

The Gospels

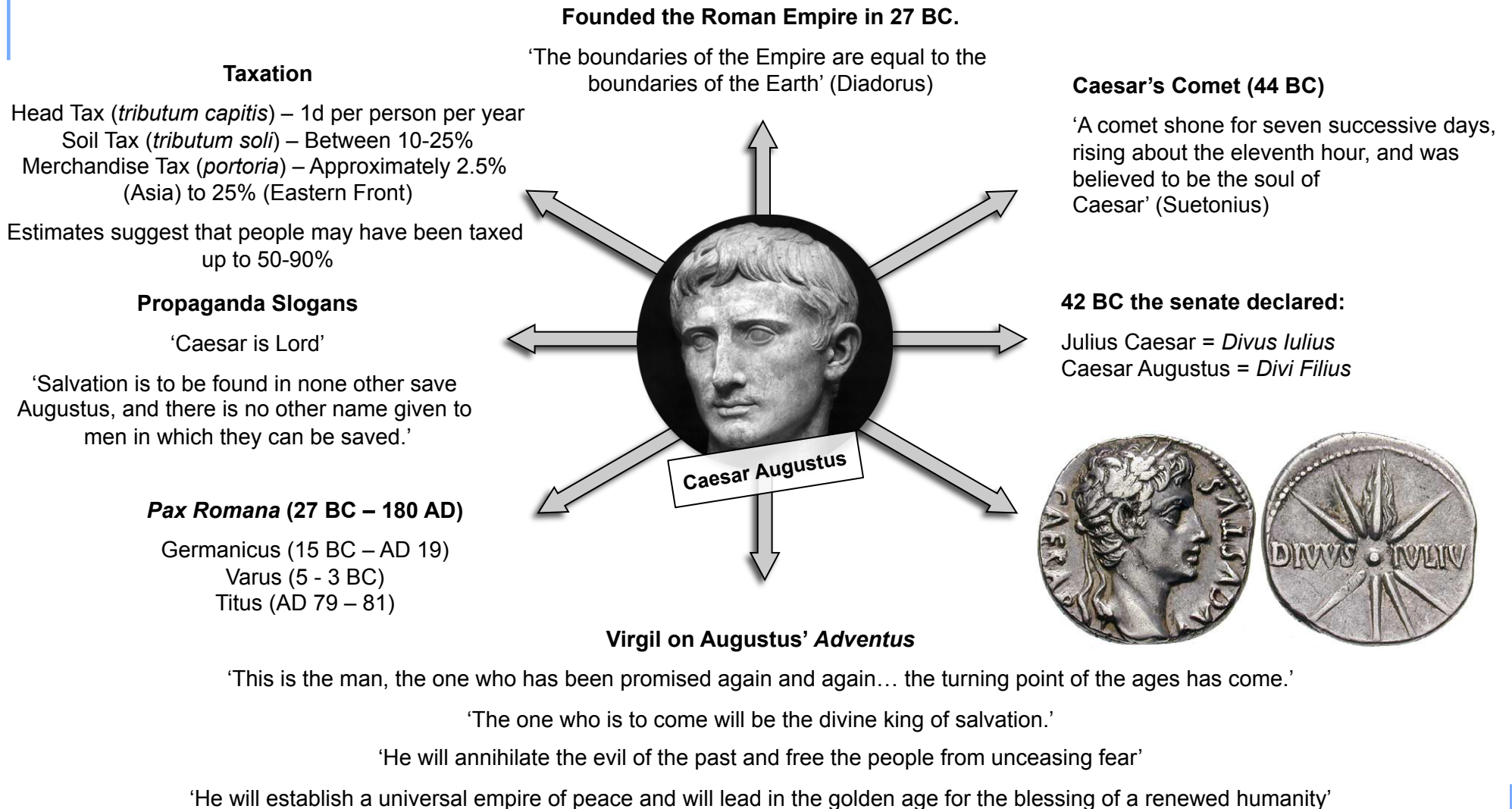
- I. **Context**
- II. Genre
- III. Christology and Crisis
- IV. Stories and Symbols
- V. Death and Resurrection
- VI. God, Gospel, People, Mission

The Imperial Background

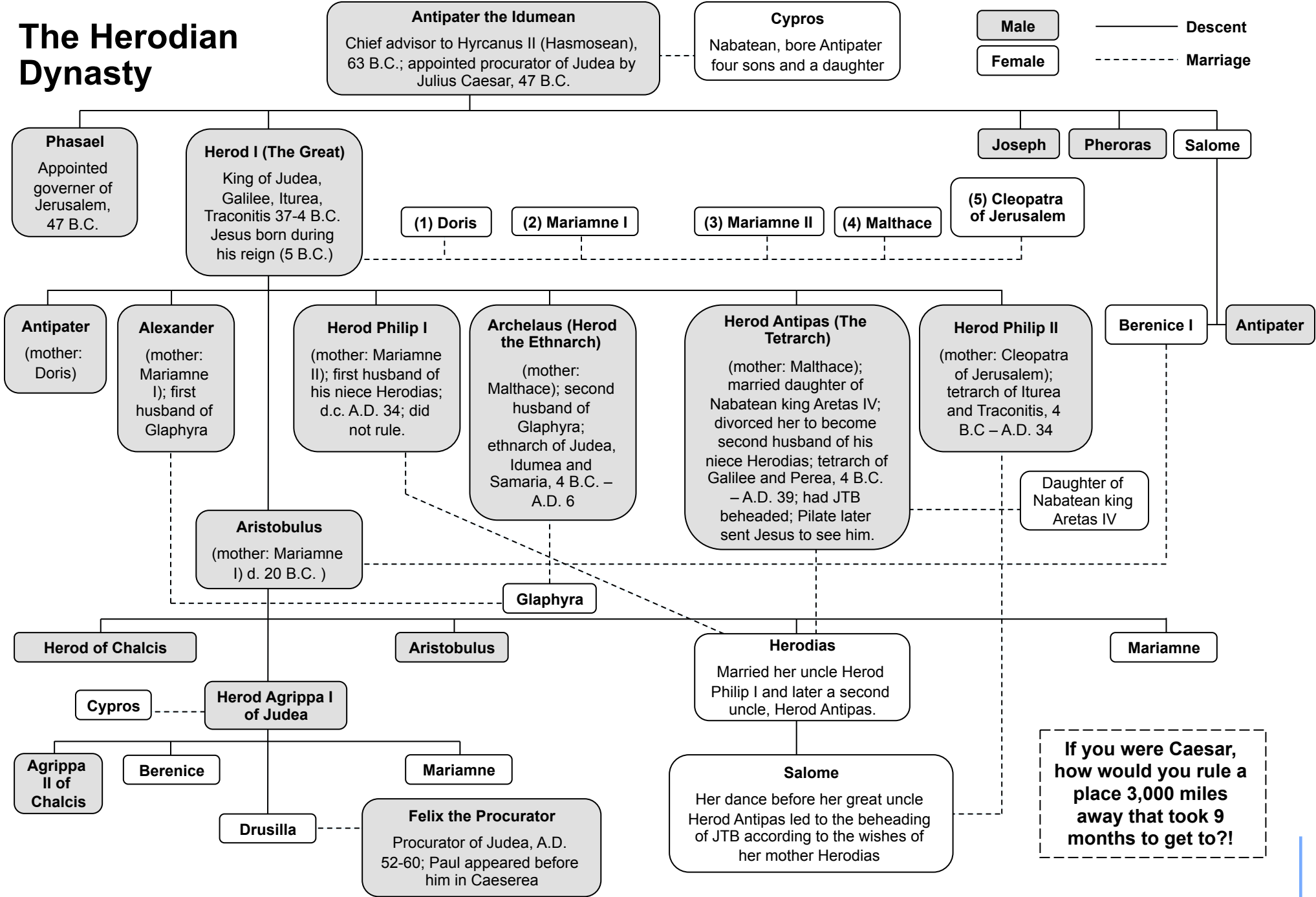
What was the world like around the time of Jesus?

