

New Testament History, Literature, and Theology  
Session 15: Concluding Luke and the Synoptic Problem  
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**A. Introduction to the Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

Today we are in the process of finishing our third or fourth lecture on Luke and today we'll be done in just a few minutes on Luke and then what I'd like to do is examine the synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. Those three are called the synoptic gospels and we're going to look at them and kind of do a compare and contrast analysis in the second part of the lecture. So let's finish up the book of Luke.

There were basically two things that we've missed so far in the book of Luke. One of those is the nature of prayer in the book of Luke and so what I want to notice is some things here like for example, eight times Jesus prays in the book of Luke. So Luke, if you're looking for prayer, Luke is the gospel to go to. So Jesus prays eight times in Luke, seven of those times are unique to this gospel. He has quite a bit to say about prayer and I kind of want to contrast that to Matthew's comments on prayer, "ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find," and you've got to be careful with that kind of a statement in terms of, some of people will look at prayer as kind of a vending machine, where you go up and put your coins in and you pull a lever and the candy drops down. They have a vending machine view of God and a vending machine view of prayer: "ask and you shall receive" and they don't realize the complexities of prayer rather they just grab a simple statement out of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and then trying to absolutize that. We said before, you have to be really careful about absolutizing those statements. So Luke presents another side of prayer and we just want to look at that and there's two that I'd like to look at in particular. Both of them are found in Luke chapter 18. What you have in Luke chapter 18 is two parables on prayer so you have whole parables on prayer.

## B. Humility and Pride in Prayer—The Jesus Prayer

Let me just read through the first one, this is the prayer of the Pharisee and the tax collector. This is in Luke 18:9 it says, “to some who are confident in their own righteousness and look down on everyone else.” That sets up this parable. They’re confident in their own righteousness and they look down on everyone else. See, you can already see the contrast and then how has that kind of arrogance and that belittling of their fellow person and how that is going to play into prayer.

Okay, so it starts out at their attitude toward others and it’s going to take that and shift that toward prayer. Jesus told them this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself. ‘God I thank you that I am not like other men, robbers, evil doers, adulterers, or even this’” You can see he is speaking pejoratively about “I’m glad I’m not like robbers, evildoers, adulterers” just speaking generically then he makes it much more personal and then this Pharisee turns to “or even like this tax collector.” Now he’s getting close and to the person who is to his left or to his right – to this tax collector: I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get,” and so this is how this man prayed. In comparison of himself to everyone else and bragging to God about his fasting twice a week, and his paying a tenth of all he has. This is interesting because it does tell something about the pharisaic notion of religion; that fasting was part of that and they fasted twice a week and they gave a tenth of everything they had.

Now it shifts then, “I’m thankful that I’m not like other men: adulterers, murderers, and this tax collector.” Now we’re going to hear from this tax collector. “But the tax collector stood at a distance,” you get the notion that the Pharisee is up front, close, and kind of like in front of people but the tax collector stood at a distance. “He would not even look up to heaven but he beat his breast and said....” Then this is what people call the Jesus prayer and this is one of the most significant prayers in Scripture this is one that--how should I say--I pray repeatedly and people around the world pray repeatedly. It’s a very short prayer, it’s kind of a breathing prayer that you can breathe out to God in a very short space of time and it says this this is the Jesus prayer: “God be

merciful to me, a sinner.” He doesn’t compare himself to anybody else you notice that the Pharisee, when he was addressing God was looking at everyone else; this tax collector is in direct communication between he and God. Then Jesus comments, “I tell you the truth, this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” What I think is interesting there is this shows us that there are some moral prerequisites to prayer.

There’s some moral prerequisites to prayer and so this person, because he humbled himself, the tax collector humbled himself, “God, be merciful to me a sinner,” he goes down justified. The word justified is very interesting. This man, because of how he prayed. was considered justified before God. The Pharisee was not, in all his righteousness, because he looked down on others. So this is the Jesus’ prayer. “God, have mercy on me a sinner,” and that stance, that humble stance is a really critical stance that one wants when one approaches God. One needs to approach not in arrogance but in humility, pleading “God, have mercy on me a sinner.” So that’s a very short prayer. You’ve got the Lord’s prayer, “Our father, which art in heaven,” many of us know that. But this is just a one liner, “God, be merciful to me a sinner” and I think it’s appropriate for people to pray that often, frequently, daily, hourly and actually minutely, if there’s such a word. So humility is kind of a basis versus pride as a character quality of a person conditioning the response to the prayer.

### **C. Persistence in Prayer: The Persistent Widow**

Now there’s a second prayer that comes up and this one is the woman and the unjust judge. The woman the unjust judge and this is another parable from Luke 18. Luke 18 starts out with this one and we’ll just read through it: “Then Jesus told this his disciples this parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.” So this is about persistence in prayer that they should always pray and not give up. I’ve been told at various points in my life that if you trust God, you make your prayer to God, he knows what’s on your heart so you don’t have to ask him more than once because he

knows what you want. To repeat it over and over again, just becomes vain babbling and Jesus said don't pray over and over again, idle repetitions. But here, Jesus talks about praying and always pray and to not give up.

He said, and now he's going to tell a parable "in a certain town, there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with a plea." Notice Luke, again, picks up on the widow. Remember we said before in the previous lecture that Luke picks up on the widow and he picks up on the only child. So here's a widow, someone who's disenfranchised in that culture, a needy person in that culture, is approaching a judge. What is a judge to do? A judge is to make justice for the widow, the orphans, the fatherless, the poor and the foreigners. So the judge is to take care of and make justice for those who cannot get justice in the society so here you've got this widow coming before the judge. The judge is a person of status, she is a person of low status. She comes to this judge and he cares neither about God, doesn't fear God or care about men.

"And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with a plea, 'grant me justice against my adversary.'" Now, the fact of the matter is that this is a parable so we don't know the whole story. We never do know what it was that was bothering her. What was this injustice that she was referring to and what this adversary had done to her and was doing to her? We don't know that. So the parables don't tell you all the little interesting details that you'd like to know. A parable's a story and it's got a point. This parable's directed to that point and so we don't really know what the injustice was but "for some time he refused but finally he said to himself, 'even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice so that she won't eventually wear me out by her coming.'" Okay, and the parable: then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust says, judge says, and will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him by day and night." Notice the crying out by day and by night people keep coming back to God, crying out by day and by night. "Will he keep putting them off? I tell you he will see that they get justice quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth? Then all of a

sudden at the end of the parable you've got this jump to the *eschaton*, to the final days. "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? And it's an interesting jump there. They will get justice. And then he puts it in that eschatological, "in that end of days" kind of thing, that God will render justice and then associates that justice with the final days.

#### **D. Perseverance in Prayer: Paul and the Psalms**

So this has to do with persistence in prayer, praying the same thing and asking for the same thing over and over and basically saying one ought always to pray and not give up. I think that's really an important thing. I think that Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, people say, "Well, we shouldn't pray the same thing over and over again." Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, do you remember that he went away three times and prayed three times, "Father, if it's your will take this cup from me." Jesus asked God to take away the cup from him, cup of sorrow. Judas is going to come to him, and he prayed three times for that and then Judas comes and betrays him. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12 Paul tells about his thorn in the flesh. Now we don't really know what that thorn in the flesh is for sure, people have a lot of guesses on that, but Paul had this thorn in the flesh that was given to him by God, he prays three times, "Father, take this from me." He prayed the thorn of his flesh would be taken away; God didn't do it. So, it's interesting so this notion of praying persistently is a big thing in Scripture we see Paul praying three times for something, Jesus praying three times for something. So it's something we need to think about in prayer. Psalms also, let me just say, the books of Psalms is also, largely a book of prayers sung to God. Those psalms would be sung over and over and over again at festivals and at feasts in Israel. So this is the notion of asking and praying. Many of your churches will pray the Lord's Prayer and we recite the Lord's Prayer and some of us recite the Lord's Prayer almost on a daily basis. So these are wonderful things and prayer continuing our conversation concerning them.

I can kind of liken it--and this is not a parable it's kind of like parallel--let's say,

and I think of my grandson Ben, and he was getting a bicycle for Christmas and he would come to my wife and every other line that he would say is that he wanted this bicycle for Christmas. What would happen is that every time he would interact with my wife whatever the instance was that was going on in the family it would come down to “Oh, sure, I would like a bike for Christmas. I sure would like a bike. Have you gotten my bike yet for Christmas? What kind of bike did you get me?” It would always come back to that. So that kind of showed his focus, he really wanted this thing and so he as a young person as a kid he’s really thinking a lot about this bike and so then when he communicates with his grandparents, in this case it was kind of like “where is this bike? Can you get me a bike for Christmas?” Then that was done repeatedly and then of course we didn’t know what Santa Claus got him but he probably got a bike that year.

### **E. Praying When It Matters- A Son in Afghanistan**

Now, just down a little bit. Praying when things matter this is an interesting one for me. I think actually my son was one of the people who taught me how to pray. A lot of times I pray about things and things happening at Gordon College and relationships with students or people that are, some students, have problems, one kid’s got a broken foot and other kids are suffering with coming between cultures and having a real hard time adapting cultures, others have trouble with the language and are struggling with language, others are struggling with relationships and relationships with their whole family and relationships here at Gordon. So you pray for people and you make requests for them. But in one sense, there is no skin in the game. It’s like whatever God does will be okay kind of thing, so you pray just to bring it in front of God.

