diaspora communities, fought vehemently for the liberty of his Gentile converts against the misplaced loyalty to the Jidaizers. He won his case, thanks to the support of the Apostolic authorities of the Jerusalem community, and in particular of St. Peter (Acts 15:7ff; Gal.2:1ff).

9.5.4 Gentile Christianity

Gentile Christianity of which Antioch seems to have been the center in the decade 40-50 AD, was naturally more expansionist and mission-minded than the rather closed community of Jerusalem. They had sent Paul and Barnabas on first missionary journey round 46 AD (Acts 13:2ff); an early tradition records a stay of St. Peter in Antioch before he travelled to Rome. St. Luke traces Paul’s missionary journeys till his arrival in Rome, the center of the Roman Empire and Gentile world. There was something deeply symbolic in the transfer of the 2 great Apostles to Rome and an apparent abandonment of Jerusalem. The Church they left behind, in the charge of James, “the Lord’s brother” (Acts 15:13 and Gal. 2:9), had been the mother-Church of all the foundations; but it was destined to fade out of history, along with the Judaism which was its original setting. According to tradition, these Judeo-Christians left Jerusalem and fled to Polla before the war of 66 AD.

But as long as St. Paul was at liberty, he was careful to inculcate in his converts a filial respect and affection for the Jerusalem community concretely shown by the periodic collections he took up to relieve its poverty (Acts 11:29ff; Gal. 2:10; Rom. 15:25-28).

The flourishing Christianity that we find in Jerusalem in the 4th and 5th centuries AD was not the linear descent of the original Apostolic community, but a re-introduction into the rebuilt Roman city, of the Gentile Christianity that owed its traditions to work of the Apostles in other parts of Palestine and Syria. (NTRG P.19).
The break with Judaism was a slow process of conflict, doubt and struggle, of which there are many echo’s in Paul’s Letters (Gal., Rom. Phil.). After an initial compromise solution (Acts 15), the Christian Judaizers continued to insist on integration into Judaism for Gentile converts, but Paul never gave in on this point and proved his stand theologically in the Roman Epistle. The majority of Jews had not joined the new community and became increasingly hostile against the Christians, who used their Scriptures, but did not observe their Law. The gentile Christians, who were soon the majority were the decisive factors in this process and completed the break with Judaism.

Take Note
It is important to realize that this conflict influenced the early Christian Writings, as we will see. Also discussed is the ongoing issue of “Jesus the Proclaimer” and “Christ the Proclaimed”.

9.5.5 Christianity Becoming “Autonomous”
The book of the Acts of the Apostles (which is given related functional titles) provides invaluable information on the primitive Christian community and the Apostolic Kerygma thereby. It is a crucial NT document focusing on the resurrected Jesus and His Apostles ministering and witnessing to Him even among the Gentiles under the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as the dynamic force and the first generation of Christians and the teething conflict and tension they experienced.

It is in this Lukan Document (Acts of the Apostles) that the followers and disciples of Jesus were first called CHRISTIANS; Though Christianity was rooted in Judaism, even in liturgy and worship, eventually the two painfully split to become autonomous “sects”. Owing to hostile severing reactions, there was a necessary dispersal of Christians outside Palestine even to Rome. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It triggered catholicity of Christianity championed by itinerant Apostles like St. Paul and St. Peter.
9.6 Summary

In this Lecture, we have discussed the healthy controversy on the issue of “Jesus of history” (Jesus the proclaimor) and the “Christ of faith” (Jesus the proclaimed). We have explicated that the eventual break with Judaism was a slow painful process of conflict, doubts and struggle of which there are many echo’s in Paul’s Letters. We have also examined the assertion that the NT was written backwards i.e., commencing with the resurrection rather than with the birth of Jesus Christ. We have also learned that as a result of hostility and other uncomfortable circumstances, a considerable number of Christians dispersed.

The fugitives encountered the Gentiles who, especially in Antioch, remarkably converted to Christianity. An interesting phenomenon occurred thanks to this dispersal: converts to Christianity – Jews and Gentiles mingled freely and as a family of Jesus Christ. They amicably met together as Christians. They, as the lecture indicated, were emancipated from the limiting/discriminative shackles of Judaism thus embracing Christian UNIVERSALITY. St. Paul was an outstanding exponent of this vibrant SOLIDARITY and healthy RELATIONALITY especially in his inter-nationally renowned missionary journeys. He, St. Peter and others worked tediously in accomplishing Jesus’ mandate of spreading and proclaiming the Good News all over- even among the Gentiles. They vigorously and fruitfully undertook Jesus evangelizing mission.

Activity 9.3

Explain the concepts “Jesus of History” and “Christ of Faith”.
9.7 References
LECTURE TEN

APOSTOLIC TEACHING and THE WRITTEN SOURCES

Lecture Outline

10.1 Introduction
10.2 Objectives
10.3 The Written Sources
   10.3.1 Just when this Oral Catechesis to be Committed to writing in whole
   10.3.2 Pauline Writing
   10.3.3 The Gospel
   10.3.4 Other Apostolic Writing
   10.3.5 Johannine Writing
   10.3.6 Further Crucial Reflection
10.4 Summary
10.6 References

10.1 Introduction

In Lecture Nine, we learned about “Jesus of history” and “Christ of faith” and the ongoing controversy on this issue. Now in this Lecture we will explain that the written form of the NT happened after a long introduction especially Judaical tradition. It will be explained that not as Jesus taught or preached or did what He did that the material was put into writing. This occurred after a long period of oral transmission.

The lecture will explicate that kerygma included only basic points of the proclamation of Jesus the Christ namely:

1) Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist and his testimony.
2) His public life, in which His divine mission was established by “signs and wonders” and by the fulfillment of prophecies.
3) His passion and death according to the plan and approval of God.
4) His return in glory (parousia) to judge and complete the work inaugurated by sending the Spirit on the believers, who formed the new Kingdom of God.

There will be an elaboration that each of the above doctrines could in the apostles’ teaching be enlarged upon with innumerable details from the memories of their
experiences. For Jews who accepted Christianity, comparatively little change was required in their moral standards. But converts from the Greco-Roman world had to learn a whole new scale of values and code of practical behavior, most of all in the domain of charity and sexual morality. The uncompromising demands made upon them could be justified only by establishing that such had actually been the teaching and demands of Jesus the Lord whom they had accepted as their Savior. Their initiation into Christian standards of conduct, as well as belief, was given largely in the form of this tradition of Jesus’ instructions, discourses, sentences and testimony. It rested upon the Apostles’ own recollections and testimony. They repeated, explained and interpreted Jesus’ sayings, parables, discourses and miracle-stories; and each did it in his own way, best suited to his audience and occasion.

The lecture will thus bring to awareness that throughout the 30 or 40 years of this oral catechesis a common tradition developed based on the Apostolic eyewitness testimony, but with the usual differentiation of individual emphasis, summarizing, omission and interpretation. It will be shown that St. Paul’s First Letter to Thessalonians is the very first one to be put into writing in the year 50 or 51 AD. The lecture will in addition discuss that the Gospels, Pauline writings etc. have as their common denominator the Person, works, deeds, mission…and commission of Jesus Christ who resurrected and was established as Kyrios (Lord) and Christos (Christ) elevated also to seat an God’s right hand. The Lecture will finally discuss the technical concepts namely: “Evangelist”, “Gospel” and “Evangelization”.

### 10.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain that NT Documents are not a biographical recording of Jesus Christ but diverse recording of orally transmitted material and written proclamation of the early Church.

2. Discuss the NT sources as having been realized after a long period of oral transmission and Judaical background.
3. Explain the Gospels, Pauline writings etc. showing that they have in common the Person, works, deeds, mission…and commission of Jesus Christ who resurrected and was established as Kyrios (Lord) and Christos (Christ) elevated also to seat an God’s right hand.

4. Examine St. Paul’s 1st Letter to Thessalonians as the very 1st NT document to be written and that His writings can be dated chronologically.

5. Discuss the technical concepts namely: “Evangelist”, “Gospel” and “Evangelization”.

10.3 The Written Sources: Earliest Writings
This happened after a long introduction especially Judaical background.

Activity 10.2
Read: Kee and Young, o.c. pp 62-76.

10.3.1 Just when this Oral Catechesis began to be Committed to Writing in Whole, or in part, cannot be dated precisely, but some time during the 2nd half of the 1st century AD, partly before the destruction of the Jerusalem, partly afterwards.

Take Note
The writing of the NT Documents was mainly between the year 50 AD and 100 AD.

The sequence of the writings in the NT Books as explained in Lecture One is not according to a chronological order, but rather an artificial grouping of literally categories: narratives- letters etc. The sequence and the Canon itself differed from place to in the beginning and was only fixed in the 5th century. Special introductions to each of these groups of Books (letters) will be given at its proper place: here we limit ourselves to the earliest writings.
10.3.2 Pauline Writings

It is now universally accepted that Paul wrote his immortal Letters a decade or more before the Gospels: 1 and 2 Thess. are the first writings of our NT, since they can be dated between 50-53 AD; then followed 1 and 2 Cor round 55 AD Gal 57, Rom58 etc.

**Take Note**

Paul’s 1st Letter to Thessalonians is the very 1st NT document to be written. His writings can be dated chronologically.

All his Letters are **occasional writings** to answer from a distance particular problems and questions which arose in his newly founded Christian communities. They are no “orderly accounts” of systematic catechesis, but they contain bits and pieces of his catechesis suited to a particular community and time. They give us valuable information on these early Christian communities: their faith and practice of the Christian life, their struggles and failures, and Paul’s advice on all these issues. Taken together, these Letters provide a consistent pattern of Paul’s *Didache*, which centers round the risen Christ and His redemptive work, the post-Easter Christ.

Apparently Paul did not have access to any written records of Jesus’ life and sayings. Although he often refers to Jesus’ teaching, and even alludes to His words (1 Cor 11:23ff), even one not preserved in the Gospels (Acts 20:35), Paul never mentions the Gospels or hints at them. It has been argued that Paul was not interested in the “Pre-Easter Jesus”, though it is more accurate to say that Paul had not known the pre-Easter Jesus: 2Cor 5:16.