Julius Caesar	100 BC – 44 BC
The Triumvirate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mark Anthony- Marcus Aemilius Lepidus- Octavian	44 BC – 31 BC
Augustus	31 BC – AD 14
Tiberius	AD 14 - 37
Gaius Caligula	AD 37 - 41
Claudius	AD 41-54
Nero	AD 54-68

Caesar Augustus, Son of the Divine



The Herodian Dynasty



Herod the Great

Homicidal Tendencies!!

Josephus, *Antiquities* 15

- His Mother-in-law
- Costobarus: his sister's husband
- The Sons of Babas
- Aristobulus: the 16 year old 'high priest'
- Mariamne: his wife
- The priests in the Hippodrome



The Herodian Temple

'The king had erected over the great gate of the temple a large golden eagle, of great value, and had dedicated it to the temple. Now, the law forbids those that propose to live according to it, to erect images, or representations of any living creature. So these wise men persuaded their scholars to pull down the golden eagle.'
(Josephus, *Antiquities*, 17.6.2)

Background

Half Jewish / Half Edomite
Ruled from 37 – 4 BC
Had 11 wives and 43 kids!

Tribute to Caesar

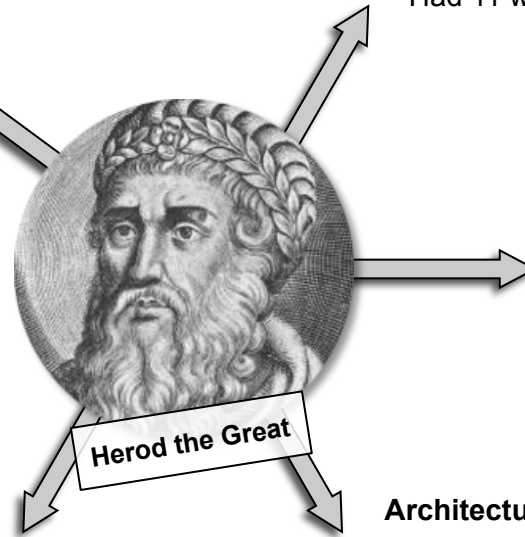
- Taxes
- Statues
- Temples

'The people erect this monument to King Herod, Devout and Lover of Caesar, because of his virtue and benefaction.'

Architecture and Wealth

- Masada
- Herodium
- Caesarea Maritima
- Gyms, theatres and the Olympic games!

According to Josephus (*JW* 2.6.203) the total revenue of Herod's territories distributed after his death was 800 talents, the equivalent of 4.8m drachmae.



Herod's Grand Designs



Masada

Herod built seven fortresses in the Judean desert, in addition to his palaces: Masada, Herodium, Cypros, Hyrcania, Alexandrium, Machaerus and Dow.

A legend said that David fled from Saul and hid in a cave in Masada. Herod decided to live there in luxury.

- The Eastern cliffs were 1,300 ft tall and the western ones, 300 ft
- The palace was three tiers high and was surrounded by a wall 4,300 ft long and 12 ft high
- It was marble tiled, with hot and cold baths.
- He build cisterns to gather rainwater and channels from Jerusalem to transport it. He stored enough water for 2,000 people

Herodium

'This fortress, which is some sixty stadia (7 miles) distant from Jerusalem, is naturally strong and very suitable for such a structure, for reasonably nearby is a hill, raised to a (greater) height by the hand of man and rounded off in the shape of a breast. At intervals it has round towers, and it has a steep ascent formed of two hundred steps of hewn stone. Within it are costly royal apartments made for security and for ornament at the same time. At the base of the hill there are pleasure grounds built in such a way as to be worth seeing, among other things because of the way in which water, which is lacking in that place, is brought in from a distance and at great expense. The surrounding plain was built up as a city second to none, with the hill serving as an acropolis for the other dwellings. (*War of the Jews*, 1.21.10)



Herod's Grand Designs (cont.)

Caesarea Maritima

- 165 acre city, built between 25-13 BC and dedicated to Caesar.
- It was the first artificial harbour in the ancient world and the biggest and most impressive.
- Water was provided by a 13 mile long aqueduct that ran along the coast and reached 20 feet high

It was “entirely rebuilt with white stone, and adorned with the most magnificent palaces, displaying here, as nowhere else, the innate grandeur of his character” (Josephus, *Ant* 1.21.5)



The Herodian Temple

- The foundations were double the size of Solomon's Temple
- The façade was covered with gold and the top was white marble, so that it shone when the sun hit it.
- The 'Herodian Stones' were around 10 x 10 x 80 feet and they used around 2.3 million of them.