My son, who is a Marine, went to Afghanistan and when he was in Iraq – he went to Iraq first a few years ago- and that wasn’t quite as bad, but when he went to Afghanistan it got really bad. As a parent, when you feel helpless, normally it’s a parent’s role, particularly the father, to protect his children, and when you can’t protect and you have no control over what happens and the person’s getting shot at and, you talk on the phone and he says, “we get shot at every day” and you know and other people, friends of

his were actually killed [Twig] and maimed [Rayaz] and hurt [Hadley] and others [Bunches] like that and you know it could have been him. You pray from this sense of helplessness. You learn to beg, that God will spare that person's life. Remember Abraham in the Old Testament, bartered that if there were 50 righteous, would you spare the city? If there were 40, 30, 10...please will you spare the city? I remember doing the same thing saying "God, if it's going to be him or me, take me instead of him, because I'm an old man and I'm ready to go." And so you pray, begging, pleading doing whatever you can because it matters so much to you.

#### **F. Praying When it Matters—Sick Children and Persecution**

So that level of praying occurs and I don't know whether you've had friends that you've prayed for – I think of other people, I've got a friend and Brian Kinney, who works for Baker Book house and Brian outside of Baker book house and I've known him for a number of years. His boy got leukemia, and his boy, who is five or six years old comes down with leukemia, cancer, and this kind of thing, and was on the verge of death. The doctors are doing wonderful things now, incredible things, and so we prayed and there were a whole host of people praying for Brian Kinney's boy. The doctors were successful. Now, I don't know, this is years later now, so I'm not sure, but they were successful, and it went into remission. He seemed to be doing alright and the leukemia passed, they got it. It was really exciting, we prayed for him for probably a year, praying for this young kid, and God spared his life and it's just a wonderful thing. You can see as a parent, when your kid gets one of these horrible diseases you just realize you're in a different stance, where you're praying for something and it really doesn't matter that much and then all of a sudden you pray and it really does matter.

My daughter's got a husband now who's got a brain tumor just inside of his ear in his brain. He's lost part of his hearing already and he's a lawyer so it really matters that he can hear – or maybe as a lawyer he shouldn't hear--but he's got this tumor and they're afraid to go in because it's around a nerve and would also paralyze half of his face and there's all sorts of discussion and prayer and so we pray for him on a regular basis now.

So we should always pray. There are big things going on the world that are to be prayed for. There was a man in Iran who was a Christian believer in Iran and he was a pastor in Iran. They said he converted from Islam and you're not allowed to convert from Islam to Christianity. He converted when he was a young kid. They made him, "you deny your faith or you're going to die." He didn't deny his faith and now the big question is if they've killed him. Yosif was his name. So you know you get these kind of things and you pray for this man, he's got a wife and kids, and is being put up for his faith and he may die as a martyr. This is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the 21<sup>st</sup> century and he's dying as a martyr for his faith. And all he has to do is recant but he won't do it because he's a Christian and he loves the Lord. So these things are going on here and there is a need for prayer, a desperate need for prayer. So prayer is a big thing and Luke 18 is really nice, as there are two parables on prayer there.

### **G. The Emmaus Road: Jesus' Disguise and the Disciples Hope**

There is one other thing I wanted to cover here, in Luke, and that's to kind of finish it out. And this is the Emmaus Road. The Emmaus Road is a famous narrative, when Jesus has risen from the dead and his disciples then are reflecting, "Jesus died on the cross" and they're all really down, down, down. After three days he rises from the dead and when he shows himself, some of the people see him, some of the people don't. You remember Thomas when we get into John. He hadn't seen him yet himself and so he questions things. This is the Emmaus Road where two individuals are walking out from Jerusalem by themselves. They've been in Jerusalem for the death of Christ and they've heard rumors of the resurrection but they don't know what's really going on. So they're walking a Sabbath day, out on the Emmaus Road, it's about 7 miles out of Jerusalem to the west, and so they're going on this road. I've had the privilege of walking on this Emmaus Road. It's an old Roman road. The Romans built roads throughout the empire and these roads are so good that they're still in existence today. Many of them are without potholes; they're made with slabs of stone, really incredible road structure.

This is from Luke chapter 24, starting with verse 13. It says "Now the same day,



two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about 7 miles from Jerusalem and they were talking to each other about everything that had happened” – okay this is, now Jesus’ death, rumors of resurrection – “and as they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. But they were kept from recognizing him” – so Jesus comes up, and is walking with them and they don’t know it’s Jesus because Jesus kind of does something, I don’t know, maybe he’s wearing a hoodie or something, they don’t know who he is. “And so he asked them ‘what are you discussing together as you walk along?’ They stood still, their faces downcast, still thinking Jesus was dead. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, ‘are you the only visitor in Jerusalem that does not know the things that have happened there in these days?’ ‘What things?’” He asked. It’s kind of like “what’s going on,” getting them to provide the information and seeing their perspective on what they think about Jesus. It’s Jesus, he asks them, “What things?” he asked them. “‘About Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied, ‘he was a prophet.’” Very interesting. He was a prophet. What was their understanding of Jesus? He was a prophet. “Powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to”-- Now what was the nature of their hope? This is a really kind of neat passage because it tells us, here are two Jewish people, they’re describing the nature of their hope that they had for the Messiah. So here’s their hope that they describe. “But we had hoped that he was the one who was coming to redeem Israel.” So the point was that the Messiah was to redeem and rule over Israel, to throw off the Roman yoke, to set up the son of David to redeem Israel. “And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women” – Now he’s going to tell about some of the rumors – “in addition some of our women amazed us. And they went to the tomb early this morning but they didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.” –again these women are reporting this but they heard the report but couldn’t confirm it. So they’re not sure, did this happen or did this not happen. The body’s gone, where did these angels come from?

## H. The Emmaus Road: Jesus Teaches the Disciples

By the way, does anybody remember in the beginning of the book of Luke, this is the last chapter of Luke, does anybody remember the beginning of Luke, who shows up? The angels show up at the birth of Christ and are singing *Gloria in excelsis deo* kind of thing. Glory in the beginning. The angels come and announce it to the shepherds and now you've got angels here reporting at the end of the book. They didn't find the body, they came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. – “Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said but him they did not see.” – So now the women's report is confirmed. The body's gone but they still don't know what to make of this. “He said to them, (now Jesus breaks in) ‘How foolish you are, how slow to believe all the things the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things to enter into his glory?’” So then Jesus raises from the prophets this notion that the Messiah needed to suffer. That it's not just necessarily the Messiah ben David who is going to, but Messiah ben Joseph who is going to suffer, like Joseph suffered in prison, righteously. So now the Messiah was going to suffer. And this is possible reference to Isaiah 53, that he would bear our afflictions and our infirmities. He was like a lamb to the slaughter, he took upon himself our iniquities--Isaiah 53. All we like sheep have gone astray.

Then it says this “Did not Christ have to suffer these things then enter into glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in the scriptures concerning himself.” What a lecture that would have been. Jesus starts with Moses. Notice he goes back to the Pentateuch, he goes back to Moses and all the prophets and explains them about the Christ. “And as they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going on further but they urged him strongly, ‘stay with us because it is nearly evening, the day is almost over.’ And so he went in to stay with them.”

And so now he sits down at the table with them. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. So now you've got Jesus sitting at the table, breaking

bread with them, giving thanks for bread. Does that remind you of anything? It's kind of like this the post-Eucharist, post-Lord's supper. Jesus is sitting down and breaking bread with them as he had sat down and broke bread with his disciples before. Now he's breaking bread again and notice what happens: "So then he was at the table with them, and he took bread, gave thanks, and broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us as he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?'" "Did not our hearts burn as he opened the scriptures to us?" This is a beautiful, beautiful saying. "They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem where they found the eleven and those with them assembled." So you have the eleven apostles and those assembled with them, apparently more than just the apostles. "Saying, 'It is true, Jesus has risen and has also appeared to Simon.' The two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread."

### **I. Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Entire Old Testament**

Now I think there's one other passage that I want to bring up and this is down in chapter 24:44. It is interesting to hear their description. It says this "he said to them [this is Jesus speaking now] 'This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written in [and then he describes the Old Testament, and here's how he describes it] everything must be fulfilled that is written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.'" And so in here, in Luke chapter 24:44, you have the threefold canon of the Old Testament. This is the Jewish canon: Moses, the Pentateuch, Genesis to Deuteronomy, the Torah; then you've got the prophets, the Former Prophets starting with Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, Kings, those are called the Former Prophets. The Later Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Twelve. And so you've got Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. The other section of the Old Testament is the Writings of which Psalms is the chief. It's a huge book, the Psalms. So Jesus here mentions the threefold division of the Old Testament and explains to his people that "They must speak these things about me in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms. And he opened their

minds so they could understand the scriptures.” This is after the resurrection and Jesus goes through with his disciples through Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings, or the Psalms. So this is a key passage when you’re thinking about canonical studies. The Old Testament was broken into these three sections. Those three sections are mentioned by Jesus after the resurrection.

That finishes the book of Luke for us. And now we’ve got Luke done, we’ll take a step back now. We’ve been looking at Matthew, Christ is King; Mark, the Amazing Suffering Servant; and we’ve looked at Luke, the Perfect Man; Christ growing in various ways. Now what I want to do is jump over from the Emmaus Road and jump over to another whole section here. Let me get out of this, come back.

## **J. The Synoptic Gospels and the Early Church**

We’re going to go into the synoptic problem now. What is the synoptic problem? The synoptic problem is basically what happens when you compare Matthew, Mark, and Luke. So there’s going to be similarities, and there’s going to be differences. When there are similarities, there’s no problem. When the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all say the same thing, that is not really a problem. But these three gospels seem to be very similar so they call them “synoptic.” You’ve got synoptic, which is like “syn-optic.” *Syn* in Greek means “with,” *optic* like optician, ophthalmology, so synoptic means “with one eye.” The synoptic problem says that these three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, see Jesus with one eye. John, on the other hand, is totally different. He gives a totally different perspective. So as you need two eyes to give you depth perception and you have two eyes so you can realize that chair is closer; the clock in the back of the room is much farther away. You have depth perception because you have two eyes. They’re actually developing video cameras with two cameras shooting and almost like our eyes, to give the sense of, even in video camera work, of three dimensions. It’s kind of neat what is happening. “What you have is Matthew, Mark, and Luke giving one perspective and John giving another one. There are very different perspectives between the Synoptics. But among the Synoptics--those are all with the same eye there are similarities and great

differences. So we want to look at that.