10.3.3 The Gospels

**Activity 10.3**

Read: *Jerusalem Bible*, NT pp. 7-8.
The main reason of writing was to preserve the material before the “extinction” of the eye-witnesses. This occurred around the 2nd half of the 1st century. There has been reconstruction of the writing period of the Gospels.

When the eye-witnesses of Jesus’ life began to disappear, measures were taken to commit to writing their testimony on the common oral tradition. Luke 1:1 mentions “many” predecessors in narrating these events, which seems to mean more than just Matthew and Mark. From internal evidence and literary comparison of the 3 first Gospels, the following steps can be discovered with some degree of probability, though not with absolute certainty.

The Kerygma was the core of the common oral tradition, as Peter’s summarized discourses in Acts show. In practice they included more detailed narratives: principally the story of the Passion, which must have assumed its stereotyped pattern very early, as the close similarity of the 4 Gospel accounts shows. It also included other anecdotes (Short stories and events about Christ’s life e.g. prayer, fasting and miracles) from Jesus’ life, which explained His Person, mission and power (miracle stories), and especially those which illustrated His teaching, such as His sayings, parables and pronouncements. Constant oral repetition of this material stereotyped (unified) the tradition.

Early collections of these anecdotes were then written: first small, later more extensive. Episodes originally narrated separately and independently of each would naturally be grouped together chronologically (e.g. Mk 1:16-39, the Day of Capharnaum) or logically (e.g. Mk 2:1-3:6, the Five Disputes).

This was the stage at which an author intervened, who according to Tradition was Matthew the Apostle. He was the first to compose a “Gospel” in Aramaic, in the meaning of a continuous narrative of Jesus’ words and deeds from His baptism by John to the resurrection. (Matthew Aramaic).

Soon afterwards a “collection of sayings” of Jesus was made, which were either not contained in Matthew Aramaic or were presented there in a different form. Both Matthew
Aramaic and the Collection were put into Greek and eventually various forms of these translations came to exist.

Then several other Evangelists wrote down (in Greek) the Didache of their masters in a Gospel form: Mark recorded Peter’s Didache, using Matthew Aramaic, but omitting many of the sayings of Jesus.

Then a revision of Matthew Aramaic was made using Mark and the collection of Sayings: this is called Matthew Greek. It contained many additions, especially 2 chapters of infancy narrative.

Finally Paul’s disciple and companion Luke, using all his predecessors, composed his Gospel in a rather systematic way of his own. He later also added a further narrative on the growth of the Church from the Jerusalem community to Paul’s arrival in Rome (Acts).

Matthew Aramaic and Mark were probably written before 70 AD, while Matthew Greek and Luke were done so after 70 AD.

Take Note
Further analysis of this reconstruction will be studied in Lecture Eleven dealing with the formation of the Synoptic Gospels.

10.3.4 Other Apostolic Writings
James, Jude, Peter and John have left us some short Letters according to very early tradition. These were not addressed to specific communities and are, therefore, called universal or “catholic” Letters.

Take Note
Their main aim/purpose is to encourage and comfort Christians in times of trial and to warn against false teachers.

James and Jude make use of the Gospels as well as certain apocryphal books of Judaism (Jude 6, 14).
1st and 2nd Peter seem to have been written from Rome to the Gentile Christians of Asia Minor (1Pet 1:1). They made liberal use of specific Pauline themes in Romans and Ephesians, and even alluded directly to Paul’s writings: 2 Peter 3:15-16).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take Note</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All these Letters contain a valuable summary of the Apostolic Didache around 70 AD.</td>
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10.3.5 Johannine Writings

2nd century Tradition testifies that John the Apostle wrote his Gospel from Ephesus round 90 AD. This 4th Gospel marks a definite stage of theological development over the three Synoptic Gospels. It has preserved the main kerygmatic message, but shows greater interest in the theological significance of Jesus’ words and deeds (signs), and is more concerned than the Synoptics with worship and sacraments. The complex problem of relationship with the Synoptics will be studied later.

10.3.6 Further Crucial Reflections

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intext Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>What do you understand by the titles “Evangelist” “Gospel” and the concept “Evangelization”?</td>
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Today, the term “Evangelist” is technically reserved to the writers of the Gospels. The concept “Gospel” has an etymological meaning from Greek, Latin and English meaning “Good News”.

Among the reasons that triggered the writing of the Gospels was the fear that the eye-witnesses would disappear with the crucial material after their respective deaths.

St. Paul is credited for coming up with the oldest written NT document. His 1st Letter to Thessalonians is the oldest NT book to be committed to writing- 50/51 AD. As we observed, Paul’s writings can reasonably follow a chronological order-though the 27 NT books follow a classical/traditional sequence. His monumental writings are highly pastoral, vibrant and fascinating.
Sooner or later the Apostles had to be assisted by disciples, also called “evangelists”. Literally this means: anyone who proclaims and explains the “Good News”. The Latin word “evangelium” is derived from the Greek term *eu-aggello* = to proclaim, announce good tidings, news. The English world “Gospel” was originally in old English: Good Spell, which meant announcing good news. Later it became God spell and then Gospel.

Nowadays the term “evangelist” is limited to the authors of the 4 canonical Gospels, but it has the wider meaning of preacher of the Good News of Jesus the Christ, as used in the NT itself. Philip the deacon “evangelized” the Ethiopians: Acts 8: 26f- and was thus entitled evangelist; Timothy is Paul’s closest associate in the work of evangelization: 2Tim 4:5; Phil 2:19ff. Paul ranks the evangelist in the 3rd place in his list of charismatic offices in the Church: 2Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11.

These evangelists helped the apostles in the teaching of the oral catechesis or *Didache* according to the growing common tradition, from which the latter written collections would be made.

The above commissioned enterprise i.e. embracing, spreading, propagating, deepening, proclaiming and transmitting the Good News is called Evangelizing/Evangelization.

### 10.4 Summary

In this lecture, we examined the NT as consisting of diverse recording of orally transmitted material and written proclamation of the early Church. Awareness was created that NT Documents came into being after a long tradition of oral transmission and Judaical background. The lecture, moreover, discussed the underlying principle of diverse NT Documents as the Person, works, deeds…mission and delegation of preaching and teaching duty of Jesus Christ who resurrected and was established as Lord and Christ thereby being elevated to seat at God’s right hand. Additionally, the lecture created the awareness that St. Paul’s 1st Letter to Thessalonians was the very 1st NT document to be written and that His writings can be dated
chronologically. Additionally, the Lecture discussed the technical concepts i.e. “Evangelist”, “Gospel” and “Evangelization”.

Activity 10.4

2. Discuss the Pentecost event (Lk 2:1-13) and how it inspired the Apostles in their missionary enterprise.
3. In view of the growth of the NT, explicate the First Letter of St. Paul to the Church in Thessalonica.

10.5 References

LECTURE ELEVEN
TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY TRADITION

Lecture Outline
11.1 Introduction
11.2 Objectives.
11.3 Some of the Main Early Witnesses
11.4 The Synoptics as Different From John
11.5 Recent Synoptic Studies
11.6 Summary
11.7 References

11.1 Introduction
In this lecture we are going to give and elaborate the tradition of the Early Church as unanimous on the authors of the 4 Canonical Gospels, though on the date and place of writing there is some divergence or ignorance and that further details can be found in the introductions to each Gospel. The lecture will also examine and contrast the Synoptic Gospels and St, John’s Gospel. It will show that the 4th Gospel is quite independent from the Synoptics in content, form (in style, vocabulary) and theological character.

11.2 Objectives
At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:
1. Analyze the ideas of some of the main early witnesses on the authorship of the 4 canonical Gospels.
2. Examine the Synoptic Gospels as different from the Fourth Gospel.
3. Identify and elaborate briefly the three 20th century main very critical methods of the study of the Gospels.
11.3 Some of the Main Early Witnesses

**Intext Question**
What are the contributions of Papias, Ireneus and Tertulian as early witnesses with regard to the formation of the Bible?

Papias, Ireneus and Tertulian

**Papias.** Bishop of Hierapolis around 130 AD:

“Matthew put together in Hebrew (=Aramaic) language the discourses (logia) and each one translated them as best he could.” (Eusebius, H.E. 111,39.15)

“Mark, having been the interpreter (Hermeneut) of Peter, wrote down carefully, though not unorder, all that he remembered, both words and deeds, of the Lord. For he had neither heard the Lord nor followed Him, but only at a later date, as I have already said, followed Peter. Peter arranged his instructions according to the needs and not as making arrangement of the Lord’s words. So Mark was not wrong to write down some things as he remembered them, for he took care to omit or falsify nothing which he heard (memory) (from Peter). (Eusebius, H.E. 111, 39, 15).

**Ireneus** (c, 140-200) Bishop of Lyons, disciple of St. Polycarp):

“Matthew (preaching) among the Hebrews also produced in their language a writing of the Gospel, while Peter and Paul were preaching and the Church in Rome” (Eusebius, H.E. V, 8,2).

“After their (Peter and Paul) death, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, left us Peter’s preaching in writing.”(Eusebius, H.E. V, 8,3).

After them (Mt, Mk, Lk) John (placed in Ephesus), the disciple of the Lord, who also reclined on His breast, issued a Gospel while he was still living at Ephesus in Asia.

Tertullian (c. 150-225) great North African theologian, later Montanist:

“There is Luke, an Antiochene Syria, a physician by profession, a disciple of the Apostles; but afterwards he was a companion of Paul until Paul’s martyrdom. After serving the Lord unswervingly he fell asleep at 84 years of age without wife or children in Boeotia full of the Holy Spirit. Gospels had already been written by Matthew in Judea and by Mark in Rome, and Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote this whole Gospel in the neighborhood of Achaea (Southern Greece). In the preface he tells us that it was necessary to provide the Gentile converts with an accurate account of the economy on Salvation so that they should neither be distracted by the fables of the Jews noe miss the truth being deceived by heretical and vain imaginings…” (Adv. Marc. IV, 5).