'He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building' (*b. B. Bat. 4a*)

Context, Caesar and Christmas

List all the ways in which Jesus’ birth challenges the power of Caesar Augustus and Herod the Great

Matthew 1:18-2:23	Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20

The Gospels

I. Context

II. Genre

III. Christology and Crisis

IV. Stories and Symbols

V. Death and Resurrection

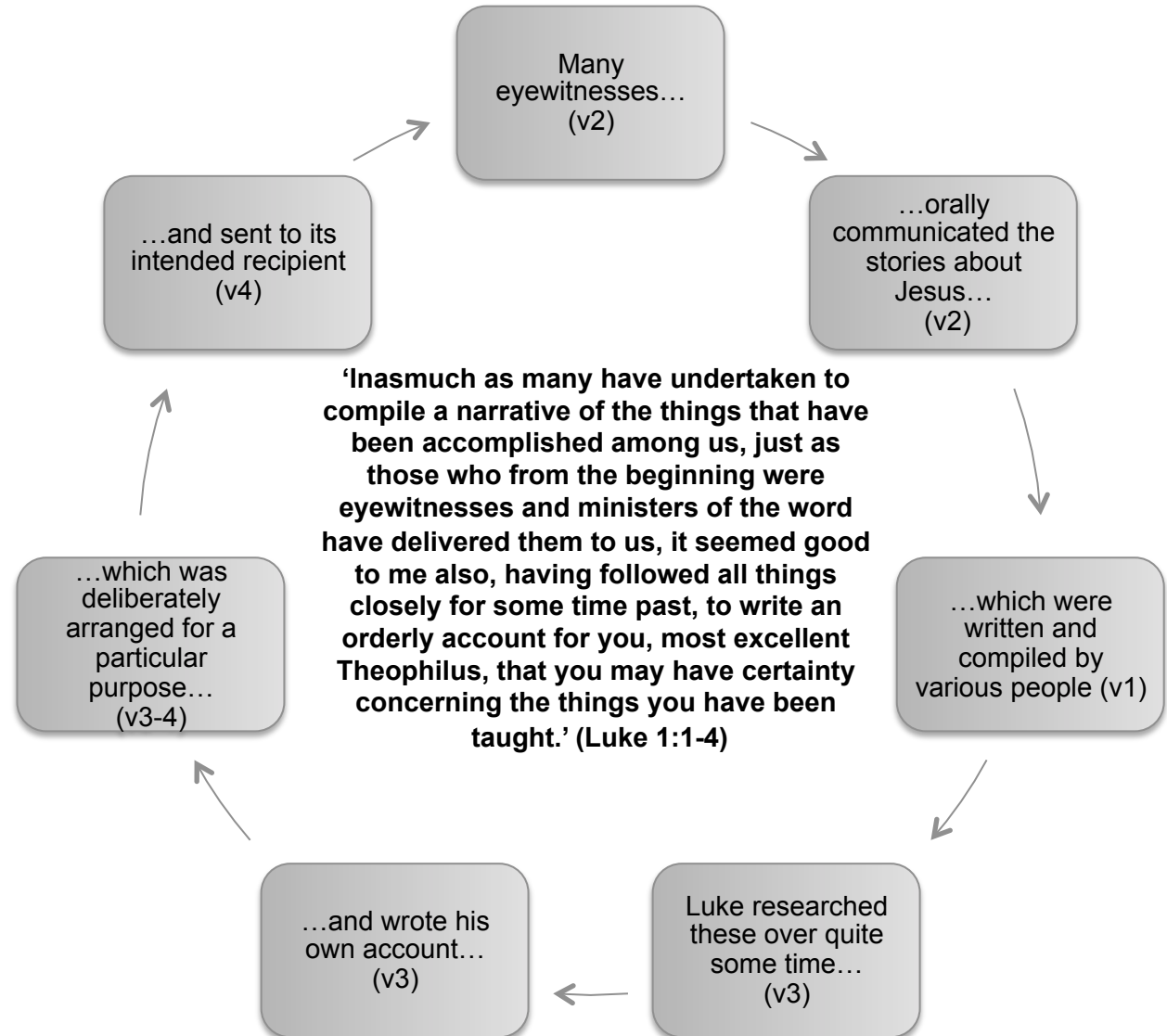
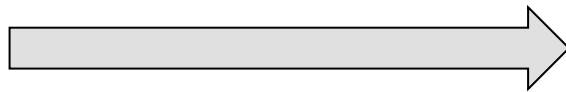
VI. God, Gospel, People, Mission

What are the Gospels?

What is a gospel?

- *Bios* = A form of biography
- They highlight the key events that surround a person; their words and deeds
- Whilst they are historical documents, they are not expected to be strictly chronological in order, but are often arranged thematically in order to emphasise the overall thrust and focus of the individual's life and work