So, synoptic, syn-optic, with one eye. The three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, see Jesus with one eye. Now what's interesting is that the early church saw the differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and yet they didn't squash them together. They allowed each witness, Matthew is different than Mark is different than Luke. They're very similar, but there are differences. Normally, if you would want some sort of agreement, you would think historically, if the text were malleable, or if the text were plastic, you'd expect people then to say, "Oh, we need to make Matthew and Mark agree." So where they disagree you'd have people harmonizing them, illegitimately. But that didn't happen. They left the differences; the early church left the differences in the text. That tells me something about the historicity of these documents. It wasn't that the church is playing around with these documents, these documents are very malleable, and they're just legends, made up, and tweaked to make them fit together. No, they didn't look at it that way. They looked at the documents that they had and they let them stand. They left them standing even at the points where there are major clashes. They left the clashes in. they didn't harmonize them. So it's very interesting, that the early church didn't correct and harmonize and things like that. They let them stand with these differences, and we'll look at some of the differences in a minute.

What does it say about their belief in the sanctity of the text and the historical reliability? The historical reliability of the text; we're, as Christians, very linked in to history. Our theology rises out of history. It's not that our theology gives birth to history, no it's that history, real events happening; Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Jesus ministered in Galilee, and walked on the waters in Galilee, Jesus died in Jerusalem and rose again on the third day. Those are historical events. In other words, Christianity is built on real history. Then our theology comes off the history. So history is incredibly important. So, the historical reliability of those three gospels that tell about Jesus is incredibly important. The same way for the Jewish people that the book of Exodus and the Pentateuch are very important for them – the coming out of Egypt and God bringing them out of Egypt with a strong outstretched arm and a mighty hand. And so the New Testament is very

historically reliable. They didn't squash things together; they didn't say that these don't fit together so we'll fudge them to make them fit better. They let them each stand.

### **K. Why the Gospel Isn't Legend: Eyewitnesses Can Corroborate Stories**

Why not legend? Okay. Part of the problem of why the gospels aren't legend is that you've got your gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. Mark writing probably before 60 AD and Luke writing before Paul was dead, Paul dies about 68AD, Luke writes to most excellent Theophilus, probably in defense of the apostle Paul. So Luke is probably pretty firmly before 65, Matthew may be little bit after that. But all these guys are writing before the 70 AD time frame. Because the temple destruction is not mentioned in any of these gospels and so you know, it is before 70AD. Well that's what, 30-40 years after Jesus. So you say a lot changes in 30-40 years. But the problem is this: is 30 or 40 years' time enough for a whole legend about Jesus to grow up? The answer is: no. The problem is that you've got eye witnesses still living to confirm Jesus either did this, or didn't do this. So because of eyewitnesses, you can't fudge that much. Kind of reminds me of a woman named Sonya Weitz. We had her at Gordon College here for years. Dr. Marv Wilson, who is the legend at Gordon College, a phenomenal teacher and individual who teaches here in Old Testament, he has developed a real integration with the Jewish community in North Shore of Boston. And he's gotten to know Sonya Weitz and she's a holocaust survivor. She would get up once a year, Marv would bring her in, or Polly would bring in Sonya Weitz and she would give a lecture then at Gordon College, on being a survivor. And she would describe the holocaust and actually I've got a video of this. She would describe the holocaust and what it was like for her and her sister; the rest of her family I think perished in the holocaust. She and her sister went to some of the major camps – Auschwitz or Birkenwald, or which one it was – but she went to several of them, got on a train, was packed on a train car with two hundred people and basically was like totally humiliated. And she would describe the holocaust. What's the thing with that, people can't fudge the holocaust because there are still people alive, like Sonya Weitz who remembers the holocaust because she was there. So when a guy like Ahmadinejad of

Iran, crazy guy, gets up in Iran and says there was really no holocaust, that was made up by the Jews. Sorry, Sonya weitz was there. By the way, even Eisenhower, General Eisenhower, when they went in to free those camps, he said people will never believe what happened here. And so he had all those things documented. They took photographs and they documented that whole thing because they said that people would never believe it. So that is very well documented. Even though it is well documented you've still got crazy people saying it never happened and things. So the problem is that you can call those people's bluffs, because Sonya, she was there, she was an eyewitness, and she bears witness to the fact of what it was like to be in the concentration camps under Hitler. And so there's no, nobody can challenge her, that was her experience. She was there, she and her sister.

So what's one of the problems? The problem is that Sonya died just a few years ago and so now she doesn't come and tell her story anymore and so that's what's happening to a lot of survivors of the holocaust, they're dying out. So therefore you don't have this witness now, and we're in 2012 now and the holocaust happened in the 1940s so we're talking 60 or 70 years now and so these people are dying off.

So with Mark and Matthew and Luke, you're still back within the twenty, thirty, forty year range so there are plenty of people around who actually can witness to these events. So that's all I'm saying. So you don't have time for a legend. You have too many people as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, there were 500 people who saw Jesus alive after he rose from the dead. There were 500 witnesses. As well as the twelve, and as well as the women, there were these two people from the Emmaus Road. So how many witnesses does it take before a person says that really happened? You've got two witnesses, you're pretty good. You've got one witness, you may wonder, you have two witness, that ups the probability quite a bit. What do you get when you got eleven, twelve witnesses at a time, what happens when you get 500 witnesses all at one time, different places, different times, and different settings?

So on the Emmaus Road, he had never probably been down Emmaus Road before, there is no record of that in Scripture, and so these people have no association with Jesus

in this area. Yet Jesus meets them on the road to Emmaus. So that's two witnesses. So it's not just one. So it is not legend, but historical reliable.

### **L. Evidence for the Historicity of the Gospel: The Ugly Truth**

Now things wouldn't be covered up. The disciples, if you're writing a gospel about Jesus, would you as an apostle, if you were one of the twelve guys, would you tell all the dumb things that the apostles do? Jesus is in a boat with them and starts telling them, beware the yeast of the Pharisees and the disciples start saying, "We forgot to take bread, and Jesus is getting mad at us because he didn't have anything to eat. So he's talking about the leaven of the Pharisees, but it's really that he's hungry because we forgot the bread." And Jesus says, "Hey, get a clue. If I want bread, uh excuse me, how many did I just feed? I just fed 5000, if I want bread I can make bread, manna from heaven. God gave manna from heaven. If I want manna from heaven I could do that. And he says, "you don't understand," to the disciples. And so that the disciples are played at some point, not understanding Jesus over and over and over again, they just didn't get it. So if you were the one writing that and you were one of the apostles, wouldn't you delete those kinds of stories? The people that you hung out with for those years, many of those people who are now in the process of going out, spreading the gospel, getting killed, and would you tell those negative stories about them? Yet the gospels expose the disciples when they're just not getting it. Jesus eats with tax collectors. You'd think that they'd want to up his status and rather than having him hang around with these illegitimate women, like Mary Magdalene, and the tax collectors. You'd put him out there with the Herods and Caiaphas, the high priest, and the Pontius Pilots, you'd have him hanging out with the bigwigs. Instead, who does Jesus, who does he hang out with? These tax collectors and sinners and we don't even know many of their names, but Jesus had a reputation with the Samaritans. Again the same thing, if you're a good Jewish person, why would you feature the Samaritans when you know that's offensive to all the Jewish people. And yet the gospels keep coming back to this – Jesus hung out with the Samaritans. It gives you a true history even though knowing that the true history is going



to be offensive to some people. In other words, Jesus was not necessarily politically correct. So he talks about his relationships with the Samaritans even knowing that that would bring opposition, the unbelief of the disciples, his own disciples did not believe in him at points.

His own family coming and at certain points coming to take Jesus away James and Joseph, and his own mother, coming to take they're coming to take you away, away. So they come to take Jesus away because they think he's crazy. His own brothers, reading in another passage, they were, this is from the book of John, sorry for jumping to John. In John they're going up to the feast of tabernacles, and his brothers say, "Hey, Jesus, why don't you do your miracles that you do, why don't you go down to Jerusalem and show everyone these miracles that you do." The narrator in John says, "because his own brothers did not believe in him." They said, "Go down to Jerusalem and do these miracles; because they didn't believe in him." If you're writing history about a hero, you'd cover those things up.

Peter denied the Lord. Peter's one of the big guys in the early church. This is the apostle Peter. "Upon this rock, Peter, I will build my church." Yet the gospels all record Peter denies the Lord three times. What kind of a history is that? Wouldn't you skip things of your friend Peter and say, okay he made some mistakes? You don't feature the mistakes of your friends in the way you write your history. Yet the gospel has Peter denying the Lord. Just before his crucifixion, three times, not just once but three times. Peter then goes out and weeps because of that. Normally, you'd cover those kinds of things up. What I'm trying to say is the gospels give us accurate history and they put out the good, the bad, and the ugly. There's some ugly stuff out there and they put it out there. So this is real history, it isn't made up history. This isn't ideal, legendized history, or mythological history where they make this myth where they make Jesus into this myth. No, they give you the real history. So the historical reliability; Craig Blomberg, down at Denver Seminary, has written a really nice book, a 4-5 hundred page book on the historical reliability of the gospels. It is a really critical book. He goes through and establishes a lot of the historical reliability of the gospels. Craig Blomberg's book,

*Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, is really worth reading.