“According to Papias, the dear disciple of John, in his 5 exegetical books, this Gospel (of John) was published and sent to the churches of Asia by John himself during his lifetime. (Ibid).

The latter Tradition repeated substantially these earliest witnesses.

11. 4 The Synoptics as Different from John

When the 4 canonical Gospels are compared to one another, it is obvious at once that Mt, Mk and Lk have much in common, and in general present the life and teaching of Jesus from the same point of view. These three are called the Synoptic Gospels (always grouped together) from the Greek word synopsis (seeing together/ seeing in the same way). They differ considerably from John’s Gospel in many particulars. Let us analyze some of the divergences:

**Activity 11.1**

Revisit Lecture One to point out the divergences between John and the Synoptics.
Take Note

The 4th Gospel is quite independent from the Synoptics in content, form (in style, vocabulary) and theological character. Even in antiquity the profound divergences between John and the Synoptics were seen and discussed and a few groups rejected the 4th Gospel. The early Christian writers defended the 4th Gospel against these objections by proposing the thesis that John intended to supplement the Synoptics both in content and theology: the so called Supplementary Theory of Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Augustine etc. Modern scholarship has produced several other explanations (Wikenhauser. NT Introduction, pp.300ff).

The Supplementary Theory creates the awareness that John wanted to supplement what the others hadn’t written hence the differences. This is also held even today but with some modifications.

11.5 Recent Synoptic Studies

During the 20th century an enormous amount of critical research has been devoted to the study of the Gospels and the methods have consequently been developed and improved. Very critical methods have come up. These are:

1) **Literary/Source Criticism:** The earliest stages of this research dealt with the composition and literary analysis of the Gospels especially in a comparative way to discover the interdependence of the Synoptics (Synoptic Gospels). This was called the “Synoptic Problem” and is quite complicated. There was also a tendency to find harmonizing solutions for the many diverse texts, sequence and situations.

2) **Form Criticism:** After World War 1 (1920s) the emphasis shifted to the pre-literary (oral) stages of the Gospels. Form criticism was applied to those units of the common tradition to recover the Logia of Jesus Himself and thus to reconstruct, if possible, the “historical Jesus” as different from the “Jesus of Faith” as presented by the Gospels. (Dibelius, Bultmann e.a.).
3) **Redaction Criticism:** More recent research by Bornkamm, Conzelmann, Jeremias e.a. examine the Gospels themselves again as a unified literary unites by authors who each had their own (different) purpose, approach, emphasis and theological insights. They arranged or “redacted” and organized their material. Redaction criticism attempts to discover the different approach and emphases of each Gospel author.

**11.6 Summary**

In this lecture, we have analyzed some of the main early witnesses’ ideas on the authorship of the 4 canonical Gospels. We have also examined the Synoptic Gospels comparing them with the Gospel according to St. John. Furthermore, we have given and briefly discussed the three 20th century very critical methods of the study of the Gospels which will be profoundly examined in Lecture Twelve, Lecture Thirteen and Lecture Fourteen.

The lecture has further explained briefly that all 3 critical methods have their own real merits and have produced a highly advanced and scientific knowledge of the Gospels as never reached before. It was noted that they also brought certain exaggerations, and wild hypotheses, which are both the price and stimulant for scientific development and that only further research can prove or disprove such hypotheses!

**Activity 11.2**

Give and elaborate some of the Early Church ideas with regard to the authorship of the Gospels.
11.7 References


LECTURE TWELVE
LITERARY CRITICISM: THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

Lecture Outline

12.1 Introduction
12.2 Objectives
12.3 Definition- The Synoptic Problem
12.4 Comparing the 3 Synoptics
   12.4.1 Mark
   12.4.2 Mathew
   12.4.3 Luke
12.5 The Agreement of the Synoptics
   12.5.1 The Gospel Material Itself
   12.5.2 The Arrangement or Sequence Agreement
   12.5.3 Agreement in the Very Wording
12.6 The Divergences between the Synoptics
   12.6.1 There are obvious Differences in the Material Confined to Individual Gospel
   12.6.2 Divergence in the Material Itself
   12.6.3 Divergence in the Agreement
12.7 Attempted Solution
   12.7.1 St. Augustine’s Effort
   12.7.2 The Theory of a Primitive Gospel
   12.7.3 The Fragment Theory
   12.7.4 The Tradition Theory
   12.7.5 The Utilization Theory
   12.7.6 The Two Source Theory
   12.7.7 The Two Source Theory
   12.7.8 Vaganeys’ Recent Theory (1954)
12.8 Summary
12.9 References
12.1 Introduction
In this Lecture, we shall discuss the nature of Literary Criticism. The lecture will explain the Synoptic Problem as the core of Literary Criticism. With these insights, the lecture will further analyze the 3 Synoptic Gospels. It will also expose and examine a considerable number of attempts in giving solutions to the Synoptic Problem pointing out both positive aspects and the limitations. It will further identify and show that the striking similarities between the Synoptics exist both in the texts as well as in the sequence of the passages. A very thorough scissor-and-past analysis to reveal the following facts in brief:

1) Of the 661 verses of Mk:
   606 reappear in Mt in somewhat shortened form;
   350 reappear in Lk.
2) Of the 1068 verses of Mt:
   500 contain the substance of the 606 verses of Mk
   235 are in common with Lk, mainly discourse material, not found in Mk.
3) Of the 1149 verses of Lk:
   350 reappear in Mk
   235 are common with Mt.

12.2 Objectives
At the end of this lecture, the learner should be able to:

1. Define Literary Criticism and Analyze the three Synoptic Gospels using Literary Criticism for comparison purposes.
2. Discuss the Synoptic Problem through a fourfold perspective namely: the nature of the Synoptic Problem; comparing the 3 Synoptics; the agreement of the Synoptics; and the divergences between the Synoptics.
3. Examine a considerable number of solutions to the Synoptic Problem pointing out both the positive aspects and the shortcomings.
12.3 The Synoptic Problem
The Synoptic Problem is the complication/difficulty posed by the unique mixture of widespread agreement and notable divergences within the first 3 Gospels. It is no longer a problem of harmonizing the Gospels, but of elucidating the history of their relationships and origins/sources.

Take Note
The Synoptic Problem should never scandalize you. Neither should you fall into the temptation of forcing Mt say what Mk says or Lk and vice versa to force a concurrence. You should, instead, endeavor to aim at explanations and sources etc. The literature is enormous though the recent redaction criticism has slowed down the output.

12.4 Comparing the 3 Synoptics

Activity 12.1
Indicate and explain the kind of questions Literary/Source Criticism tackles.

This academic exercise will give us crucial illuminations with regard to the divergences and convergences of the 3 Synoptics. It will also be exciting to learn the issues of material peculiar to individual Gospel, material belonging to double tradition and that falling under the category triple tradition.

12.4.1 Mark
This Gospel has 16 Chapters, 661 verses 1524 lines in the Greek text of Nestle.
The whole of this shortest Gospel occur almost also in Mt (though condensed) or in Lk or in both (Triple tradition). You should bear in mind that Mark was before Greek Mathew.
Mark has only about 30 verses peculiar to him, which contain:

- 2 miracles: cure of a deaf mute: 7:32-37
  Cure of a blind man: 8:22-26
Take Note
in these 2 cures, Christ uses spittle as *dawa* (medicine) unlike in Mt or Lk where He uses words.

- 3 short narratives: 3:20; 11:11; 14:51ff (auto-biography of Mk. He is the one who run in his birthday soot).
- 1 parable: the seed growing by itself: 4:26-29.

Take Note
Mark was before Greek Matthew. He is a verbose Evangelist telling/describing vividly and in details. That is why his Gospel is so human and fascinating. This reveals his personality as a reporter.

12.4.2 Matthew
It has 28 Chapters, 1068 verses, 2500 lines in the Greek Text.
It contains in 500 verses the substance of more than 600 vv. of Mk (condensed).
It shares with Luke 235 vv not found in Mk, mainly discourses (double tradition).
It has a large amount- about 330vv- peculiar to him which contains:

1) The infancy history 1:1-2:23 different from Lk.
2) 8 parables: cockle-treasure in the field-pearl-net (13:3b:3bff)
   Unmerciful servant (18:23-35); laborers in the vineyard (20:1-6);2 sons (21:28-32); wise and foolish virgins (25:1-13).
3) Some narratives: 2 cures: 9:27-31, 32-34;
   Temple-tax: 17:24-27; end of Judas 27:3-10;
4) More than 50 verses of Logia or Sayings of Jesus.

Take Note
Matthew as a tax collector manifests an economy of words, business character and is less human compared to Mk. His experience with money as a tax collector is reflected in his commercial and administrative parables and
end of Judas showing that he was not a friend of Judas. Moreover, his familiarity with his intended recipients of his book, the Jewish readers, made him document a lot of material friendly to his readers. Material peculiar to him is almost 1/3rd of his book.

12.4.3 Luke

Luke has 24 Chapters, 1149 verses, 2670 lines in the Greek Text. This longest Gospel took over ½ of Mk’s material (350 vv) and omitted the other ½, which occurs especially in Mk 6:45-8:26 and is therefore called: “the Great Omission”.

Strange still Luke substituted part of this omitted material by parallel passages e.g. Mk1:16-20 and Lk 5:1-11 and omitted the rest simply without substituting, probably because he found it unimportant for his Gentile readers; e.g. 7:1-23.

Luke shares 235vv with Mt, which do not appear in Mk: This is so-called “Double Tradition” (Mt and Lk) which contains:

1) 3 narratives: the temptation Mt 4:1-11= Lk 4:1-13;
   - Ruler of Capharnaum: Mt 8:5-13= Lk 7:2ff;
   - Deputation from John Baptist: Mt 11:2-19= Lk 7:18-35.