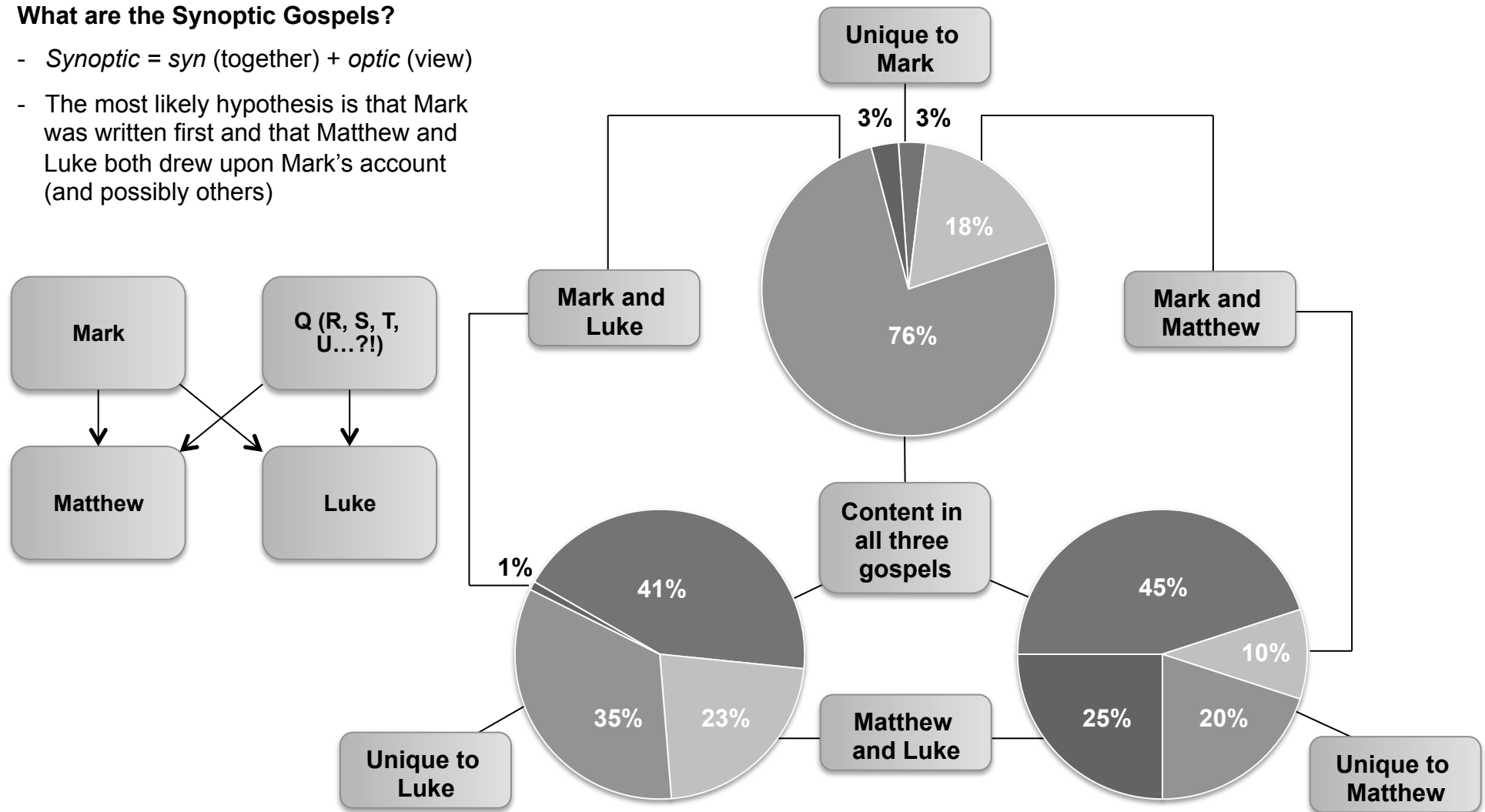
Where did they come from?



The “Synoptic Problem”

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

- *Synoptic* = *syn* (together) + *optic* (view)
- The most likely hypothesis is that Mark was written first and that Matthew and Luke both drew upon Mark's account (and possibly others)

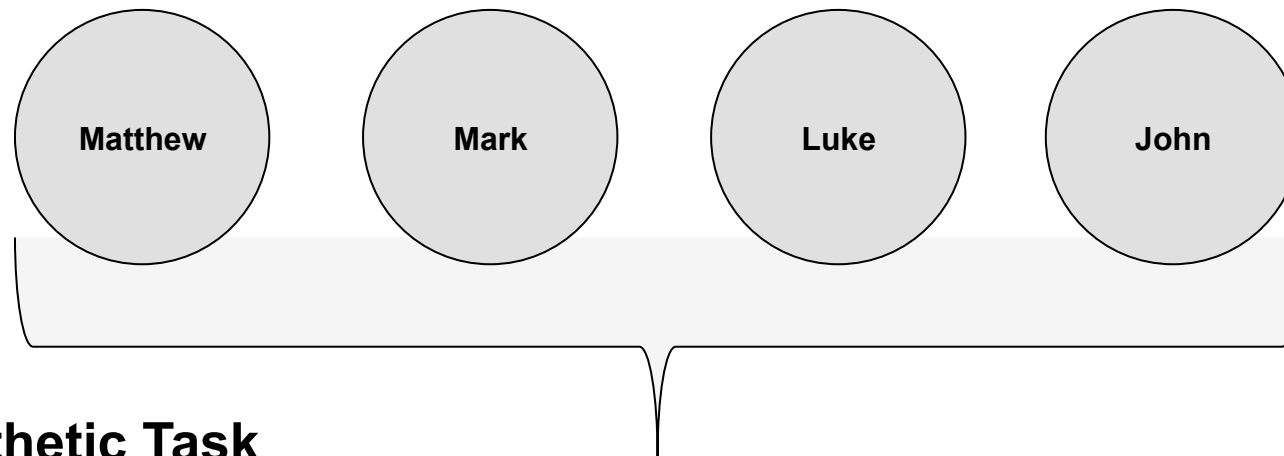


How Should We Read the Gospels?

I – The Descriptive Task

‘The first thing we must do in order to understand the ethics of the New Testament is to explicate in detail the messages of the individual writings in the canon, without prematurely harmonising them. When we read the texts in this way, we note distinctive themes and patterns of reasoning in the individual witnesses’ (Richard Hays)

‘We must let the individual voices speak if we are to allow the New Testament to articulate a word that may contravene our own values and desires. Otherwise, we are likely to succumb to the temptation of flipping to some comforting cross-reference to neutralise the force of any particularly challenging passage we may encounter.’ (Hays)



II – The Synthetic Task

‘If we are pursuing New Testament ethics with theological concerns in view [...] we must move on to ask about the possibility of coherence among the various witnesses. When we ask this question, we move from the descriptive to the *synthetic* task. Is it possible to describe a unity of ethical perspective within the diversity of the canon?’ (Hays)

III – The Hermeneutical Task

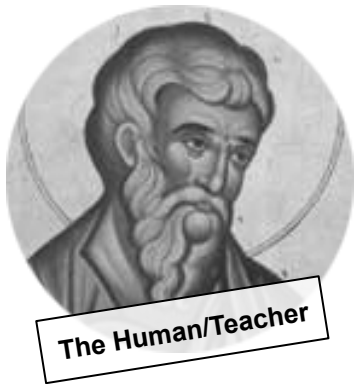
IV – The Pragmatic Task

The Gospels

- I. Context
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Christology and Crisis: Matthew

Compare these passages and note the similarities or differences. How is Matthew presenting Jesus?