### **M. Similarities: A Shared Broad Chronology**

So now let's look at some of the synoptic gospels here. Some of the similarities. We said there's going to be similarities and differences in the Synoptics, Matthew, Mark and Luke. Similarities, they don't bother us and so let's look at those first. Those are pretty easy ones but I just want to bring some of them up because I think it's important to know at what level the similarities happen. There's kind of a broad chronological similarity. All the gospels have this broad chronological framework. Jesus is born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grows up in Nazareth. So Jesus born in Bethlehem, goes to Nazareth. Nazareth is where he grows up under Joseph his father, as a carpenter. All of this is his early ministry, not ministry, but Jesus growing up in Nazareth. And then Jesus goes over to the Sea of Galilee and he's calling the disciples and doing his ministry and walking on water and feeding five thousand, doing Sermons on the Mount, kind of things, healing lepers, and cast out demoniacs. So Jesus goes from Nazareth over to Galilee. Galilee is where he has much of his ministry and then from Galilee he goes down to Jerusalem. When he goes down to Jerusalem, that's getting ready for the end. The Passion Week he's going to go down to Jerusalem and Jerusalem this is where he's going to be crucified. So all of them had Jesus' death, three days later, his resurrection. So that is the broad historical framework, Nazareth to Galilee, Galilee ministry with disciples, and miracles, parables, teachings and sliding down to Jerusalem for the end, and then hitting Jerusalem with the Passion Week, being crucified, dead and buried, and resurrecting from the dead three days later. All gospels have that same broad chronology. Okay, so that, and again, we're not surprised in the recording of all that happened, and they all agree on that broad chronology.

### **N. Similarities: Healing the Paralytic Man**

Some wording of many passages, is exactly the same. Exactly to the point of being stunningly exact. So what we have here and I want to look just at the miracle of the

paralytic. So this paralytic; let me just frame this story, you all know this story. Jesus is in this house and there's a crowd out there and these guys are bringing--this guy who is crippled and he's brought by his four friends. So his four friends are carrying him on a mat and they can't get in to see Jesus because of the crowd. So what are they going to do? They've got this guy who is crippled, they've got to get him in to Jesus so Jesus can heal him. They go up on the roof, they take the roof apart. The roofs were flat in that culture, and they're basically flat roof made out of mud and branches and things like that. They didn't have good shingles like we have in New England and steep roofs. Flat roofs. They go up and take the roof apart. You can imagine Jesus sitting there with all this dirt falling down on him.

But, anyway, then right through the roof they drop this guy down in front of Jesus. Jesus looks at the guy and everyone's expecting Jesus to say, "get up and walk." Jesus doesn't say that. Jesus never does what you expect and so Jesus looks at the guy and says, "Your sins are forgiven." Some of the people freak out and say, "Whoa, who can forgive sins but God." Exactly the point, and Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven," and says, "which is harder, to say 'your sins are forgiven,' or 'get up your mat, take your mat and walk'?" Apparently taking your mat and walk proved that he could forgive sins. So Jesus says, "Get your mat, get up, get out of here." The guy stands up, walks out. By the way, in a small town, would everybody in town know that this guy was a cripple? I don't know how he was made cripple and the whole situation with the family, but in small towns everybody knows everything. So this guy walks out and they're all stunned. This is the story of the paralytic. What we're looking at here is I want to look at the particular texts exactly of the wording and this is Matthew 9:6, and it says "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," [break in the text]. "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sin," break then, he breaks, "so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," then he turns to the paralytic exactly at the point after saying, "that you may know" then he turns and "he says to the paralytic, 'get up and walk.'" So there's a break right here and I want to look at that break where he breaks away from his talking to the crowd

and he turns to this guy who's paralytic and that's exactly what happens.

If you look over at Mark chapter 2, it says "but that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sin..." and then again, exactly at that place, "he turns to the paralytic and he says, 'Pick up your mat and get out of here.'" So the break is exactly at the same point. And then, of course, we're showing similarities and Luke 5:24. It says "but that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." break "that you may know" he turns to the paralytic and says "get up and walk"

So you can see that in all three of these narratives Jesus breaks at exactly the same point. What I'm trying to say is that these are the synoptic gospels. They tell the stories, a lot of these stories, they tell them exactly the same way. The wording is exactly the same, the movement even, in addressing the crowd and turning to the paralytic is exactly at the same point. And so this is verified three gospels the way it happened there. So now that's one similarity.

#### O. Similarities: John the Baptist

Here's another similarity. This is the quote about John the Baptist. John the Baptist's who is an early forerunner of Jesus, he's Elijah who was to come. Jesus said that if you receive it, this is Elijah reading the coming of the Messiah. So John the Baptist is this Old Testament quote, and so it says "this is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, 'A voice of one calling in the desert.'" And what does he call "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him." So there's a voice of one calling in the desert. Where did John hang out? John hung out in the desert. He ate locusts and wild honey and he hung out in the desert. So it's saying, Isaiah said, I believe it's Isaiah 40, and he said, "a voice of one calling in the desert." So he's out in the desert, and what does he call? "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him." That is a quote coming from the LXX, or what's called the Septuagint. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament done about 200-100 BC. I don't want to get into all this stuff about when exactly the LXX was translated but about 200-100 BC. The Septuagint, actually be a little bit earlier. Notice, then, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, and Luke 3:4, okay

so basically, 3:4 and 3:3 in Matthew and Luke the same chapter. It has this quote, and they all quote from the Septuagint.

None of them use the quote in the Old Testament from Masoretic Text. What is the Masoretic Text [MT]? The Masoretic Text is the Hebrew Old Testament, or what we call the MT. The MT is the Masoretic Text, the Hebrew texts preserved by a group of scribes known as the Masoretes. That's the Hebrew that a lot of Old Testament scholars learn how to read. They also learn how to read Greek so that they can read the Septuagint and compare the Greek and the Hebrew. We can see how the translators, in about 200 BC, how they did their translation work between them. But it's interesting when the gospel writers go to quote it, they all quote from the Septuagint. They all then do not quote from the Hebrew texts.

Here's how this passage is framed from Isaiah 40:3: "A voice of one calling, in the desert, prepare a highway for the Lord." And you see the difference there? This is saying, "a voice of one calling" and what does he say? He says, "in the desert, prepare a way for the Lord." So it's the way of the Lord that is going to be in the desert. But when you look in the Septuagint it says, "the voice of one calling in the desert" so in the first case, in the Septuagint, it's the person who is calling, who is in the desert. Whereas in the Masoretic Text, it's just: "a voice of one calling." And what does he call? "in the desert prepare the way of the Lord." It's the way of the Lord that is in the desert. So in the one, the speaker is in the desert. And he calls, "prepare the way of the Lord." In the other one, it's "prepare a way of the Lord in the desert." So the way of the Lord is in the desert. So these are definitely different readings then between the Septuagint and the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

So what it's saying is then that all three gospels, the synoptic gospels, they all switch over to the Septuagint and all ignore the Hebrew reading of the text there. So it is very interesting that all three are in agreement on that. It is word for word, word perfect, to quote a software package--word perfect. These are striking similarities that are exactly a word for word kind of thing, very similar.

## **P. Similarities: Westcott's Percentages Comparing the Gospels**

Now I want to work with this guy by the name of Westcott that showed comparisons between and we want to look at how many things are similar, how many things are different. And so I want to put up this kind of a chart, and we're going to look at how much of Luke, or how much of Mark, was different and how much of Mark was similar to the other gospels. So the differences are going to be the differences from the other gospels. Similarities are going to be when they overlap, when they're similar. In Mark, seven percent of Mark is unique to Mark. Seven percent of Mark is different than the other gospels, so that means if you lost the book of Mark, how much would you lose. You'd lose about seven percent. This means then that 93% of Mark, this is huge, is found in the other gospels. A lot of new testament scholars today, there's some divergence on this, there's some argumentation on this, many New Testament scholars will hold to a Markan priority. In other words, Mark came first and Matthew and Luke used Mark. So Mark came first and then Matthew and Luke drew on Mark. They call that Markan Priority. Mark came first. Here's one of the reasons why they do that, not the only reason certainly, but one of them. That so much of Mark is found in the other gospels, 93% of it is picked up in Matthew and Luke. That's incredible. So most of Mark is found elsewhere. Now 42% of Matthew is unique to him, and 58% of Matthew is similar. So Matthew shares with other gospels 58%. 42% is unique. So 42% that's quite a bit. Okay so you look, the Olivet Discourse and other things, in Matthew they are unique. Luke, you notice this is edging up. Luke is now almost 60% unique, but nevertheless, 41% is basically, is found in other gospels. So Luke is about 60/40. 60% unique, but 40% overlaps. So quite a bit of Luke is found elsewhere and so that these three gospels, now you see, are very similar to each other, especially Mark.

Now let's look at John. John, we said, is not one of the synoptic gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke are the synoptic gospels. John's totally different. John is 92% unique. Do you see that? That's incredible compared to these three. You can see why these three are paralleled and 92% of John is found nowhere else, totally unique to John. Only 8% of the book of John is found in the other three gospels. That's why John is giving you a

different perspective. It's interesting actually, that John and Mark roles are almost reversed. 8% percent of John is similar to the other gospels but look, Mark is only 7% unique to him. Mark has only 7%, most of Mark is found elsewhere and so there's almost like a flip flop back and forth with those. But John is very unique. So these three are the synoptic gospels, and this one, John is, well, John is John. So this is a comparison of how much there's overlap and we said there's a lot of overlap with Mark, and not so much with John.