2) 7 parables: Building a house: Mt 7:24-27= Lk 6:47-49;
   - The lost sheep: 18:12-14= 15:4-7;
   - The great supper: 22:1-14= 14:15-24;
   - Thief in the night 24:42-44= 12:39-40;
   - Loyal and disloyal servant: 24:45-51= 12:42-48;

3) A large number of Sayings of Jesus: according to the “Two Source theory” this material postulates a common source- Quelle (Q).

There is more peculiar material in Luke than in others: 548vv which contains:
Take Note
Almost half of Luke’s material is peculiar to him, and as this part is so rich, it has been suggested that in addition to the Gospel of Mk, Luke also used as a source another complete Gospel.

- A considerable number of narratives:
  - 5 miracle stories:
    - Rich haul of fish 5:1-11;
    - Widow’s son of Naim 7:11-17;
    - The deformed woman 13:10-17;
    - The dropsical man 14:1-6;
    - The ten lepers 17:11-19.
  - Other short stories:
    - Sending of 70 disciples 10:1ff;
    - Visit of Jesus to Martha and Mary 10:38-42;
    - Jesus and Zachaeus 19:1-10.
  - The Passion narrative: Luke treated Mark’s history of the Passion with greater freedom than Mt, making 12 transpositions, and inserting his own peculiar material:
    - Jesus sweats blood in the garden 22:43ff;
    - Jesus before Herod 23:6-16;
    - The women on the way of the cross 23:27-31;
    - The words to the good thief 23:40-43.
    - The resurrection Narrative: appearances to the disciples of Emmaus, and to the 12 in Jerusalem, 24:13-53.
  - He has 16 parables peculiar to him namely:

Activity 12.2
Give the sixteen parables peculiar to Luke.
Take Note

Luke has a huge number of parables to himself that include some of the most beautiful monumental ones. His Gospel has characteristics that justify its qualification as a “social Gospel”, “humanitarian Gospel”, “feminist Gospel”, “Pneumatological Gospel” etc.

a) The 2 debtors 7:41ff;
b) The good Samaritan 10:30-37;
c) The importunate friend 11:5-8;
d) The rich farmer 12:16-21;
e) The lord’s return 13:35-38;
f) The barren fig tree 13:6-9;
g) Places at table 14:7-11;
h) Building of a tower 14:28-30;
i) Waging war 14:31ff;
j) The lost drachma 15:8-10;
k) The prodigal son 15:11-32;
l) The unjust steward 16:1-12;
m) The rich spendthrift 16:19-21;
n) Slaves who must always work 17:7-10;
o) The unjust judge (18:1-8);

- Luke further has some 55 verses of the Sayings of Jesus (Logia).

12.5 The Agreement of the Synoptics
There is a vivid synthesis among the Synoptics. A very considerable part of the material occurs in all three or at least in two of the Synoptics (Triple or Double Tradition).

12.5.1 The Gospel Material Itself/Content
   1) -Narratives: The greater part belongs to the Triple Tradition. This gave rise to the hypothesis of a common pre-gospel form, called the “Synoptic Foundation Work”
or the “Primitive Gospel”: J. Michaelis, Lessing, Eichhorn etc. Mark would have preserved this pre-gospel form most faithfully.

2) Discourses: A considerable part of the discourse material occur in all 3 Gospels:
   - the substance of the Parables and eschatological discourses.
   - the 5 conflicts in Galilee and the 5 in Jerusalem.
   - the Beelzebub discourse.

12.5.2 The Arrangement or Sequence Agreement

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<th>Take Note</th>
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<td>The Synoptic Gospels tend to follow the same basic framework. A similar outlook with basic themes and discourses connected with events.</td>
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There is also far-reaching agreement in the arrangement of the material. All 3 Gospels follow in essentials the same outline story as follows:

1) The preaching and baptism of John is the signal for Jesus to leave the quiet of Nazareth.
2) After the arrest of the Baptist Jesus begins His public ministry in Galilee, where He calls His first disciples.
3) Galilee is the principle scene of His work, especially Capharnaum and its surroundings, and the Sea of Galilee.
4) After some time He sends 12 disciples on a travelling mission in Galilee.
5) Afterwards He withdraws to the pagan territory of Tyre and Sydon and the Decapolis, though He does not undertake a proper ministry there. (Missing in Luke: the great omission).
6) Peter’s confession at Caesarea-Philippi and the 1st prophesy of the Passion mark a turning point in Jesus’ work.
7) He now goes through Galilee and by Perea and Jericho to Jerusalem for the Pasch of the Passion (heading for His death and Peter eventually taking over): during this journey 2 more prophesies of the Passion are made. (Luke inserted most of his material in this journey, thus called: “the great insertion” or “the travel document”).

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8) The events of Holy Week are described almost identically: Mt and Mk agree entirely in their history of the Passion. Luke has made some slight additions to their account. He has some freer interpolations.

12.5.3 Agreement in the Very Wording

Many passages also show close agreement in wording:

1) In their citations of Isaiah 40:3 they agree neither with the Hebrew text nor with the LXX, but they agree among themselves: Mk1:3 par.

2) Some rare and unusual words and expressions occur in all 3 or in 2 of them: “sons of the bridegroom” Mk2:19 par; the little wing Mt 4:5 par.

3) We have cases where whole sentences or groups of sentences correspond almost word for word, e.g. Mt 3:7b-10, 12= Lk 3:7b-9; Mt 20: 21-23= Mk 10:37-40.

Take Note

So among the 3 Synoptics there is very extensive agreement in content, arrangement and often even in wording. This agreement is particularly striking when they are compared with John’s Gospel. A Gospel which not only has little material in common with the Synoptics- the correspondences are closest in the history of the Passion- but also follows a different outline from them.

12.6 The Divergences between the Synoptics

NB: Besides the material which is peculiar to each one, there are also some divergences within the common material-i.e. even within Triple Tradition or double tradition. Redaction criticism to be handled latter in Lecture Fourteen will give us the reasons behind it.

12.6.1 There are obvious differences in the material confined to individual Gospels.

This is material peculiar to respective Gospel.

12.6.2 Divergences in the Material Itself:

1) The Our Father has 7 petitions in Mt (6:7ff) and only 5 in Lk (11:2ff).

2) Mk and Lk speak of the cure of:
A possessed man at Gadara: Mk 5:1; Lk 8:26.
A blind man at Jericho: Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18: 35.
One animal at the entry of Jesus in Jerusalem: Mk 11:1-7;   Lk 19:28. In all these cases Mt speaks of two!

3) Mt has 8 Beatitudes (5: 1-12); Lk has only 4- and 4 woes (6: 20-26).

12.6.3 Divergences in the Arrangement

1) The Double Tradition Mt-Lk is mainly grouped by Mt in the 6 great synthetic discourses; in Lk it is scattered through Chapters 3-17 (19).

2) The parable Chapter is common to all three: Mt 13; Mk 4; Lk 8. But Mt has 7 parables; Mk has 5; and Lk has 2.

3) Jesus’ rejection at Nazareth is placed by Mt and Mk at the end of the Galilean ministry (Mt13: 53-58; Mk 6: 1-6), while Lk puts it at the beginning (Lk 4: 15-30).

12.7 Attempted Solutions

Take Note
As we expose/ disclose and examine several attempted solutions, remember that no theory answers all questions. Each theory gives SOME solutions.

It was only in the mid-18th century that Scriptural studies had a “Synoptic Problem”, and thorough scientific research only began in the 19th century. From antiquity the 4 Gospels had been compared to one another, but this was merely done to harmonize their accounts.

12.7.1 St. Augustine’s Effort
St, Augustine faced the challenge in his book “De consensus Evangelistarum” (c. 400 AD), which is an apologetic work against the pagan allegation that the Gospels contain contradictions. Only in passing does he deal with the question of their interdependence; he considered that they wrote in the order: Mt-Mk-Lk-Jn and that each used his predecessors. Until the end of the Middle Ages his harmonistic solutions were accepted without discussions- with no queries or questions.
12.7.2 The Theory of a Primitive Gospel (Lessing; Eichhorn, 1804, Vannutelli 1942)
This suggests that all 3 Synoptics drew their material from a lost Primitive Gospel, which was latter translated into Greek and revised a number of times. The 3 Evangelists used different editions of this revised translations, and each independently from one another.

Take Note
This theory is too simplistic and does not explain sufficiently the striking divergences.

12.7.3 The Fragment Theory (Schleiermacher, 1832)
According to this theory, the 3 Synoptics drew their materials from a series of collections of Sayings, miracles, parables etc., which were translated into Greek, then enlarged and revised. Each Evangelist used these in his own way.

Take Note
The theory does not explain sufficiently the uniformity of structure and sequence.

12.7.4 The Tradition Theory (Herder, Gieseler, 1818, and many others)
Its stance is that all the 3 Evangelists drew their material from a fixed, oral and stereotyped tradition only and write independently; there was no primitive written Gospel document. Divergences arose in this oral tradition, when it was preached in Greek to Gentiles in the Diaspora. The Evangelists recorded the different presentations of this tradition by Matthew, Peter and Paul.

Take Note
This theory, which was quite popular in the past, emphasizes correctly the importance of the early oral tradition, which is the starting point for the later
12.7.5 The Utilization Theory

This is rather a group of theories, which all stress the literary dependence of the 3 Synoptics: they used= copied one another. The theories vary according to the order accepted for the composition of the Gospels:

Haag e.a.: Mt (In Hb)-Mk-Lk: each used his predecessor(s).

Griesbach: Mt-Lk-Mk: Mk is an excerpt from Mt and LK. Was it because Mk is the shortest Gospel?

Lachman: Mk-Mt-Lk: Mk represents the common source of MT and Lk.

Take Note

The 1st one is too simplistic; the 2nd one not very popular; the 3rd is very popular.

Lachman laid the foundation for the still popular theory of the Two Sources, which is still the most universally accepted theory, especially among non-Catholics scholars.