- Often described as ‘the most Jewish’ gospel because of his attention to detail about Jewish customs, his focus on ethics and the law, his criticism of the Jewish leaders, and his regular reference to OT scriptures
- It may have been written to Jewish Christians, or Christians in areas with large Jewish populations (Syria or Palestine?) helping them to see Jesus as the fulfilment of the OT and giving them an ethical framework for how to live as kingdom people
- A large amount of Matthew’s gospel is given over to sustained blocks of Jesus’ teaching

Old Testament	Matthew	Significance
Exodus 1:15-17	2:16-18	
Exodus 2:15-22	2:23	
Exodus 2:13-14	2:19-20	
Exodus 4:22	3:17	
Deuteronomy 8:2	4:1-2	
Exodus 19:20	5:1-2f	

Christology and Crisis: Matthew

A child is saved from an evil king intent on slaughtering children (Exodus 1:15-17; Matt 2:16-18)

He flees for his life and has to live in a foreign land (Exodus 2:15-22; Matt 2:13-14)

He returns after the death of the King (Exodus 2:23; Matt 2:19-20)

Matthew 2:13-18

¹³ 'Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they care no more."

What does this teach us about Matthew's hermeneutic?

Why did Matthew quote Jeremiah 31:15?

Why did Matthew quote Hosea 11:1?

If Hosea 11:1 is about Jesus, what about 11:2?

Mourning women precede:

Deliverance from God (31:10-15)

The return from Exile (31:16-30)

New Covenant (31:31-34)

Christology and Crisis: Matthew

Deuteronomy 31:2-8

² The Lord has said to me, 'You shall not go over this Jordan.' ³ The Lord your God himself will go over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them, and Joshua will go over at your head, as the Lord has spoken. ⁴ And the Lord will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. ⁵ And the Lord will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to the whole commandment that I have commanded you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." ⁷ Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. ⁸ It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

**God Will
Never
Leave You**

**The Lord
Himself
Will Go
Before
You**

**Joshua /
Yeshua
'God is
Salvation'**

**Mountaintop
Commission**

**Take the
Land /
Go to the
Nations**

**Do / Teach
All My
Commands**

Christology and Crisis: Mark

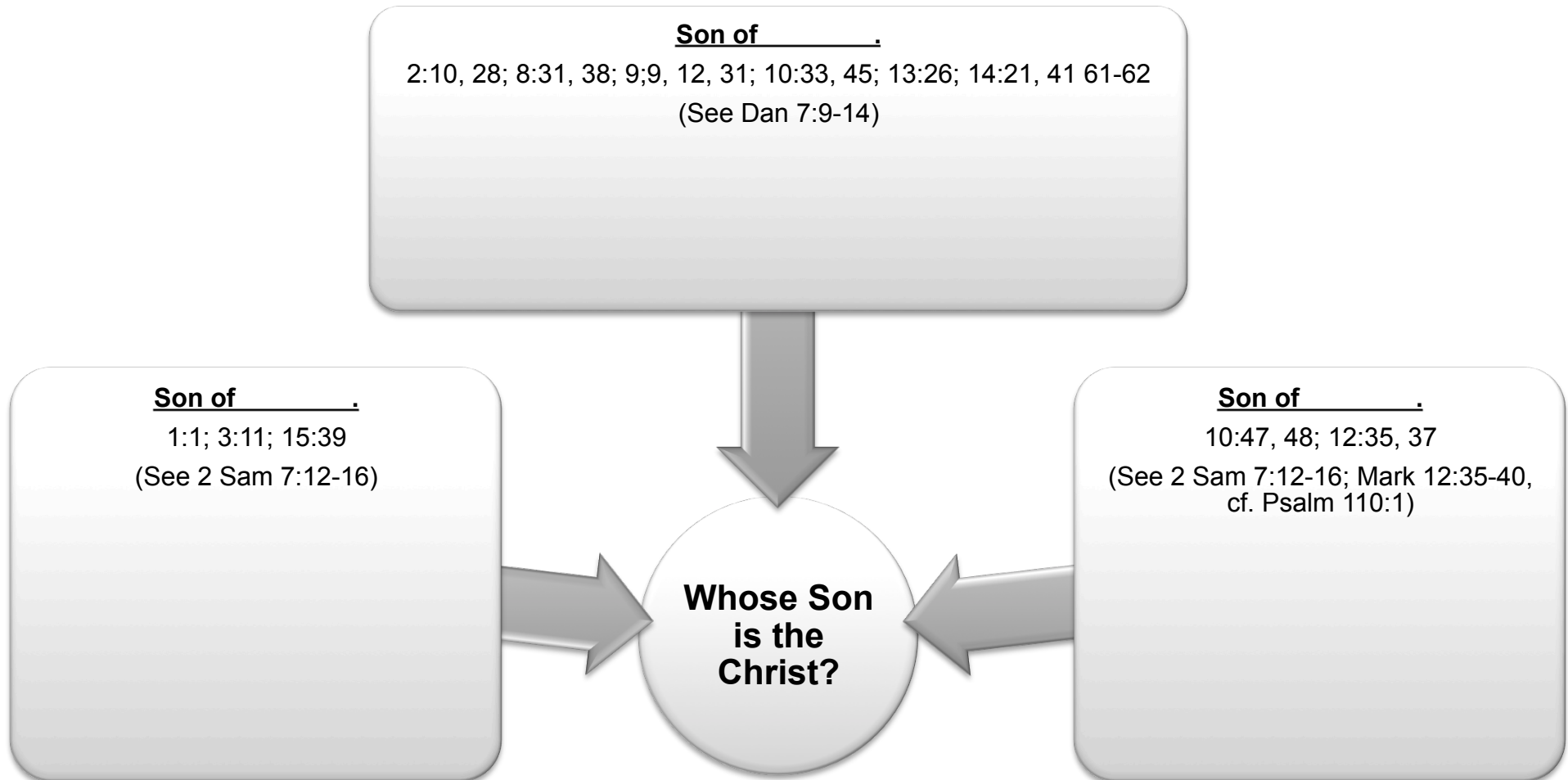


- The first gospel account to be written
- Written to Gentiles. He translates Aramaic phrases and explains Jewish customs (e.g. handwashing in 7:3-4)
- Mark was not an eyewitness, but was 'Peter's Interpreter' (Eusebius' *Historica Ecclesiastica*, 3.39.15; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 106; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.1.2; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcion* 4:5 etc)
- Peter had a close relationship with Mark (1 Peter 5:13 – "my son")
- Compare Mark's structure to Peter's proclamation of the gospel