### **Q. Similarities: Synoptic Overlap**

Here's another way to look at it. You can use these Venn Diagrams from when you were in high school. Probably tried to forget this Venn Diagram stuff but it actually comes in pretty handy here in comparing these three things. So you've got Mark, only 50 verses of Mark are unique, Matthew has 280, Luke has 500 unique. So you can see Luke, of the three, Luke is the most unique. Mark is the most not unique, and Matthew's got its own substantial stuff. There's 480 segments here. 480 segments that overlap. All three have these 480 similarities, in common. They overlap. Then here, between Mark and Matthew, about 180 segments are shared between Mark and Matthew, but not in Luke. This is outside Luke. This is just shared by Matthew and Mark, 180 segments are there. Mark and Luke share uniquely outside of Matthew, about 20, so this is not very much at all. Luke shares with Mark 20 segments, and then 170 units are shared by Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark. So most of what Mark contains, is found elsewhere, only 50 verses, or 50 segments. Now 170, are shared between Matthew and Luke but not in Mark. We call this 170 "Q." We'll see this in a minute, what Q is. We're going to call it the *Quelle* [Q], "the source" that is shared. This is the material here Q, that is shared by Matthew and Luke but not in Mark. So it's outside Mark and that's what they call the Q source. So if it's in Matthew and Luke but Mark didn't have it. Matthew and Luke drew on that Q source to prove that 170 segments there.

### **R. Differences in the Synoptic Gospels: The Order of the Temptation of Christ**

Now, we will push on to the differences in the Synoptic Gospels. We've talked about the similarities and the similarities usually are not a problem. Everybody kind of agrees with the similarities when we show similarities but the differences cause people problems. And this is called the synoptic problem. What do you do with the differences? One of the differences is going to be the ordering of events. The ordering of events is, I think, significant.

Do you remember the temptation of Christ? Christ in almost all of gospels it starts right out. The Spirit of God takes Christ out into the wilderness, where he's fasting forty days and forty nights out in the wilderness. These are temptation sequences in Luke 4 and Matthew 4. Here's the order. Both of them, both of these gospels start out with Satan comes up to Jesus and says "hey, are you hungry? Turn those rocks into bread." And Jesus says what? "Man does not live by bread alone." Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy. Actually, all three times Satan tempted him, he quotes from Deuteronomy 4 to chapter 11, or chapter 8, something like that in that section in Deuteronomy. So both gospel writers start out with rocks to bread. And you say there's no problem there and that's right, no problem there.

What about the second one? In Matthew, it says that Satan took Jesus up to the pinnacle of the temple and basically said, "Jesus, the Psalms say if you throw yourself down that his angels will bear you up lest you dash your foot upon a stone." And Jesus turns and says, "Don't tempt the Lord your God." Jesus' response is again out of Deuteronomy. Satan's quoting Scripture here, as we've mentioned before, Satan actually quotes Scripture. He says "pinnacle, jump off the pinnacle, and angels will bear you up."

But what's interesting is Luke, on the other hand, talks about the kingdoms. Satan takes him for the second temptation up to the mountain, and to the high point of the mountain, shows him all the kingdoms of the world and says, "I will give all these things to you if you'll bow down and worship me" and Jesus says, "you should worship only the Lord your God" again quoting from Deuteronomy. So here are the kingdoms up on top of the mountain shows and kingdoms of the world and calls for worship. So you can see that the order is different. There's three temptations in each one of these have three



temptations. But the three temptations, numbers two and three are switched or flipped. So Matthew, Matthew ends with Jesus being taken up to the mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the world, and says, “all these kingdoms I’ll give you if you bow down and worship me.” Jesus says, “No, worship God only.” Matthew ends with the kingdoms, whereas Luke ends with the pinnacle jump. “Jump off this pinnacle and his angels will bear you up.” So what I’m saying is, the three temptations of Christ, when he’s tempted by Satan in the wilderness, numbers two and three are flip flopped. The order is different. So which one is the actual order? Which is the actual historical order?

### **S. There are Various Ways to Tell a Story**

Now I want to bring another thing into this. Is it possible that the writer is using the order of this temptation of Christ in order to make a statement? In order to fit, in other words, did the writer fit his story to the environment of what he’s trying to say. What I’m wanting to suggest is, yes. Do you guys appreciate storytelling? When a person tells a story, do they tell it in different ways depending on the audience that they’re addressing? We have this guy at Gordon College named Dr. Graeme Bird, he’s a pianist who plays classical piano, piano, and he’s an incredible pianist. He’s also a classical scholar, studies Homer and Greek and that kind of thing, as well as a linguist. And also involved in computers. He’s kind of a Renaissance kind of person. They still have some of those people left in the world. It’s very interesting, he sits down and he what he calls it jazz. And so he sits down with this metaphor on Jazz and so what happens is he’ll play something like, let’s take a song like “Amazing Grace.” “Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.” So he’ll play it, and what he’ll do is then he’ll take the song “Amazing Grace,” and he’ll play it in the classical style. In the style of Beethoven or Mozart, and all of a sudden you’ll hear him doing and it will sound, you will recognize that it’s “Amazing Grace,” but you will recognize that it’s also that he’s playing it like a classical piece. Then all of a sudden, he’ll switch and play “Amazing Grace” as if it’s a gospel song in a kind of a First Baptist Church rendition. He’ll start beating the piano and start playing “Amazing Grace” like it would be in a Baptist church

kind of context. And then all of a sudden, he'll change again, you recognize both classically that it was "Amazing Grace" and when it was played as a gospel kind of song, "Amazing Grace," and then all of a sudden, he'll turn it into jazz. And it's almost like you're down in New Orleans and this guy is out on the street. He's playing this song "Amazing Grace." Now by the way, do you recognize it as it's jazz, you recognize it immediately that it's jazz. But you also recognize that the song is "Amazing Grace." Now each one of those is "Amazing Grace." But they're played totally differently and you can see he could play to a classical audience he would play it this way, for a gospel audience, he would play it this way. If you're down in New Orleans, he would play it this way. It is the same song, but different.

Anybody who's taught much knows. When I was a lot younger, I taught at a Bible College down in Bristol, Tennessee, and I was a pastor, preaching at five different churches, and so I had like five churches and every week I would go to a different church and preach. So it was like a circuit rider preacher. I would go around to the churches. So what happened is that, I developed a sermon and I would preach the sermon. Now at the first church, I would preach it, and then the second, next week, I would preach the same sermon at a different church. A third time, I would preach in the third church, fourth and fifth church. I would preach the same sermon five weeks in a row and do it at five different churches. There were five different audiences.

Now each time I preached the sermon, was it the same sermon? It was the same sermon, all five times, but my wife would go with me to these various churches and she would always say the first time you preached it, it was pretty terrible. You go off the first time, she says, "the first time's down you didn't really have it together." She said it got much better the second time. She said the third time you were the best. The third time you really honed it and you preached it really well. She said by the fourth and fifth time, she says, especially the fifth time, she said, "I could tell you were bored with your own sermon." There was kind of like a crescendo coming up. It was terrible initially, it got better and better, and finally I got it right and then after I got it right it was downhill from there. So, what I'm saying is the same sermon preached in five different churches, did I

ever use exactly the same words? Some, but with each church, were the stories a little different? Did things get tweaked a little bit? Some depended upon the audience interaction and some depended on my crafting the sermon to a different level, editing it again. So all I'm saying is it's possible to tell the same story several different ways.

This has also come up, my son got back from Afghanistan, and he tells stories, I've heard his stories now told several times, and it's been very interesting each time he tells the story, he tells it one time to his brothers and sisters, and he tells the story and everybody's laughing and rolling on the floor, he's an amazing storyteller. And he tells the story and it's really humorous. The siblings leave and he talks to just to my wife and I and then he tells us the same story, but with totally different meaning. He just drops some really, really heavy stuff and it's the same story but told with different effect on the audience. And so storytelling's important. What you have here is, then, let's look at this.

### **T. The Order of the Temptation in Matthew and Luke**

How was Matthew doing with the story? Matthew takes the temptation of Christ, rocks to bread. Why did they start there? Jesus had been fasting for forty days, so the first question he's going to ask him is you want something to eat. So they all start with rocks to bread, but notice how Matthew ends with kingdom, shows him all the kingdoms of the world, "bow down and worship me." Matthew chapter 4, these are all the kingdoms and worship me. What does chapter five of Matthew go into? Matthew chapter 5 goes into the beatitudes: blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the meek; blessed are those who are those persecuted for righteousness sake; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. It's the Sermon on the Mount. So after chapter 4, you've got this going into the Sermon on the Mount, teachings about the kingdom, and the Sermon on the Mount. So Matthew sets up the teachings of the kingdom by ending the temptation of Christ with the kingdoms of this world, "bow down and worship me." Now Jesus will tell you about his kingdom. His kingdom is found in the Sermon on the Mount, as he describes Kingdom living. So Matthew, I don't know, switches his original order, we don't know for sure, but in Matthew you can see it fits perfectly into the narrative of how Matthew's going to

pick it up, Jesus is now going to teach on the kingdom in chapters 5, 6, and 7, in the Sermon on the Mount. So Matthew's story, the three temptations of Christ, ends with the kingdom and then Jesus is going to teach on the kingdom.

And what about Luke you say? And actually this is the first year I was seeing this but Luke starts with the rocks to bread, of course because Jesus is hungry, the kingdom world is offered the second one, but the pinnacle of the temple, "throw yourself off the pinnacle temple and the angels will catch you and bear you up." I never saw this before, but how this led from one into the other, and I said, "I wonder if Luke ends with this pinnacle, jumping off the pinnacle, I wonder if there's a connection to what follows in Luke," and sure enough, guess what? Luke has Jesus going to the synagogue in Nazareth, teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth, Nazareth was his hometown. The people in his hometown rejected him and they take him off to the cliff that's overlooking the Armageddon valley, the Jezreel Valley, they take him from Nazareth out to this cliff and they are going to throw him off the cliff, so Jesus is going to be thrown or jumped off the cliff, and be thrown down, exactly the way this is the pinnacle, "Get on the pinnacle and jump off, his angels will bear you up." And then what you have is this story of Jesus being taken to the cliff and going to be thrown off the cliff. So it seems to me the story of Luke finishing with this pinnacle jump, leads right into Luke's next story of Jesus teaching in Nazareth. The conclusion of that is that his own people in Nazareth would reject him, and take him to the pinnacle, and they're going to throw him off.