12.7.6 The Two Source Theory (Holzman, 1850; Wernle, 1889 e.a.)

Take Note

An awareness is created that Mark is the oldest Gospel and that the foundation for Mt and Lk. But both Mt and Lk used also a 2nd written Source, which consisted mainly of the Sayings of Jesus= the Logia Source, or Discourse Source, and called: Quelle” in German, meaning “Source”. In addition to Q, Mt and Lk used also some other special sources, which would explain the peculiar material of each one.
12.7.7 The Two Source Theory has established correctly

(a) The Priority of Mark

When Mt and Lk reproduce Mk’s material, they also follow Mk’s arrangement; when they together differ from Mk, they also differ from one another. Both, therefore, depend on Mk. Mt adopted almost all Mk’s material and sequence, and then fitted the non-Markan material wherever it fitted best. Lk adopted only half of Mk’s material and skillfully inserted the non-Markan material in certain blocks.

(b) The 2nd Source or Quelle

Take Note

Remember Q contains Logia or sayings or discourses.

Mt and Lk must have used a second main source (written) for their common discourse material which was not known to Mk. Only this can explain the often word for word agreement of the Double Tradition- Mk + Lk.

This explains satisfactorily the “doublets” (occurs twice) of Jesus’ Sayings in Mt and Lk: one is taken from Mk and the other from Q: e.g. Mt 10:38ff (= Lk 14:27 + 17:33= Q) = Mt 16:24ff = Mk 8:34.

This Quelle was originally composed in Aramaic, but went through a number of Greek translations and revisions. Mt and Lk used different editions, which explains part of the divergences.

(c) There is no Direct Literary Dependence Between Mt and Lk

Mt and Lk had a common source for the non-Markan material, but the considerable amount of peculiar material in both and their quite different arrangement of this material and of the Double Tradition material, suggests direct literary dependence. This last point, however, is not so universally accepted as the former 2 points.

The Two-Source Theory remains till today the most widely accepted explanation of the Synoptic Problem, even though it has not solved all questions.
12.8 Vaganay’s Recent Theory (1954)

**Intext Question**
How does Vaganay synthesizes his predecessors?

Dissatisfied with the unresolved questions of the Two-Source Theory, **Leon Vaganay**, professor at Lyons University, produced a very complex theory, in which he combined various former as well as new elements with the two-Source Theory. But even he did not solve all the problems either!

It has the following 7 stages:

- Oral tradition in Aramaic (o).
- The pre-Gospel Collections in Aramaic and latter Greek (E) - (not yet a Gospel).
- Matthew Aramaic (Mt A) an extended pre-Gospel Collection.
- The second Synoptic Source (S or Q).
- The Gospel of Mark, based on Mt A - (1st real Gospel).
- The Gospel of Matthew in Greek (Mt G).

**12.8 Summary**

In this Lecture, we have explained the nature of Literary Criticism. The lecture has discussed the Synoptic Problem as the very kernel of Literary Criticism. With these insights, the lecture has further analyzed the 3 Synoptic Gospels. It has also exposed and examined a considerable number of attempts in giving solutions to the Synoptic Problem indicating both the merits and the limitations thereby.

After the exposure or disclosure of the above attempted solutions with regard to the Synoptic Problem, the lecture has created the awareness that no theory answers all questions adequately. That each is an effort but with own contributions and shortcomings as adequately elaborated above- but this should
not make you be quick to conclude that there are contradictions in Scriptures and, therefore, the Bible is not authentic.

The lecture has also empowered you to learn that Literary/ Source/ Higher Criticism deals mainly with written sources/ the text itself. That it also tackles literary organized oral sources. The lecture, furthermore analyzed the kind of questions the above Criticism handles namely: Were sources used or were they not used? Who wrote these sources? How were the sources changed? How do we locate the sources in time? To what extent were the sources used? Were they used holistically or partially utilized? In what manner did the author(s) use them? How far is the inter-dependence of the Synoptics?

Activity 12.3

Elaborate Source/Literary Criticism thereby highlighting the Synoptic Problem.

12.9 References


LECTURE THIRTEEN
FORM CRITICISM OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Lecture Outline
13.1 Introduction
13.2 Objectives
13.3 Setting Basic Reflections
13.4 Rudolf Bultmann
13.5 Martin Diberius
13.6 Assessment of Form Criticism
   13.6.1 The Synoptic Gospels are Compilation
   13.6.2 The Classification of the Unit into Forms is a Difficult Task
   13.6.3 To Ascribe the Making of a Tradition Exclusively to the Creative Power of an Anonymous Community is False
13.7 Reaction to Bultmann
   13.7.1 In Germany
   13.7.2 Great Britain
   13.7.3 Catholic Biblical Scholarship
13.8 Summary
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13.2 Introduction

In this lecture, we shall discuss and assess Form Criticism. We shall see that shortly after World War 1 several scholars, like Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius - among others - dissatisfied with the meager results of the Literary Criticism of the Gospels, began to investigate the Gospel traditions from a different point of view.

Take Note

“In appropriate cases the interpreter is free to seek out what sound elements there
are in the method of Form- history and these he can duly make use of to gain a fuller understanding of the Gospels.” (Pontifical Biblical Commission Instruction, 4/1964). This is quite an event- permission to Biblical scholars to follow Form and Redaction Criticisms. Before then, non-Catholics had done the above for 40 years without Catholic cooperation.

The lecture will explain that these scholars asked themselves: what is likely to have happened during the transmission of Jesus’ teaching and the narratives about His ministry during the generation or two when they circulated by word of mouth before being reduced to writing? With this in mind, the lecture will examine the contribution of scholars like Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius- among others. It will, additionally, give and evaluate select Biblical scholars’ reactions to Rudolf Bultmann’s radical ideas.

13.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the nature of Form Criticism and that scholars like Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius, unhappy with the shortcomings of Literary Criticism, began to investigate the Gospel traditions from a different perspective.

2. Examine the contribution of scholars like Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius.

3. Assess the advantages and inherent limitations of Form Criticism in the realm of historical critical method of NT study.

4. Evaluate the invaluability of some select Biblical scholars’ reaction to Rudolf Bultmann’s radicalism.

13.3 Setting Basic Reflections

Several German scholars, especially Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann (a heavily criticized Lutheran scholar), analyzed and classified the units of Gospel materials into the following literary forma (without minding so much who said what):
1) Pronouncement stories (a narrative leading to a significant pronouncement) e.g. Mk 3:31-35.
2) Miracle stories.
3) Parables.
4) Stories about Jesus. (e.g. Mk 4:35-41)
5) I-sayings. (Mainly in the Sermon on the Mount episode e.g Mt5:20ff.)
6) Legends.

In addition to analyzing the Gospels in such units according to their form, the Form critics also sought to reconstruct the conditions in the primitive Christian community in which the first unconscious shaping of the Gospel materials took place. This (category of) “situation-in-life”, as it is called included:

1) Early missionary preaching (kerygma/preaching).
2) Liturgy.
3) Sermons.
4) Catechetical instructions (Didache/the teaching).
5) Controversies and apologetical sermons.
6) Disciplinary measures (steps taken by the Church) in early Christian Church.

Take Note

NB: The name given to this new approach was “Formgeschichtliche Methode”, or in English: “Form Criticism”, since it is a method which concentrates on the form or structure of the primitive Gospel tradition.

The method was not entirely new: it had already been applied to parts of the OT, notably Geneses and Psalms, by H. Gunkel. But it is within the field of Synoptic criticism that it has grown and developed.

The benefits derived from this kind of analysis of the Gospels were very real. Instead of concentrating on a scissors-and-past type of literary criticism, attention was now directed to the practical interests and needs of the early Church in which the Gospel tradition circulated and took shape. It was now fully appreciated that the history of Jesus was
never viewed as a mere incident of the past; it was seen rather as a vital (living) power always operative, challenging and controlling the lives of His followers in the present. This continued use of His words and deeds, was bound to shape their narrative and to bring out what was deep and rich in every event.

**Take Note**

NB: The Good News is living message to living people. We change, therefore, even the ways of application change though the kernel of message remains. Remember that Christianity is not a bookish message but a universal message to all.

Form critics have pointed out, that e.g. the accounts of Jesus’ miracles were preserved in the memory of the early Christian community mainly by being preached. Keeping to the demands of oral style and following the rabbinical pattern, the first preachers described the miracles of Jesus briefly without irrelevant details of time, place and circumstances. The account contained brief notes on the 3 phases: (1) the illness and condition of the sufferer; (2) the action of Jesus; (3) the saving effect of His power. This crisp brevity and concentration on what is essential characterize most of the Synoptic healing narratives.

**Intext Question**

Of what use was the preservation of Gospel material by the Church?

Other units of Gospel material were preserved, and sometimes modified, because the early Church recognized their usefulness in answering current questions. Form critics emphasize that as the Church grew in numbers and diversity of membership, it was confronted with many pressing problems, which necessarily helped to shape the Gospels.

A significant proportion of the words (vital for early Church needs/preserved because it was preached/ organic and vital) and events included in the Gospels are there not only because they figure in the life of Jesus, but also because they served some vital need in the life of the early Church. Since, moreover, many of the Sayings of Jesus were
preserved mainly by being preached, they were liable to a certain, or rather an uncertain, amount of modification with a view to bringing out the point of them in one or another set of circumstances in the primitive Church. What each Evangelist has preserved, therefore, is not a photographic reproduction of the words and deeds of Jesus, but an interpretative portrait delineated in accord with the special needs of the Church.

The original meaning of Jesus’ teaching is not verified by the literary argument. Reinterpretation and development need not involve deformation, but may be entirely homogeneous with the original meaning, whose full vitality is thus unfolded for the benefit of the whole Church. You should always bear in mind that not as Jesus spoke, taught... so was it written. It took quite a period for the material to be committed into writing.

13.4 R. Bultmann (Rationalistic Approach)

Take note

R. Bultmann is famous for his theory of DEMYTHOLOGIZATION i.e. removing mythological elements (because of some creative inventiveness of early Christians) and come to the core – using his rationalistic approach.