Acts 10	Mark
'Good News' (v36)	'The beginning of the good news' (1:1)
'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit' (v38)	The coming of the Spirit on Jesus (1:10)
'Beginning in Galilee' (v37)	The Galilean ministry (1:16-8:26)
'He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil' (v38)	Jesus' ministry focuses on healings and exorcisms
'We are witnesses of everything he did... in Jerusalem' (v39)	The ministry in Jerusalem (ch 11-14)
'They killed him by hanging him on a cross' (v39)	Focus on the death of Christ (ch 15)
'God raised him from the dead on the third day' (v40)	'He has risen! He is not here' (16:6)

Christology and Crisis: Mark

What title is Jesus given? By whom? And what is its meaning/significance?



Christology and Crisis: Mark

Three Major Themes:

The Activity of Jesus
Healing miracles and exorcisms
1:16-8:26 - Demonstrations of Power
'Immediately' – 42 times, Compared with 7 in Luke and 4 in John

The Passion of Jesus
'[Mark is] a passion narrative with an extended introduction' (Martin Kähler)

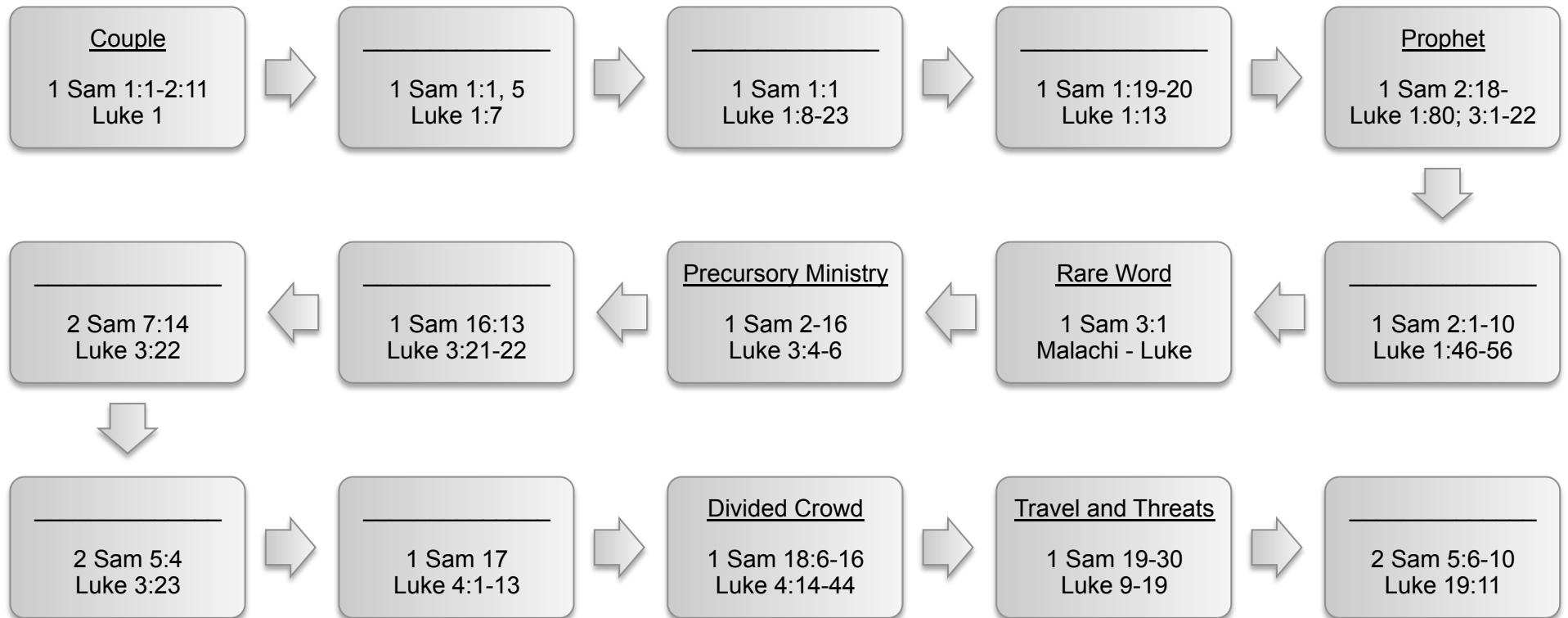
Jesus Predicts his Death	8:31	9:30-31	10:32-34
Disciples Misunderstand	8:32-33	9:32-34	10:35-40
Cost of Discipleship	8:34-38	9:35-37	10:41-45

The Cost of Following Jesus
Modeled on Jesus' own suffering

Passage	Theme	Setting
1.1-15	Introduction	
1:16-6:6	Demonstration of Jesus' Authority	Ministry in Galilee
6:7-8:26		Ministry beyond Galilee
8:27-10:52	Testing of Jesus' Authority Through Suffering	Journey to Jerusalem
11:1-13:37		Judgment on Jerusalem
14:1-16:20		Death and Resurrection

Christology and Crisis: Luke

Compare these passages and note the similarities or differences. How is Luke presenting Jesus?



Christology and Crisis: Luke

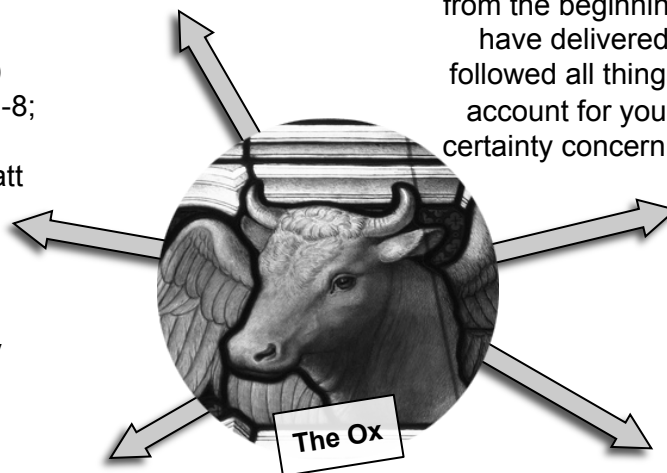
If Luke portrays Jesus as the New David, how does Acts portray the church? (cf. 1 King 4:34; 10:1-9; Ps 72:1, 20; 89:19-37)