So anyway what I'm suggesting here is that this is beautifully crafted literature. In other words the guy crafts this story to make it fit he connects story to story, these stories are organically connected. One flows into the next one and they're crafted so that they flow one to the next. There is a difference of order here, so you could say contradictions, in Scripture, the order is different. There's a reason why the order is different. This is how each writer wants to tell his story. So the order of the temptation is not really that important point here, the point is the temptation of Christ. So this is a difference in order, and we've got clear examples of that.

## U. Variations of the Title on the Cross

Now, here, let's go next to some other differences. Here is a difference in quotation. This is the difference quotation. What was on the title over Jesus' head as he hung on the cross? And what we can do is pull up the various gospels, we'll pull up the gospels, and it tells us then this title was put on Jesus over the cross when he was hung on the cross. In Matthew 27:37, the title above the cross says, "this is Jesus, the king of the Jews." Okay, so that's kind of what you would expect, "this is Jesus, king of the Jews." This was the title that was over Jesus on the cross, Matthew 27:37. What do Luke and Mark say? Mark drops the "this is Jesus" and Mark just has "the king of the Jews." He drops the first part, but he keeps "the king of the Jews." Now you say, well, you expect Mark to be shorter. The book of Mark is quite a bit compressed and shorter so that Mark drops this. You ask: What was really on the cross over his head? What was on the title over Christ's head? Mark drops "this is Jesus" So they're different. All I'm trying to point out is that they're different. The quotation of what was on the title over Christ's head is different. Luke comes out like this in chapter 23 verse 38. Luke says "this is the king of the Jews." Now Matthew said "this is Jesus, the king of the Jews" Luke says "this is the King of the Jews." It drops out the name, Jesus. So now, what happens here is you have three different readings and therefore I ask you in the resurrection, therefore, which one of these readings was really over the head of Christ?

Now, you say, "Matthew seems to get the most, so you pick the biggest one can be condensed out of that," but you see, there's a difference here. My point is you have a quote of what was on the title over Christ's head, and there are three different recordings of what that exactly was, so they're different. And you say, "Wait a minute, Hildebrandt, what about John?" Guess what, would you expect John to be different, sure enough, he is! John has the title above the cross over Jesus's head saying, "Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews." So you say, well they all have the "king of the Jews" so "the king of the Jews" must be on there, but did it say, "This is Jesus," did it say nothing, did it drop Jesus' name and say, "this is the king of the Jews" or did it say "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews" there's four different readings for what was on the cross over Jesus' head.

## V. Possible Explanations—Summaries and Translations

So all I'm saying is sometimes when you have quotes, and let me just make a bigger point-- sometimes in the New Testament, and it says Jesus said, what's the problem? It's not giving you the exact words of Jesus. It's giving you a summary of what he said. They're summarizing sometimes in their own words. The same way that if you went to Lane to go to lunch, you would say, "what Prof Phillips says is this." You aren't quoting her word for word, you're summarizing what she said, and you're summarizing, oftentimes, in your own words. So what you may have then is that you've got to be careful. These aren't quotes like technical quotes, where every word is exactly what he or she said.

So how do you account for these differences? Well, some of it could be just saying basically what's on the title of the cross. It's very likely--and actually we know from the records, that the title of the cross was in three languages. And so you've got probably Greek and Aramaic up there. So one of these would be Greek, one of these would be in Aramaic and another in a different language and you see you have three different languages. Is it possible then, that in three different languages they had three different titles? In other words, it wasn't word for word, and that in the different languages they had different titles. So what we would have here is that each person then copied a different one of those languages up there and the three different languages weren't the same. That's possible. So the three different languages with three different descriptions about the cross, that's possible.

Let's go a bit further. When in your Bibles, you have the red letter Bible, you have what Jesus said, and what Jesus said was in red letters, what's the problem with that? What language did Jesus speak in? Jesus spoke in Aramaic. *Talitha koum*, Jesus says to the little girl. "Little girl, get up." Jesus spoke Aramaic. Our New Testament is written in what? Our New Testament is written in Greek. So what you have in the New Testament is a translation of what Jesus said. Jesus spoke in Aramaic to his disciples. What you have in the New Testament is a translation into Greek of what he said. It's very possible and it's likely if you've done any translation work, different translators translate things

differently. It's not whether one's right or one's wrong, it's just they translate it differently. So Jesus taught in Aramaic. Well, we've got the New Testament so it's in Greek. So you've got to make an allowance for that. So we're not going to have quote exact quotes from Jesus because Jesus spoke in the different language. It'd be like somebody speaking in Spanish and then it gets translated into English. Different translators are going to translate it differently. You say, Pablo says, and you quote him in Spanish but you're quoting him in English. Well, Pablo really said, "que pasa" or something and you're going to translate that into English in different ways. So you need to keep that in the back of your mind when you think about this. Some of the differences may be accounted for are translational problems. Some of them may be that the different languages are reflected in the translation. Others may be the purpose of the writer, the purpose of the writer who wanted to make a point with something and do it that way. So there's variation in quotation and you've got to be aware of that.

#### **W. Variation in Quotation: Peter's Quote**

Peter's quote, "who do you say that I am" and you can go through Peter's quote, "thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God." Well, if you take Peter's quote and you trace it through the other gospels, you'll see there's again, variation in quotation. So there's variation in quotation. By the way, I just challenge you think about how you quote your own friends, when you say so-and-so said this. Often you're not quoting them word for word you're giving summaries of it. One other thing I should just say this too, in terms of Jesus words. Think about the sermons. Remember back in Matthew we talked about the five great discourses in the book of Matthew. The five great discourses of Matthew, how long does it take you to read this Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount is Matthew 5, 6, and 7. How long does it take you to read that? Well, if you were to read it out loud, and my Greek students could do it out loud in Greek, it would take you probably about ten minutes to read this Sermon on the Mount. Now how many of you really think that when Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount that the sermon was ten minutes long? I want to tell you when Jesus gave a sermon, the Sermon on the Mount,

that it was much longer than ten minutes. So Jesus probably gave a sermon for what, half an hour, an hour? Some of those people, when they gave sermons in the ancient times, they gave sermons for hours. And what we've got ten minutes? We've got ten minutes of what Jesus said there. We don't have the hours or the hour that he gave. By the way we know that to be true, do you remember some we're reading in the book of Acts right now, you've got readings in the book of Acts. Do you remember in the book of Acts, you've got this chapter 20. You've got Eutychus, and Paul gives a sermon, and Paul gives a sermon at Troas in northwest Turkey there. Paul's giving a sermon, and Paul's sermon goes so long, it kind of was like this class sometimes, that the sermon goes so long that this Eutychus guy, falls asleep in the windowsill, and he actually falls out the window because he fell asleep during Paul's sermon. Paul's got to go out and raise this guy up from the dead, because the guy broke his neck or whatever. So Paul heals him from falling out of the window, because the sermon was so long, and the guy was tired. So all I'm trying to say is when it says Jesus' words, when you have these great discourses of Jesus, the Olivet Discourse is only two chapters, the discourse the sending of the Twelve is one chapter long. What we're getting is a three minute synopsis, or abstract, or condensation of this sermon that probably would have gone on for a half hour, an hour long, but we've only got that much of it. So be careful.

When the--"who do men say that I am?" -- "you're the Christ, the son of the living God," they'll be variations on that don't think of it in terms of quotes. They're giving you summaries, abstracting what they said there. So "you are the Christ, the son of the Living God." Here is Mark, "you are the Christ" now you notice that he drops off. Again, Mark is shorter. Mark kind of gets to the point, "you are the Christ." He drops off the "son of the living God." Luke says, "the Christ of God." So Luke kind of takes "the Christ" here and "God" and kind of puts them together in his own way. So all I'm saying is be careful assumes these are exact quotes. The quotes have variational differences, some of that may be to the fact that Jesus spoke in Aramaic and these are different translations of it, some of it may be compositional problem. Not problems, but the writer Matthew, Mark, and Luke are trying to do something different with each one of them. So



they'll have to do with the composition of the writer. Sometimes they're just summarizing what he said and they summarize it differently. That's all. Don't think necessarily about the quote marks. Here are some other differences. Sometimes there's a difference in number. In Matthew 8:28 he comes up to the demoniacs. How many demoniacs from Geresá are there? You remember this story, there was this guy who comes out, he's cutting himself, he's in the graveyard, cutting himself. They bind him with chains, he snaps the chains, and nobody can bind him. There are two demoniacs of Geresá, in Matthew chapter 8, and Jesus comes up, and casts them out. This is legion, they say please cast us into the pigs, and the pigs and run down the hill and get drowned in the Sea of Galilee. So in Matthew 8, there are two demoniacs of Geresá. Jesus casts the demons out of two guys.

When you go to Mark, Mark has the story in chapter 5:2, there's one demoniac. Jesus casts the demon Legion out of him. He goes back home and tells of the great things God has done for them. So in the resurrection, therefore will there be two demoniacs, or one demoniac? I guess you say, well that's not really the point, there could have been-- is it possible that there could have been three or four? Matthew only tells us about two of them. Or is it possible there's only one of them. Let's put it back in your face. How many of you, when you tell your parents what happened, and you were out at some party or something at night, and you went out and you know, you're on the town and you tell parts. Do you tell part of the story, or do you tell the whole story? Well, you tell the part that you think your parents would want to hear. You don't tell the other part. So it's not, question: are you lying to them? No, you're not lying to them, you just didn't tell them everything that happened that night, because you don't want to get in trouble or whatever, and so you just tell part of the story. You don't tell the whole story.