Bultmann, who examined closely the history of the transmission of the whole Gospel material, is violently skeptical on the question of historicity. This skepticism has led him to conclusions which have been widely rejected (cf. Fascher, Tailor, Buechsel, Leon-Dufour etc.), and which have discredited Form Criticism in many people’s eyes.

According to Bultmann the Christian community attributed to Jesus many beautiful sayings which came from the treasury of Jewish wisdom sayings. The Law sayings are exactly parallel in the OT prophetic teaching against external piety; in view of their radical nature they are evidently authentic sayings of Jesus, but the sayings which contain rules for the conduct of the community and for the mission, are probably all creations of the community.
Most of the “I-Sayings” are creations of the community expressing their faith in Jesus, His work, and His fate (the “Jesus of Faith”). In most cases the parables must be regarded as genuine traditional material, but in the course of transmission many of them were amplified with allegorical elements, or were interpreted and explained as allegories e.g. 4:14=20; Mt 13:36-43. According to him they were SAID by Jesus and EXPLANATION was by the Church. The rationale was that the Church needed them.

Some of them are creations of the community: Mk 12:1=12; Mt 25: 1-13. Others are parables from Jewish tradition, which were ascribed to Jesus by the early Christian community: Lk 16:19-31; 14:7-11, 12-14.

It is an axiom with Bultmann that Jesus wrought no miracles in the strict sense of the word, though he admits as a possibility that actual happenings may have provided a foundation for some of the stories of miraculous cures. Most of the miracle stories are popular stories which have been connected with Jesus. Some came from the OT (2Ki 4:42-44) others came from certain controversies in the Palestinian community (Mt 12:22-28), but most of them must be presumed to have a Hellenistic origin. For in Hellenistic territory Jesus was regarded as the Son of God walking on earth. Some of these miracle stories were suggested by Sayings of Jesus and were invented by the Christian community (Lk 5:1-11: “fishers of men”), or are simply stories of the time after the Resurrection which were put back into the real life of Jesus (Transfiguration, walking on the water).

Even the historical narratives have received strong legendary colorings (influence). The Baptism of Jesus is to be accepted as a historical fact, but the reporting (interpretation of early Christian community making it more credible) of it is a legend telling of the consecration of Jesus as Messiah. The confession of Peter, whose original ending is preserved only in Mt 16: 17-19, is a story from the period after the Resurrection, which has been put back into the life of Jesus.

Bultmann also assumes that the foundation for the story of the Passion was “an old historical account which related very briefly the arrest, condemnation by the Sanhedrin and by Pilate, the way of the Cross and the Crucification (Mk 14-43-53, 65; 15:1-5, 15b,
20b-24a, 27, 37… This was gradually amplified, partly by incorporating existing accounts, and partly by newly produced stories.

As you reflect on the above insights, always bear in mind that R. Bultmann is famous for his theory of DEMYTHOLOGIZATION i.e. removing mythological elements (because of some creative inventiveness of early Christians) and come to the core. This radicalism was of great concern – more so to his scholar disciples. No wonder the reaction was prompt.

13.5 Martin Diberius

Diberius considers that Form Criticism cannot decide whether a tradition is historical, but holds that it can provide a solid foundation for judgment on questions of fact. He rates the pronouncement stories as highest in historical value, while the stories about Jesus remote from the historical events, as they intended to exalt “the Lord Jesus” as miracle worker above the pagan gods and heroes.

Though Deberius is not free from criticisms either, nevertheless, his critic of R. Bultmann is invaluable in NT studies.

13.6 Assessment of Form Criticism

This new method of treatment has quickly established itself in NT studies. It marks a notable advance on the one-sided Literary Criticism, which had long dominated Gospel studies, for it is a useful means to illuminate the unknown pre-Gospel period.
On the other hand it produced some excesses for which its chief exponents were justly criticized and censured. There is need for a correct stamen of the principles which should govern this method and its inherent limitations.

13.6.1 The Synoptic Gospels Are Compilations.

We must, therefore, distinguish sharply between the traditional material and redaction. Only the individual sayings of Jesus and the individual stories are traditional; they must be separated from the framework in which they are embedded, and must be treated by themselves.

The order in which the units stand is not necessarily chronological order of the incidents recounted in them. Hence the different order and setting in the individual Gospels. (Mk1:40-45= Mt 8:1-4= Lk 5:12-16).

This applies even more to the sayings and discourses: they are groupings of single sayings according to the subject matter.

However, the framework of the history of Jesus cannot be dismissed so easily: the Evangelists were not mere collectors who juxtaposed words and acts of Jesus superficially. The similar outline in Mk, Mt and Lk guarantees that this outline is in substance historical. But while preserving this framework the Evangelists inserted the traditional material with great freedom: see e.g. Matthew’s grouping of discourses and Luke’s travel document. Above all the “general accounts” must be regarded as pure redaction: e.g. Mk 1:39; 3:7-12; Mt 4:23-25; Lk 4:15, 44.

13.6.2 The Classification of the Units into Forms is a Difficult Task

The notable differences of classification of the units by the exponents of Form Criticism shows that Form Criticism is still in its infancy, that the criteria by which units are classified need further study and, therefore, their conclusions are more working-hypotheses than scientific conclusions.

The classification of discourse material is the easiest, as it can be paralleled to the OT, especially the Prophets and the Wisdom Literature as well as to Rabbinical Literature.
These forms were shaped by the primitive Palestinian community and did not rise from Hellenistic mythology.

The classification of the narrative material is more difficult. Here we deal with deeds and incidents of Jesus’ life which for the narrators belonged to the immediate past for which there were eye-witnesses. Resemblance with Jewish and pagan miracle stories is often very superficial.

The unwarranted **leap from Form Criticism to Historical Criticism is a serious error** of the founders and early exponents of Form Criticism.

13.6.3 **To Ascribe the Making of a Tradition Exclusively to the Creative Power of An Anonymous Community is False.**

It is historically false to exclude consistently eye-witnesses of the life, deeds and words of Jesus. Though we accept a certain amount of creative power in the early preachers of the *Didache* and in the Evangelists themselves, we cannot exclude on principle (or rather on hypothesis) the historical substance of the discourses as well as the narrative materials, which could be continually checked by eye-witnesses. The total absence e.g. of parables in the teaching of the Apostles (Acts and Epistles) strongly suggests that the Gospel parables reflect the authentic teaching method and message of Jesus. Consequently the “Jesus of Faith” is not the production of the Paulus’ Easter Christ myth- to be demythologized!-, but is a faithfully developed image of the pre-Easter Jesus of History.

13.7 **Reaction to Bultmann**

Bultmann’s tremendous influence brought a fire which some extinguishers increased all the more. Some tended to demythologize even more!
R. Bultmann’s tremendous influence on NT studies can be measured by the manifold reactions- favorable and hostile- caused by his work. These reactions cover the whole spectrum of Christian thought from fundamentalist conservatism, which rejected his work totally, to Protestant Liberalism, which accused Bultmann of not going far enough in his demythologizing process. Let us peruse some of the leading scholars who reacted to Bultmann:

13.7.1 In Germany (very Protestant)

Several Biblical scholars were dissatisfied with Bultmann’s view. That is why they reacted thus:

   He rejected Bultmann’s method and stressed God’s role as the source of Revelation and faith. (He was such a man of faith!).

2) O. Cullmann:
   *Christ and Time*, 1951.
   *The Christology of the NT*, 1959.
   *Salvation in history*, 1967.
   He asserted that the Gospels contain Salvation history, which is not a distortion, made by the early Church, but is firmly rooted in the OT and in Jesus’ teaching.

3) W. Pannenberg:
   *Revelation as History*, 1961.

**Intext Question**
Can you verify that the above Criticism helps us in going back to the early Christian communities for a better rooting in our NT studies?
His accentuation is that God’s self-revelation comes to people through the events of history and is verifiable by the methods of historical criticism. (Salvation then= God not principles or things).

### Take Note

By this time, Catholic scholars were still in Rome-meaning that they were by then forbidden to undertake such studies. They, therefore, owe a lot to the Protestant Scholars.

### 13.7.2 Great Britain:

More modern Biblical scholars noticed even more shortcomings in Bultmanns contribution to a critical study of the NT. They came up with monumental monographs. Let us present a few of them:

### Take Note

While rejecting Bultmann’s radical skepticism, British scholars accepted the principles of Form Criticism in a constructive way.

1) E. Hoskyns:

*The Riddle of the NT*, 1931.

*The 4th Gospel*, 1940 (a standard work published posthumous).

2) V. Taylor:


*The Names of Jesus*, 1953.

*The Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 1954.


Taylor recognizes the importance of the preached Christ, but firmly teaches the indispensability of the historical Jesus for Christology.


3) R. Lightfoot:
History and Interpretation in the Gospels, 1935.

Lightfoot agreed with Bultmann’s radical skepticism and became the champion of Form Criticism in Britain. In his book on Mark he even queries the historicity of Mark. He was thus sympathetic to Bultmann.

4) C.H. Dodd:

The Parables of the Kingdom, 1935 (standard work).
The Interpretation in the 4th Gospel, 1953 (standard).


Dodd (d.1974) had a great influence by his invaluable and sound critical contributions. In the Apostolic kerygma, based on Jesus’ teaching, he proved the underlying unity of the NT. He traced the Parables back to Jesus’ own teaching; (Later on this was elaborated by J. Jeremias). He emphasized against A. Schweitzer that Jesus’ Kingdom was a present reality (“realized eschatology”). Though a Pastor, his contribution is scholarly not emotional.

13.7.3 Catholic Biblical Scholarship

Catholic Biblical Scholarship only reacted after the Encyclical Divino afflante Spiritu (1943) and then very cautiously following Cullmann, Taylor and Dodd rather than the “Post-Bultmannians”.

