

“Equipping believers for growth and service by encountering God through his word.”

The Bible for Today

January 6, 2010



The Gospel of Mark

- A foundational writing of the New Testament
- An overlooked gospel—most people gravitate toward Matthew, Luke, and John
- Very simply structured into four parts

The Background of Gospels

- Jesus is the center of the Christian canon—not just death and resurrection but life and teachings
- Yet, up to 1/3 of the each gospel relates the events of Holy Week—death and resurrection
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are '*synoptic*' meaning 'seeing together;' yet each a little different in the image of Jesus and the audience

More on the Gospels

- Gospels cannot be understood unless one views Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope; [key to the writers](#)
- Jesus is viewed in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, but he is more because gospels written after the resurrection
- [Role of the king](#)— important image; the king is the representative of God to the people and the king is the embodiment of Israel in one person— “corporate solidarity”

Kingship in the Gospels

- Important concept: Jesus is the fulfillment of the perfect representative of God and the embodiment of true Israel—the perfect Israel (no OT king could do both)
- Gospel writers understand Jesus as the fulfillment of these two elements, and because Jesus is both, believers are invited to be involved in the story as well

Just what are the Gospels?

- Gospels are historical narrative– the weaving of historical events and teaching understood in the events
- Gospels written in Greek; Jesus spoke Aramaic– narrative for a wider audience than those living in Palestine
- The disciples’ memoirs all connected by a single narrative– about Jesus, with teachings of Jesus, and witness to Jesus

The interest of the writers

The Gospels are interested in Jesus at two levels:

1. Historical- who he was, what he said, and what he did; he is the exalted Lord we worship
2. Context- Jesus lived in the context of Judaism and the First Century; important to understand for reading the narrative appropriately

The Power of Jesus' Teaching

Jesus' teaching was not like a rehashing of the Old Testament laws.

Jesus' teaching points to God's grace and love; our redemption and a new life that can be lived in grace and love.

God is gracious and forgiving; we are to be gracious and forgiving.

The Kingdom of God: Essential for Reading

- The framework of ALL the NT is eschatological, that is when God brings all thing to a closure in the end of the age.
- First Century Jews believed they lived on the edge of the end time—God would step in and bring in a new age (through the Messiah)
- Jesus ushers in the new beginning—the Messianic Age, that is the Kingdom of God/“God’s rule”

The Time Between

- Jesus ushers in the Messianic Age (Luke 4)
- Jesus grows in popularity in teaching, THEN crucified! Not the kind of Messiah developed in the Intertestamental Age
- Jesus gives the kingdom now; ascends to heaven, but it is also not yet; Jesus brings the beginning of the end; ushers in God's blessing to the whole world

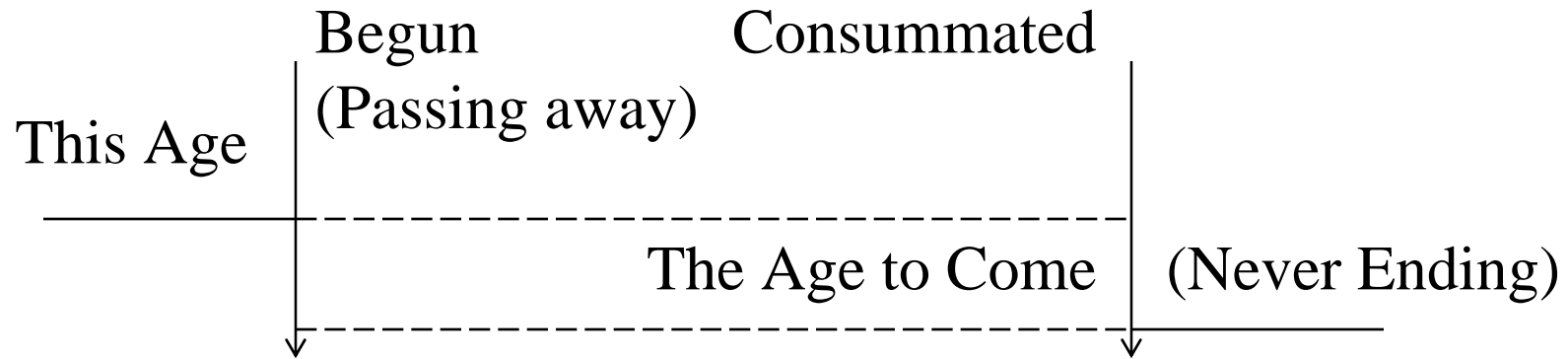
Here we are In-between

- We live in the between times; the kingdom is now and not yet; the tension in this world
- Lord's Supper a reminder/ celebration of this time and to proclaim Christ until the close of the age
- Blessings do come, but not always perfected as in the end of the age
- Victory over death for those in Christ

THE JEWISH ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE

This Age (Satan's Time)	The Age to Come (The Time of God's Rule)
<p>Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Sin•Sickness•Demon Possession•Evil People Triumph	<p>Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The presence of the Spirit•Righteousness•Health•Peace

THE NEW TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEW



The Cross and Resurrection

Christ's Return

Already

Not Yet

Righteousness **Completed righteousness**

Peace **Full peace**

Health **No sickness or death**

Spirit **In complete fullness**

How Then Shall We Live?

In the Now and Not Yet, we are to live:

- The life of the kingdom of God which is characterized by grace and forgiveness;
- Live under the lordship of Christ daily who has forgiven our disobedience and reconnected us with God;
- Ethically and morally in this age as ambassadors of Christ—grace, forgiveness, love in our daily lives.

Reading the Parables

- What is the context, the original audience: a broad range of ideas (riddle, puzzle, parable)
- Variety of parables: Good Samaritan, a true parable/ story; similitude; metaphor; epigram.
- Function of parables: To get a response from the hearer—the parable is the message

A Parable is like....

...a good joke; the joke is funny because a person relates to it and gets caught by the punch line. BUT the punch line can only be caught IF a person gets the reference point of the joke (if you have to explain it, the joke isn't funny)

Today: we don't have the reference points, so do not fully understand; we have to interpret so we get the point. How do we get the punch line? What is the equivalent for us?

Interpretation of Parables

1. We have to find the reference points, so we can see the punch line. Luke 7:40-42 (full context is 36-50)
2. Who is the audience? What are the reference points for them? What might they have heard? (Good Samaritan)

Kingdom of God Parables

- “The kingdom is like...” tell us about the nature of the kingdom of God.
- The kingdom parables invite us to respond in discipleship.
- The kingdom parables deal with what is already, the kingdom is come in Christ—how will we respond; a sense of urgency for us.

The Bible for Today

- ❖ Begin 2010 with a commitment to read all four gospels.
- ❖ Begin 2010 with a commitment to purchase and use “Reading the Bible Book by Book.”
- ❖ Commit to living 2010 in grace and love for those around you.