## **X. The Part/Whole Issue**

So it's possible that here, we have a part/whole issue. He tells part of the story. There are two guys, and the other there's one guy and he's just not giving you the full story. There could have been three or four there. But he's just telling you focusing on

two, and the one case in Mark. It had a woman in a class this year, and she brought up the fact, she says, “Even as a parent, does a parent always tell their kids the whole story?” And that’s true too. Often times parents tell the kids just part of the story and the kids then you know, it’s not appropriate for them to know everything that when on in a certain situation. I know that I’m debating in my own head, now, and our kids normally--my wife and I fight, like anybody who’s married. My wife and I usually when we fight, we made a practice not of fighting in front of our kids. So my kids have never really seen my wife and I really go at it and get into a conflict because we usually, when we fight we go upstairs, close the door, and then we have it out. But we do it away from the kids. I’m debating now whether that was a smart thing to do, or whether that was a dumb thing to do as a parent. Is it good to show your kids how to resolve conflict and do it in front of them? Or is it good, to do it separately so they don’t see it, and then give the false impression that maybe the parents don’t fight. My kids know better than that, but it’s just, I go back and forth. One of the girls in the class this year said, that in her family, her parents fought in front of her, and as a little kid, she always wondered, you know, did I cause the fight. So she took on a lot of the guilt then, and thinking that she caused it when it had nothing, whatsoever to do with her. You’ve got to be really careful about those kind of things. But all I’m saying is that parents don’t tell their kids everything that’s going on. When we’re in financial difficulty or something like that, we don’t lay those financial burdens on our kids. It’s inappropriate for them to know about certain things. From your perspective as college students, you know, you don’t tell your parents everything either. And so part/whole kinds of things, number variation in this case, two demoniacs, one demoniac is a part/whole kind of thing.

### **Y. Timing Variations—Sending out of the Twelve**

Now this brings up a big one: timing variations. I want to look at here, one particular instance of this, and this has to do with the temple cleansing. Now we’re going to be comparing John here. John, has the temple cleansing where Jesus goes in and flips over the tables in the temple, and drives out the shopkeepers, and take the doves out of

here. Jesus does that in John 2, which is right at the beginning of the book of John. John doesn't have any of the birth stories about Jesus. He starts "in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God." And he jumps right into this thing of Jesus is the Word--the *logos*. And then chapter 2, Jesus makes water into wine, and Jesus flips over the tables. Then you've got the whole rest of the book of John, Jesus cleanses the temple is one of the first things he does in the book of John. Yet in Matthew, the story of the temple cleansing comes at the end when Jesus is up at the temple and he's going to his last week, his Passion Week, when he's going to be tried and crucified. He does the temple cleansing just before his crucifixion.

This is interesting too. What about the fig tree? In Matthew, Jesus condemns the fig tree, and it withers immediately, whereas in the book of Mark, when Jesus curses the fig tree, the fig tree withers the next day. So this is a tiny timing variation. We're talking about differences in timing. Was the temple cleansing at the beginning or end of Christ's ministry? This is the withering of the fig tree. Jesus curses the fig tree after or he goes up to the fig tree and there's no fruit on it. In Matthew, the fig tree withers immediately, but in Mark, it's the next day, when the fig tree withers. Now, okay. What about this timing variation, and I think this is fairly significant here. Let me just talk about this a little bit further. Now I'm just wondering, let me just go down a little bit here. Let's see. Yeah, let's deal with the temple cleansing first.

There is another, where people say, contradiction here, where in one, Jesus is sending out the twelve, and in one, he says, don't take a staff, and you know, just go out, don't take staff, don't take anything with you, just live off the hosts. And the other one, he says take a staff with you, so there's a difference between Matthew 10:10 and Mark 6:8. This is pretty easily solved I think. Did Jesus send the twelve out repeatedly, probably. Did Jesus send the twelve out in various contexts? And so one time, he told them, take a staff, the other one he tells them don't take a staff. It could be, even, that he's got some people, who he's sending out into Galilee and he tells those people. "Don't take a staff," because you're going to Galilee, you should be friends with the people there. And he's telling these other guys, "They're going to the Decapolis area and you're

going to need a staff over there.” So it’s possible that he tells some of his disciples to take a staff, and some of them not to take a staff. So, you’ve got that scenario where he’s sending them to two different regions, and he’s telling one group to take a staff and one not to, in the same event. Or you could have it that Jesus sends out the twelve, and we know in other places he sends out the seventy. And so Jesus sent out people repeatedly, and with different advice each time, and that’s possible. So this is not really a contradiction, you can explain it in various ways.

### **Z. Introduction to Cleansing the Temple: Variation in Storytelling**

Now, I want to talk about the temple cleansing, and actually I want to tell you a story. And let me come back to this one with the staff, to take a staff and not to take a staff, and one he tells them do take a staff and the other one he tells them do not take a staff. I think it was Kenneth Concert, tells this story about a person. And I want to tell you a story; I want to tell you, told by two eyewitnesses. These are two people who saw this accident. So you’ve got two eyewitnesses of an accident, okay, so here’s how it goes. The first witness, this is how the first witness reports to the police, this is what happened. There was a bus, the bus came down the road, the woman was standing by a telephone pole, the bus hit the pole, and threw the woman, and hit the woman. The bus hit the telephone pole, hit the woman, threw the woman, and the woman was hurt, but not fatally. And she was taken to the hospital. So the bus hits the pole, hits the woman, the woman is hurt, not fatally, and taken to the hospital. That’s what the one witness saw. Here’s a description of a second witness. The second witness says, the woman was in a car, the car was t-boned, she was not wearing her seatbelt, she was thrown out of the car and killed instantly. Okay, she was in a car, without her seatbelt, she was hit, t-boned, and was thrown out of the car and killed instantly. Now, which one of those stories is true? they’re very different stories, right? These are very different stories. One by telephone pole, she’s not hit fatally, she’s taken to the hospital. But then she’s killed instantly, thrown out of the car. Okay, two different stories, sounds like these are two different witnesses, it sounds like the stories are contradictory. They’re not. The problem is,

whenever you have a story, you don't know the full story. Life is complex. This is just sort of kind of a dumb thing to say, but life is more complex than a story. What happened with this woman? Here's how this worked out. This is actual truth, this actually happened. Okay two witnesses, in one the woman was standing by a pole. She was hit by the bus and she was injured. A good Samaritan stopped his car, picked up the woman, and was taking her to the hospital. As he was taking her to the hospital, she did not put on her seatbelt, and the guy went through an intersection while he was taking her to the hospital, and he was t-boned, and she was ejected from the inside of his car, and she was killed instantly. So question, which witness was right? They both were right. The problem was the story was much more complex than initially told. You get--you think like the stories are like this, and you realize that there was a time sequence there, and that solves that problem.

And so all I'm saying is, when you've got to be careful when you come to scripture. Life is much more complicated than a story told. We're getting a fraction of what happened. We're getting a fraction of what Jesus said. We're getting a fraction of the situation, we don't know the whole situation all the time, so you've got to be careful about making these big judgments --all those contradictions in the Bible, see this contradicts this, he told them to take a staff, he told them not to take a staff. You weren't there, so you don't know, you don't know exactly what was going on. Did he send them to two different areas, did he tell them to take a staff one time and not another time? You weren't there and so don't go, saying the Bible is proven reliable enough all the time, on the stuff that we know, that where there's conflict, you've got to be able to say, "I trust the witness. You know I've seen the Bible, the truth a hundred you know, million times, and so if it's got this thing that looks like a contradiction, there's got to be some sort of explanation to it." So be careful, life is more complex than what is recorded in Scripture. Indeed, John tells us, sorry for jumping to John, John tells us "If I wrote down everything that Jesus ever did, all the books in the world couldn't hold it all." So, of course, you're just getting part of what Jesus said and did. So just that kind of is a background there.

## **AA. Four Different Aspects of the Temple Cleansing**

So what I'd like to do is look at this temple cleansing. Because I think this is really pretty interesting. I want to run through this. This temple cleansing where Jesus flips over the tables, is found in all four gospels. So I want to look at it in all four gospels because they give us different narrations of what happened and when it happened. What I want to ask is this: what is the function of the temple cleansing story in each gospel? How does the temple cleansing function for each gospel writer. How does he use the temple cleansing when he tells that story? How does he frame the story and in that context?

So what we're going to see is that one frames the story of the cleansing of the temple in a religious, priestly, or purity of the temple kind of way, that there's a violation of the purity of the temple. A second way will be, a social justice way, where we'll see Jesus comes in and flips over the tables and cleanses the temples so that he can teach. He is the sage teacher, and he comes and the pilgrims are there, coming to his teaching. And so that'll be framed that way. Another one frames it as Jesus is flipping over the tables and kicking them out as a Messianic king. This is his temple, he's cleansing it as the Messianic king, redefining the temple that he's cleansing. The temple becomes the temple of his body. Then lastly, one of the writers will take this temple cleansing as a prophetic announcement. "Get these things out of here," as Jesus' participating in this prophetic kind of pronouncement, and then the rejection of the prophet. Same way that they rejected Isaiah, same way that they rejected Jeremiah and Ezekiel, they reject Jesus. Now, in the temple area as he makes his prophetic--actually Jeremiah, the one who was in the temple, and he would tell these prophecies and the people would wail on him and beat him. Jeremiah had a rough time. This is, the prophet in the temple making a pronouncement and then being rejected and then the judgment coming on the temple, as Jeremiah. Jeremiah makes these prophecies that Babylon's coming and going to destroy the place and basically the people get all upset and they reject Jeremiah. They beat up Jeremiah and what you have then is this judgment on the temple comes with Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. He comes and wipes out the temple, exactly as Jeremiah

said. Jeremiah said Nebuchadnezzar would come and the Babylonians would wipe it out, destroy it, and indeed they did. With Jesus you've got the same thing. He comes and cleanses the temple and announces the temple's going to be destroyed. And sure enough, in 70 AD, Titus and the Romans come in and level the temple. All I'm trying to say here is the story of the cleansing of the temple is told in four different ways. So, let's kind of lay that out now.