13.8 Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed Form Criticism and the assessment thereby. We have seen that shortly after World War 1 several scholars, like Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius -among others- dissatisfied with the meager results of the Literary Criticism of the Gospels, began to investigate the Gospel traditions from a different point of view.
The Lecture has explicated that Form Criticism, which emerged shortly after the 1st World War, does not contradict the former Criticism-Literary/Source Criticism. The lecture explained that what this criticism concerns itself with is what happened before the written data. It dwells not just on the written but mainly on the orally transmitted, or rather, oral pre-history.

It also explained that among the tasks of this Criticism is: to indicate and utilize the units thereby searching the structures of the pericopes; then follows a very important job which is to seek out what the genre is and to what it pertains distinguishing what is common from the peculiarities; then relating a particular form to a particular setting follows; after that, it tackles the study of the type and unit through the lenses of tradition history.

The lecture further discussed that this highly controversial criticism-thanks to radicals like Rudolf Bultmann- helps us realize that the transmitted material was in structured patterns. These patterns/forms were both tenacious and closely related to people’s Sitz im Leben (situation in life). There was an elaborated that, without minding who said what, scholars like Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius, through critical analysis, came up with units of Gospel material e.g. pronouncement stories, miracle stories etc. analyzing too categories of situation-in-life e.g. liturgy, sermons, early missionary preaching (kerygma), catechetical instruction (Didache) etc.

This lecture, moreover, evaluated the usefulness of some select Biblical scholars’ reactions to Rudolf Bultmann’s extreme ideas – especially that of demythologizing.

Activity 13.2

With insights from Form Criticism, discuss that harmonization in the Gospels in view of seeking a smooth flow is uncalled for.
13.9 References


LECTURE FOURTEEN

REDACTION CRITICISM

Lecture Outline.
14.1 Introduction
14.2 Objectives
14.3 Fundamental Considerations
14.4 Results of Redaction Criticism
   14.4.1 The Gospel According to Matthew
   14.4.2 The Gospel Accounting to Mark
14.5 Summary
14.6 References

14.1 Introduction

This lecture explains the emergence and nature of Redaction Criticism and how it relates to Literary Criticism and Form Criticism. The lecture explains that the best known reaction to Bultmannian criticism arose among Bultmann’s own disciples (professors). They pursued the quest for the historical Jesus in a new way, with more modest goals and more cautiously. It brings to awareness that faith should not merely depend on historical research but should dwell more on our encounter with Jesus Christ. The lecture, moreover, identifies and utilizes the results of Redaction Criticism as a useful tool in introducing each individual Gospel as autonomous and with own indispensable peculiarities.

14.2 Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Give and explain the emergence and nature of Redaction Criticism and how it relates to Literary Criticism and Form Criticism.

2. Discuss that critical questioning Bultmann’s own disciples and some other
scholars re-examined Bultmann’s radical ideas by pursuing the quest for the historical Jesus in a new more moderate way.

3. Explain that faith should not merely depend on historical research but more on our encounter with Jesus Christ.

4. Utilize insights from Redaction Criticism to critically examine and introduce each Gospel as an autonomous whole Document imbued with specific peculiarities.

5. Examine the inter-dependence and distinctiveness of Literary Criticism, Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism.

14.3 Fundamental Considerations

The “post-Bultmannians”, as they are called, concentrated on the Gospels themselves as unified compositions of literary authors, and accepted that:

1) There is an essential continuity between Jesus’ proclamation and kerygma of the early Church.

2) Jesus’ actions were the original context of His proclamation. His acts and words connected.

3) Each Gospel possesses a unique literary quality, its own theological insights and purpose.

This new trend in Gospel studies is called “Redaction Criticism” or also even better but less used “Composition Criticism”, because it concentrates on the composition (redaction) of the Gospels in their present form without, however, ignoring the results of Literary Criticism and Form Criticism.
Take Note

Jesus’ acts and words are connected. He did something to say something. We thus cannot ascribe everything said as myth. There is a continuity linking words and deeds.

Activity 14.1

Mention some outstanding proponents of Redaction criticism indicating also their publications.

The main representatives (each exponent with own tendency) of the Post- Bultmannians with scholarly published works are:

3) W. Marxsen, Mark the Evangelist, 1956.
5) G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, 1956: The first Post-Bultmannian study of the historical Jesus. He emphasizes the authority of the Historical Jesus, which cannot be a product of faith. His monograph is so invaluable that it has been reprinted so many times.

Take Note

Faith should not merely depend on historical research. Our faith is in our encounter with Christ.

Catholic biblical scholarship has only moved slowly into NT criticism, first in articles and lecture notes.

Take Note

One cannot blame them. They were, by then, forbidden by the authorities.
But noticing the challenges, they were allowed to participate.

Full-scale commentaries are now available in Germany, Holland, Italy, France…and Spain. In English we have one-volume commentary: *the American Jerome Biblical Commentary* (its new edition was published in 1995) and the British- *A New Catholic Commentary*. Some of the important representatives are:

1) France: After the famous Pere Langrange; P. Benoit; M.E. Boismard; S. Lyonnet (St. Paul); A. Feuillet (John); spich (St. Paul).
2) Belgium: L. Cerfauy of Louvain and his pupils: A. Descamp (Paul); F. Braun (John); J. Dupont (Gospels and Acts).
3) Germany: J. Schmidt (Synoptics, in Regensburger Bible, NT); A. Wikenhauser (John and Acts in Regensburger Bible, NT). R Schaneckenberg (John, Biblical Theory of N.T.)
4) U.S.A. : D. Stanley (John and Acts) was strongly criticized especially by the Church men; E. Siegman: many articles on modern NT criticism in Catholic Biblical Quarterly, of which he was the editor between 1951 to 1958. It is now the leading Catholic Biblical magazine in English.

### 14.4 Results of Redaction Criticism

**Activity 14.2**

Using redaction criticism, discuss:-

a) The Gospel according to Mark;  
b) The Gospel according to Matthew.  
c) The Gospel according to Luke

Instead of a composite picture of the life and teaching of Christ, made up of features drawn from all 4 Gospels, Redaction Criticism *studies the individual characteristics of each Gospel* to find the special contribution and theological perspective of each Evangelist.

Although these studies have not yet reached their final definite form, we present here a provisional synthesis, which will serve as an immediate *introduction to each* Evangelist.
14.4.1 The Gospel According to Matthew

It contains many features/elements which indicate that it was written to convince Jewish readers that Jesus is the royal Messiah/the expected King

1) The genealogy traces Jesus’ ancestry from Abraham (1:1ff), regarded by the Jews as “the father of the faithful”, through King David and all the succeeding kings of Judah.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remember Lk does not insist on Jewish ancestry but goes to Adam. While Abraham was the beginning of all Jews, Adam may be said to be for all Binadamu (all human beings).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Born at Bethlehem, the City of David, the Child is adored as “King of the Jews” by wise men from the East (2:2). This had a Messianic aspect.

3) As a royal Teacher/Rabbi of His people, Jesus sets forth in His “inaugural address” (the Sermon on the Mount, Chs5-7) the traits and characteristics of those who would be citizens of His Kingdom.

4) Matthew emphasizes Jesus’ Davidic lineage much more often than the other Evangelists: he includes the testimony of the 2 blind men (9:27); the multitude (12:23); the Canaanite woman (15:22); the crowds at the entrance of Jerusalem (21:9); and children in the Temple (21:15): all of these-in the six occasions- recognize Jesus as the Son of David.

5) Only Matthew refers to Jesus as King of the 12 tribes of Israel/new Israel (19:28) and as the one who is to rule over a Kingdom (25:34).
6) All 4 Evangelists quote OT prophecies which they regard as fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus, but Mt includes 9 additional such prophetic proof-texts, all with a special appeal to Jewish ears.

Take Note
Evangelist Matthew did this because he was speaking and writing to Jewish readers showing fulfillments as foretold.

The nine prophetic-proof texts found only in Mt (i.e. peculiar to Mt) are as follows:

a) Jesus’ birth from a virgin- 1:22-23.
b) The return from Egypt -2:15.
d) Jesus living in Nazareth- 2:23.
e) Jesus preaching in Galilee- 4:14-16.
f) Jesus’ bearing away of people’s infirmities- 8:17.
g) Jesus’ desire to avoid popular disturbances- 12:17-21.
h) Jesus’ habit of teaching in parables- 13:35.
i) The purchase of the potter’s field- 27:9-10.

7) The division into 5 books, each consisting of a discourse introduced by carefully selected narrative material, could well be a reminder of the Pentateuch.

Take Note
NB: The above shows that this is the new Torah. The whole Gospel is pervaded by those features which would make it especially appealing to Jews and Jewish Christians. For him, it was necessary to go back to Judaism.

14.4.2 The Gospel According to Mark
This Gospel is evidently written for a **Gentile reading public** and probably for the **Romans in particular**. The intended beneficiaries are **readers who new Roman culture** but not Hebrew. Among the reasons why it is the shortest Gospel is because Mark omitted discourses and concentrated more on events with his readers in mind.

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**Take Note**

NB: Mark had no reluctance in presenting the full humanity of Jesus. Also because of his targeted readers who were polytheistic, Mk had to accentuate more than the others the Divinity of Jesus in case they include Jesus as one of their gods.

1) Mark is careful to translate Aramaic and Hebrew names and phrases, such as *Boanerges*, 3:17; *Talitha kumi*, 5:41; *ephatha*, 7:34; *Abba*, 14:36; and *Eloi, Eloi Lama Sabachthani* the cry of dereliction on the Cross, 15:34.

2) He explains Greek expressions by their Latin equivalents: the 2 coins of the poor widow were the equivalent of the Roman *quadrans/peny*, 12:42; he identifies the court of Pilate’s palace as the *praetorium*, 15:16.

3) Mark is more concerned with what Jesus did than what He said: **events rather than discourses** make up the bulk of Mark’s Gospel. In relating to Jesus’ activities, Mk gives the impression of rigor: the words “immediately” or “then” occur more than 40 times. About one quarter of this Gospel deals with the events of the last week of Jesus’ life.