Strength to Bear Burdens

- Begins and ends in the Temple (1:5-23; 24:53)
- Prayer (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 11:1-4; 18:1-8; 22:40 etc)
- Holy Spirit: 18x. 57 in Acts. 6 in Mark. 12 in Matt
- Joy and Praise (ch 1-2 repeatedly; 10:17, 21; 15:7, 10; 19:37; 24:41, 53)

Bears the Burdens of the Weak and Lowly

- Jesus appears to the meek and lowly
- Mary's viewpoint (2:19, 51) and her family
- Shepherds (2:9) rather than Wise Men
- Angel appears to Mary (1:26) rather than Joseph (Matt 2:20)
- Warnings to the rich (12:13-21, 22-34; 16:14, 19-31; 18:18-25; 19:1-10)
- Eating with Sinners (5:29-32; 15:1-2; 19:7)
- Lepers (5:12-16; 7:22; 17:11-19)
- Crippled (5:17-26; 7:2)
- Blind (7:21-22; 18:35-43)
- Tax Collectors (5:27-30; 15:1-2; 19:1-10)
- Lost Coin (15:8-10) and Prodigal Son (15:11-32)
- Women: Mary named 13 times. Widow of Nain (7:11-17); Woman with ointment (7:36-50) etc
- Gentiles: Good Samaritan (10:29-37); Centurion (7:1-10) etc



Historical Account

'Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.' (Lk 1:1-4)

Compare Luke and Josephus

Slow and Steady Journey to Jerusalem

Jerusalem and Temple (1:5-4:13)

Galilee (4:14-9:50)

'Set his face to Jerusalem' (9:51)

Long and steady journey (9:51-19:27)

'It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem' (13:33)

'Stay here in the city' (24:49)

'Jerusalem is named about thirty-three times in Luke's gospel, as often as in Matthew, Mark and John combined; while it comes sixty times in Acts, the rest of the New Testament has it only fourteen times, which shows how central it is in Luke's thinking.' (Burridge)

Christology and Crisis: John

Theme	Prologue	Gospel
The pre-existence of the Logos or Son	1:1-2	17:5
In him was life	1:4	5:26
Life is light	1:4	8:12
Light rejected by darkness	1:5	3:19
Yet not quenched by it	1:5	12:35
Light coming into the world	1:9	3:19, 12:46
Christ not received by his own	1:11	4:44
Being born to God and not of flesh	1:13	3:6, 8:41-42
Seeing his glory	1:14	12:41
The 'one and only' Son	1:14, 18	3:16
Truth in Jesus Christ	1:17	14:6
No-one has seen God, except the one who comes from God	1:18	6:46



'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name... This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.' (John 20:30-31; 21:24-25)

Christology and Crisis: John

Think about the passages and their contexts. Identify the claim Jesus is making and explore its implications

7) _____

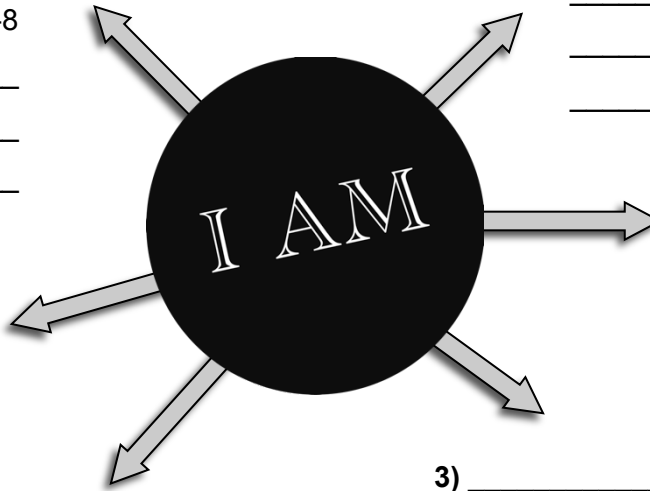
John 15:1-17; Ps 80:9-16; Is 5:1-7; 27:2-5; Jer 2:21;
Ezek 15:1-8

6) _____

John 14:1-14; Exodus 26:31-35; Leviticus 16;

5) _____

John 11:1-44; Dan 12:2-3; Isa 26:19; Hos 6:1-2; 13:14; Ezek
37:1-14



1) _____

John 6:1-15, 25-69; Exodus 16

2) _____

John 8:12-30; 7:2, 14; Exodus 13:21

3) _____

4) _____

John 10:1-21; Num 27:15-17; Ezek 34:1-24; Micah 2:12-13;
Psalm 118:19-20

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The Story of the Bible

The story of the Bible in 100 words (well ... 107, with some cunning word-count-reducing-hyphenations)

**1) God:
Trinity and
Attributes**

**2) Gospel:
Problem and
Solution**

'The OT storyline that I posit for the basis of the NT storyline is this:

The Old Testament is the story of God, who progressively reestablishes his new-creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people by his word and Spirit, through promise, covenant and redemption, resulting in a worldwide commission to the faithful to advance this kingdom and judgment (defeat or exile) for the unfaithful, unto his glory.

[...]

The NT transformation of the storyline of the OT that I propose is this:

Jesus's life, trials, death for sinners, and especially resurrection by the Spirit have launched the fulfilment of the eschatological already-not yet new-creational reign, bestowed by grace through faith and resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to advance this new-creational reign and resulting in judgment for the unbelieving, unto the triune God's glory.'

(G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, p16)

**4) Mission:
Kingdom
and
Eschatology**

**3) People:
Community
and Ethics**

The Centrality of the Kingdom

What is the kingdom of God ...?

2 Samuel 7:12-14: “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.”

Isaiah 52:7-8: ‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.’

Daniel 2:44: ‘And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.’