### **AB. Mark: Prophetic Rejection**

Now look at how Mark frames the story of the temple cleansing. He frames it with the cursing of the fig tree. So Jesus comes up to the temple and, before he gets up to the temple he curses this fig tree. The fig tree stands for Israel, and that Israel has not got any fruit and it should have had fruit. Jesus curses it. The temple is cleared, this incident is in Mark 11:15, Jesus cleanses the temple with the outcome that the crowds are amazed. In the book of Mark you've got the crowds, you've got the amazement to a Roman audience, and so it fits perfectly. He cleanses the temple and the crowds are amazed and the religious leaders want to kill him. So what you've got here is, basically, the rejection of the prophet by the leaders of the country. And the leaders of the country reject him, and so what happens? So he clears the temple, and there are these two very different reactions, and then what happens. The fig tree withers. At the end, you come back in chapter 11 verse 20 in Mark, they go out again, and they see that the fig tree is withered. So here it starts with the fig tree being cursed and then the story ends with the fig tree withering. You see Mark then frames kind of like an envelope, or as Dr. Phillips would say, an inclusion. It begins with the cursing of the fig tree, and then end with the fig tree withering. The fig tree then encapsulates, like bookends, encapsulates the story of the temple cleansing, largely to illustrate this point of the prophet's being rejected. Jesus comes in as the prophet to the temple and he is rejected. They try to kill him. So the tree withers because the tree represents Israel, that Israel's rejection of the message would result in withering the fig tree. So this is how Mark frames the story as a prophetic rejection. So it's more in line with Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7. So Mark frames it with

this kind of quote “get these things out of my house” and “ my father’s house” and “a den of thieves” kind of thing.

Now let’s look at the other one. Let’s look at Matthew, chapter 21. Now in Matthew, you remember it is about the kingdom of heaven. So Matthew will portray this temple cleansing and the idea of a Messianic restoration of the temple area, and so let’s look at the context and how it flows. Jesus, in Matthew 21, Jesus comes into the temple area, how does he get there? He’s riding on a donkey, the people are all singing, “Hosanna, hosanna, to the king,” and it is Palm Sunday. In Matthew 21, Palm Sunday, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, the son of David coming in, “Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.” Then Jesus what? Jesus comes as the Messiah he comes into the temple and he cleanses the temple. That’s the role of the Messiah to make things right. So he cleanses the temple, chapter 21 verse 12, he flips over the tables and drives them out. Hosannas continue and Jesus, then, in the book of Matthew, Jesus flips over the tables, he cleanses the temple, and then what should the messiah do? The messiah should heal people, on the temple mount and there’s all these healings that Jesus does, and the son of David, the people cry out “son of David,” and “from the lips of children, you’ve ordained praise,” Jesus said. So what you have in the book of Matthew is, Jesus flips over the tables, and the Messianic restoration, Jesus heals people. He takes that which is broken and he fixes it. The messiah restores things to the way it should be. You get a glimpse of the kingdom that is not yet becoming already here when Jesus is here. Jesus is the king. He is the messianic ruler and therefore he cleanses the temple and he heals people. He brings the kingdom into the now. This is the “already but not yet,” as Dr. Matthewson used to say so much. So you get a glimpse of the “not yet.” But Jesus doing it already here as he heals these people and restores and cleanses the temple. So this is the messianic restoration clearly seen here in the book of Matthew. The lame are healed, the outsiders are brought in, and this is the messianic kingdom. In Matthew, you get a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Matthew portrays this as the temple cleansing. The outsiders are brought in, but the insiders become opponents. This is a minor role, though, here. Then the next day, the next day, the fig tree is withered. In



other words, the fig tree is not the point here. He's showing the messianic restoration, and so the fig tree is disconnected from the temple cleansing, and rather the fig tree is used in Matthew as a lesson on prayer. So Matthew uses the fig tree in conjunction with these things but he uses it for a different function and shows Jesus temple cleansing is actually the Messiah, a messianic restoration, especially featuring the healing of the people.

### **AC. Luke: A Place of Teaching**

Now what do you have here in Luke? In Luke, it's interesting, in chapter 19, verse 45 and following, Luke's got the temple cleansing, and what does Jesus do? Jesus flips over the tables, but then instead of healing people and making things in this messianic kingdom, giving a glimpse of the kingdom, here you've got Jesus teaching in the temple. So it's in the context of Jesus' lament for Jerusalem. Jesus comes over the Mount of Olives, and he's going to go into the temple area. As he comes over the Mount of Olives, Jesus weeps and he says, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how many times as a mother hen, I would have gathered you as chicks into my arms but you would not." He laments. You have seen in the Get Lost in Jerusalem program, the Dominus Flavit, the church where Jesus wept. The church itself is shaped like a tear and it's on the Mount of Olives as you come down to Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. And so the lament for Jerusalem and this is foreshadowing. What is this foreshadowing? The day of the Lord. This foreshadowing the destruction of Jerusalem. God is coming to you. Jerusalem is going to be destroyed. The day of the Lord is coming. He mutes the incident, there's no reference to the money changers, the doves, there's no details of, taking the doves, the doves got special treatment, there's no reference to the money changers. He mutes the incident of the temple cleansing. Why does he mute the incident of the temple cleansing, the flipping over the tables and things like that? Instead of the flipping over the tables, the driving out the money tax collectors, and the doves, taking special treatment of the doves. It's taken as an example of Jesus as the sage whose teaching function and it's through Jesus' teaching function that the audience is split. So Jesus is the teacher in Luke. He's a messianic teacher, he's a sage teacher. It's very interesting to me, and this year, I made

this connection with Luke. Luke is the only gospel, that reveals when Jesus was twelve years old, and he went, they took him to the temple for his bar mitzvah or whatever it was, and then they leave and they leave Jesus behind. This is kind of a first Left Behind series. And Jesus is left behind. His mother and father leave, and then all of a sudden, they get two or three days out and say, “Oops, where’s Jesus?” Nobody knows where he is. “We’ve lost him.” So they go back to Jerusalem, and they go where? They go into the temple area and what’s Jesus doing? Jesus is sitting there, listening and teaching people in the temple area. Then his parents come up and say, “Hey, we were worried to death about you, what are you doing?” And Jesus says, “I should be about my father’s business. Right?” His father’s business is in the temple. So Luke starts, in I think Luke 2 or 3 there, he starts with Jesus as teacher in the temple. Then how does Luke end in chapter 19 here? He comes at the end of his book, he comes back to Jesus now cleansing the temple and being the messianic teacher once again. As 30-32 year old person. So this is a kind of a neat way that Luke both when Jesus is twelve and when Jesus is just before his Passion Week, that he features this Jesus as sage. Jesus is the wise teacher. That’s Luke. So Luke tells the same story the temple cleansing, he downplays certain of the details that are fronted in the other gospels. Instead, Luke fronts Jesus’ teaching as sage.

#### **AD. John: Temple Building to Body as Temple**

Let me just do John. We’ll just describe what happens in John. In John, Jesus comes and flips over all the tables and cleanses the temple, but in John, John puts the temple cleansing early. John puts the temple cleansing so it’s in chapter 2 of John. This is how Jesus starts his ministry. Then Jesus says what? He flips over all the tables. They ask him: what right do you have to do this? And Jesus says, “Destroy this temple in three days, I’ll raise it up.” What temple is he talking about? Jesus is flipping over the table and saying, “Destroy this temple and in three days I’ll lift it up.” He’s talking about the temple of his body. So in John, when Jesus flips over the tables, there’s a transition from the temple cleansing to the temple of his body. Then in three days he’ll raise it from the dead. By the way, is that issue that John raises, that in three days he’ll raise it from the

dead, is that a really important issue for the Jews? Yes, it is, because do you remember in Jesus' trial when he comes before Caiaphas? There's some witnesses who come forward and say, "on what basis did we accuse Jesus?" Because he said he would destroy the temple and raise it up in three days. Did they not get it that he was talking about the temple of his body? But then he raises from the dead, the temple of his body three days later after the resurrection. So what you have in John, then, is John starts his gospel explaining to the Jews that he's not talking about the temple there, he's talking about the temple of his body. When he raises from the dead then his disciples put it together, "Okay, that's what he was talking about." But they misunderstood and so John is basically short-circuiting this Jewish misunderstanding of Jesus. That Jesus was going to destroy the temple. That's not the point. The point for the Jewish people is to realize that the temple is the temple of his body. So John puts that right initially and so John puts Jesus temple cleansing in the temple, shifting it to, the temple that he's talking about is the temple of his body.

#### **AE. Four Perspectives on the Temple Cleansing**

So what you have then is in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Luke is the sage teacher. Mark is the prophetic rejection. Matthew is messianic the kingdom, and John was the temple of his body. So they used the story of the temple cleansing in four different ways, according to the writer. It's just absolutely beautiful how each writer crafts the story of the temple cleansing and puts it in a different context and gives it a different flavor. Each sees it from a different perspective.

Even as, and let me just use one more example, and we'll quit with this. How many refs do you have in a basketball game? Do you ever have just one ref? No, you don't have one ref, you have two or three refs, because you need different perspectives. One ref may see, somebody goes up and gets hit from one side, the other guy didn't see that he whacked him with his hip and that's why the guy went flying. But the other ref from the different perspective did. If you've ever watched referees, you'll notice that they work different aspects of the court, so that they can see from a different perspective. So

what you've got is the gospel writers telling the same story, but they're like refs, they're looking from different perspectives. So as you need multiple refs in a basketball game, so you've got what, three gospel writers? They see Christ with the same eye, they're telling many of the same stories. John's giving a very different story, but they're--even among the three, they're using the story and they're seeing the story in a different light. So that's part of the synoptic problem, and next time we'll develop this a little bit further.

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