4) He emphasizes the **full humanity of Jesus**, clearer than the others; Jesus asks questions, apparently to gain information. Jesus displays/manifests human emotions such as grief, anger and amazement. He sleeps from fatigue, 4:38, and declares that He, though the Son, is ignorant of the Father’s appointed time, 13:32.
5) There is a persuasive undertone of witness to Jesus as the divine Son of God. Already at the beginning/ at the opening sentence, 1:1 this title appears further from the part of the demoniacs, 3:11 and 5:7; in the High priest’s question, 14:61 and in the centurion’s cry, 15:39. Jesus knows what goes on in people’s mind and heart and the circumstances of their lives, 2:5; 8:17; 9:33-35; 12:15, 44. Jesus accurately foresees and foretells the future: His own, 10:32-33, or that of individual people, 10:39; 14:27, and of communities, 13:1ff.

6) The paradox (seeming contradiction) of the rejected Messiah, who was God’s triumphant envoy, provides the central interest in this Gospel. It is linked to the “Messianic secret” idea, by which Jesus took the mysterious title “Son of Man”, 2:10ff, rather than call Himself Messiah, 8:29ff.


Intext Question

According to you, which is the longest Synoptic Gospel and why?

This longest Gospel was written to attract cultured Greek readers to Christianity. Compared to the others, it is the most voluminous with 24 Chapters, 1149vv and 2670 lines in the Greek text.

Take Note

This Gospel’s universality and explicit concern for all with outstanding accentuation on the Holy Spirit merits its other titles namely: the “Social Gospel”; the “Humanitarian Gospel”; “Pneumatological Gospel”; and the “Universal Gospel”. Also because of giving fuller information about women it is furthermore called “Feminist Gospel”.

Luke makes comparatively few quotations from the OT, and seldom appeals to the argument from prophesy. Instead of using the Jewish word “rabbi”, Luke is the only NT author who employs the Greek equivalent “epistates”, meaning “Master”. Where Mk and Mt use “Amen”, Lk usually substitutes the Greek expression “Truly”.

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Take Note
That is why it is so loved by feminists and exponents of women liberation.

1) Luke describes better than the others Jesus’ humanitarian concern, for which this Gospel is called nowadays “the Social Gospel”: His deep sympathy for the poor, oppressed and the outcast. While Mt stresses perfection in 5:48, Luke emphasizes mercy Lk 6:36. Only Lk adds after the Beatitudes a series of woes against the rich, 6:24-26. Only Lk has the beautiful passage on selfless love towards the poor and the sick in 14:12-14.

2) Exhortation to almsgiving and voluntary poverty occur more frequently in Lk, 6:20ff; 12:33f; 14:33; 16:25ff etc. Luke alone records Zacchaeus’ public renunciation of his earlier life of dishonesty as a tax collector, 19:8; and of the Pharisees as “lovers of money”, 16:14.


4) Luke is preeminently a person of broad culture and capable of writing an elegant style of Greek. When he writes independently his style is excellent, but out of respect for his sources he incorporates their imperfections- after polishing
them a little. Occasionally he goes out of his way to give a good imitation of Septuagint Greek.

**Take Note**

Redaction Criticism has been greatly helped by the new impetus in Judaic studies, especially through the discovery of the Dead Sea Documents in 1947 henceforth. A comprehensive knowledge of Jewish traditions, literature and logic is of great value for the understanding of the Gospels. Although the Gentile element became increasingly predominant after the break with Judaism, the Christian movement was born in Judaism and its traditions grew and developed in a Jewish context.

**14.5 Summary**

In this lecture, we have critically examined Redaction Criticism. The Lecture has enabled you to understand that Redaction Criticism is “that method/criticism which takes each whole Gospel as a literary composition”. That is why some prefer to call it “composition criticism” or even “editorship criticism”.

The lecture, has also discussed that Redaction Criticism takes the Gospels themselves as unified literary units; that it considers: each author, his peculiar preferential purpose, his approach, his stress, and his theological bend; that it also views how each author redacted/composed and arranged his material.

In other words, awareness has been created in this lecture that: this method aims at finding out the diverse approaches and emphasis of each Gospel Evangelist. It does this by looking at the book as a whole- with final elements of Source/Literary Criticism and Form Criticism in mind. Moreover, we have seen that Redaction Criticism peruses thoroughly individual characteristics of each Gospel with the finality of finding out the special composition, contribution and theological perspective/approach of each Gospel. This results in an advanced
Activity 14.3
Discuss the importance of the discoveries of the “Dead Sea Scrolls” in 1947 near Qumran for NT studies more so through the lenses of Redaction Criticism.

14.6 Reference


UNIT CONCLUSION

This Unit, **CRS 202: Introduction to the New Testament** was subdivided into four main Sections:
Section One dealt with crucial prolegomenon setting of the Unit. It consisted of four Lectures: Lecture One which provided the preliminary observations and reflections; Lecture Two that discussed the vital inter-dependence and inter-relationship between the NT and OT verifying the importance of background knowledge of the OT for a deeper understanding of the course on NT; Lecture Three which examined NT translations and explications thereby accentuating the unfinished business in this task; and Lecture Four which identified and elaborated the crucial tools for a scientific study of the Unit emphasizing the indispensable duty of knowing these tools and how to use them for self erudition.

Section Two examined the historical setting which, as we saw, is invaluable for the Unit. It was sub-divided into four lectures: Lecture Five which dwelt on the historical background of the NT and Biblical Geography; Lecture Six that examined the Roman Empire and Palestine and Hellenistic civilization showing the emergence, growth and impact of these forces on the Jews and the historicity cum historiography of the NT; Lecture Seven which identified and discussed the Jewish world whose knowledge is a necessary condition for understanding our Unit; and Lecture Eight which identified and explicated the Literature of Judaism and the Jewish Liturgical calendar evaluating their invaluability in understanding the NT.

Section Three discussed the ongoing controversy on the issue of “Jesus of history” and “Christ of faith”. It consisted of two lectures: Lecture Nine which examined the historical Jesus and the Apostolic age; and Lecture Ten that discussed the Apostolic teaching and the written sources.

Section Four handled the most important issue of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels together with miracles and parables of Jesus. It was sub-divided into four inter-related Lectures: Lecture Eleven which dealt with the testimony of the early tradition; Lecture Twelve that examined Literary Criticism through the lenses of Synoptic Problem; Lecture Thirteen which examined and assessed Form Criticism focusing on its main exponents i.e. Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Diberius and the reaction triggered by their ideas; and Lecture Fourteen which discussed Redaction Criticism and its utility in introducing individual Documents.
I strongly recommend that we end the Unit by reiterating the following summarized insights with regard to the most important elements and characteristics of historical critical method of NT study namely- Literary Criticism, Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism:

1) Literary/Source Criticism, Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism are essentially intertwined. One takes over from where the other leaves filling up the gaps endeavoring to overcome respective shortcomings and limitations. They are thus inter-related.

2) They also relate in that they all venture to inculcate the Biblical message. They make a real attempt to make it relevant, readable in a more meaningful manner and livable among the contemporaries. What is even clearer is that they challenge us by reminding us that as we change, therefore, even the way of comprehending the Bible should grow.

3) They concur in making us comprehend that not as Jesus spoke etc was what is in the Bible written. There was a long living crucial Tradition through which the material was transmitted. Thus creating an awareness that a living Tradition was there before writing.

4) The above, furthermore, helps committed NT scholars to appreciate that the early eye-witnesses MUST be taken with the seriousness they deserve and not just be dismissed as creators of Jesus story and history.

5) The major common denominator in the three criticisms is that they all have an extremely strong tendency to go back into history at erudition level- a highly commendable effort.

The author can only hope that the Unit has initiated you into a more meaningful serious scientific approach to the study of the NT taking the 27 Documents with the seriousness they deserve thus equipping you well for engaging in the ongoing dialogue with other faiths in this era of ecumenism and healthy religious pluralism.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES**


APPENDIX FOR MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the double-pronged authorship of the NT and also elaborate that the Person came before the written Books thanks to oral transmission prior to writing.

2. Compare the Synoptic Gospels with the Fourth Gospel.

3. Indicate and discuss the very first NT Document to be put into writing.

4. Indicate the nine Matthean “prophetic proof texts” (which are peculiar to Mt) verifying that Jesus is the fulfillment of OT prophecy.

5. Using the main steps in exegesis, explain (as an exegete) the Matthean narrative of the end of Judas (Mt 27:3-10) and the lessons you learn from the episode.

6. Using the tools for NT study, discuss the amicable encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10) indicating also the lessons we in Kenya should learn from this Biblical passage.

7. Who were the Essenes of Qumran and why did they choose to settle at the shores of the Dead Sea?

8. Discuss the Jewish final revolt under Simon Bar Cochbar against the Romans and the impact it had on the Jews.

9. Introduce either the Gospel according to Matthew or Mark or Luke using Redaction criticism.

10. Focusing on the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees, explain the Matthean passage (i.e. Mt 19:1-9) on the question concerning divorce.

11. Elaborate why the feast of Pentecost is such a central feast among the Jews.

12. Give some of the titles the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is given and the rationale behind it.

13. Comment on Acts 22:30-23:11 pointing out also what you learn from this passage that is useful to you today.
14. Discuss the Pentecost event (Lk 2:1-13) and how it inspired the Apostles in their missionary enterprise.

15. In view of the growth of the NT, explicate the First Letter of St. Paul to the Church in Thessalonica.

16. Compare the Synoptic Gospels with the Fourth Gospel.

17. Give and explain the Synoptic Problem within the context of historical critical method.

18. Explain how Form Criticism helps in digging into the data between Jesus’ death and Gospels’ writing thereby highlighting the inevitability of a living tradition.

19. Give and evaluate the contribution of at least three Biblical scholars’ reaction to Rudolf Bultmann’s radical ideas.

20. Focusing on the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees, explain the Matthean passage (i.e. Mt 19:1-9) on the question concerning divorce.