Matthew 3:2: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’

Kingdom of God

This World



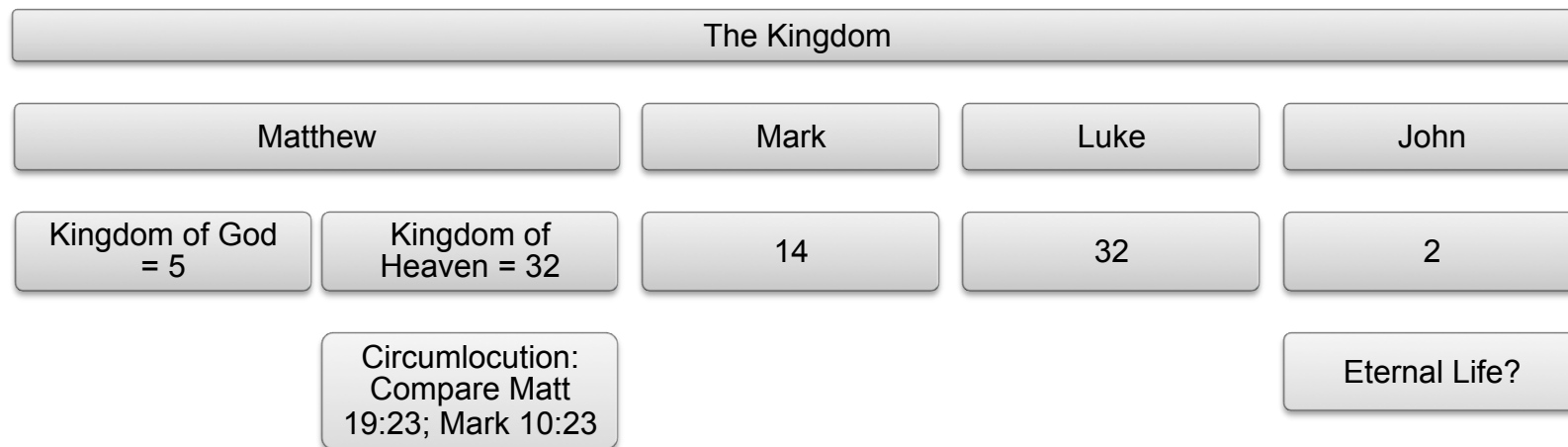
‘All men live on the plane of ‘his world; but from the time of Christ’s coming to the end of the world, the inheritors of the kingdom (and they alone) also live on the plane of the kingdom’
(D.A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p16)

The Centrality of the Kingdom (cont.)

... and why is it so important to Jesus?

'The sovereign and saving rule of YHWH' (Tom Wright)

'The king-dominion of God' (D.A. Carson)



Pharisees:

'The Pharisees' kingdom-plan, in line with plenty of earlier Jewish aims and ideals, was to intensify observance of the Jewish law, the Torah. That, they believed would create the conditions for God to act, as he had promised, to judge the pagans who were oppressing Israel, and to liberate his people.' (NTW, *Luke for Everyone*, p59-60)

Zealots:

They believed that the kingdom of God needed to be advanced by a demonstration of power. If people were serious about the Kingdom, they would be willing to fight and die for it! See Judas Maccabaeus and the revolution of December 25th 164 BC.

Essenes:

Believing that others had lost sight of the truth about Israel, and convinced of their special status, they enacted the exile that God's people were experiencing by separating themselves and living as an exiled people 'demonstrating by [their] wilderness existence the fact that the promises of restoration and redemption are yet to be fulfilled.' Their task was to wait and stay separate in prayer and purity.' (NTW, *NTPG*, p206-7)

What are the Parables?

■ Communicative

- The parables are not simply entertaining stories (or preaching illustrations!) but tools of communication, so their themes are likely to correspond to the overall themes of Jesus' teaching
- 'The parables represent the interpretation which our Lord offered of His own ministry' (C. H. Dodd)
- 'They made sense only within the whole context of Jesus' career. They echoed, reflected, interpreted and indeed defended the main thrusts of Jesus' work, and themselves set up other echoes in turn' (Wright)
- 'The *story* which can be evoked by the phrase 'kingdom of god' may well be present even though the phrase itself is absent' (Wright)

■ Cultural

- 'What seems to the western mind to be bad farming is simply customary usage in Palestinian conditions' (Jeremias)

■ Confrontational

- 'When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds' (Matt 21:45-46)
- 'For the most part, though not exclusively, they are weapons of controversy. Every one of them calls for an answer on the spot ... All of the parables that deal with the gospel itself are a defence of the good news. The actual proclamation of the good news to sinners took a different form, in the offer of forgiveness, in Jesus' inviting the guilty to taste his hospitality, and in his calling them to follow him. It was not to sinners that he addressed the gospel parables, but to his critics, to those who rejected him because he gathered the despised around him' (Jeremias)

■ Cryptic

- Matt 13:1-17, 34-35; Mark 4:11-12 – are these deliberately cryptic in order to confuse people? Cp. Matt 13:14-15; Isa 6:9-10
- 'The parables not only conceal but also reveal and often they reveal that which was previously concealed' (Blomberg)

Parables of the Kingdom: the Mustard Seed

What is Jesus teaching about the kingdom in Matthew 13:31-32, the parable of the mustard seed?

‘The Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’

Hints:

- Consider Ezekiel 31:1-14 and Daniel 4:10-23 and think how Jesus might be adapting the imagery to make his point.

Parables of the Kingdom: the Leaven in the Lump

What is Jesus teaching about the kingdom in Matthew 13:33, the parable of the leaven in the lump?

**‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour,
till it was all leavened.’**

Hints:

- Most uses of the imagery of leaven are negative (Matthew 16:6, 1 Corinthians 5:6, Galatians 5:9). But do they shed any light on Jesus' *positive* use of the metaphor here?

Parables of the Kingdom: the Hidden Treasure

What is Jesus teaching about the Kingdom in Matthew 13:44, the parable of the hidden treasure?

‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden up in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.’

Hints:

- What were people’s pre-conceived ideas about the Kingdom and how it was going to come about? How, therefore, might this parable have challenged their thinking?

Parables of the Kingdom: the Wicked Tenants

Mark 12:1-12

‘And he began to speak to them in parables.
 “A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, “they will respect my son.” But those tenants said to one another, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.” And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.’

Vineyard (Ps 80:8-13; Jer 2:21; Ezek 19:10-14; Hos 10:1)

Unpacking the story

- What is the vineyard?
- Who are the inhabitants?
- Who is the owner?
- What is the fruit?
- What is the crime?
- What is the consequence?

Unpacking the story

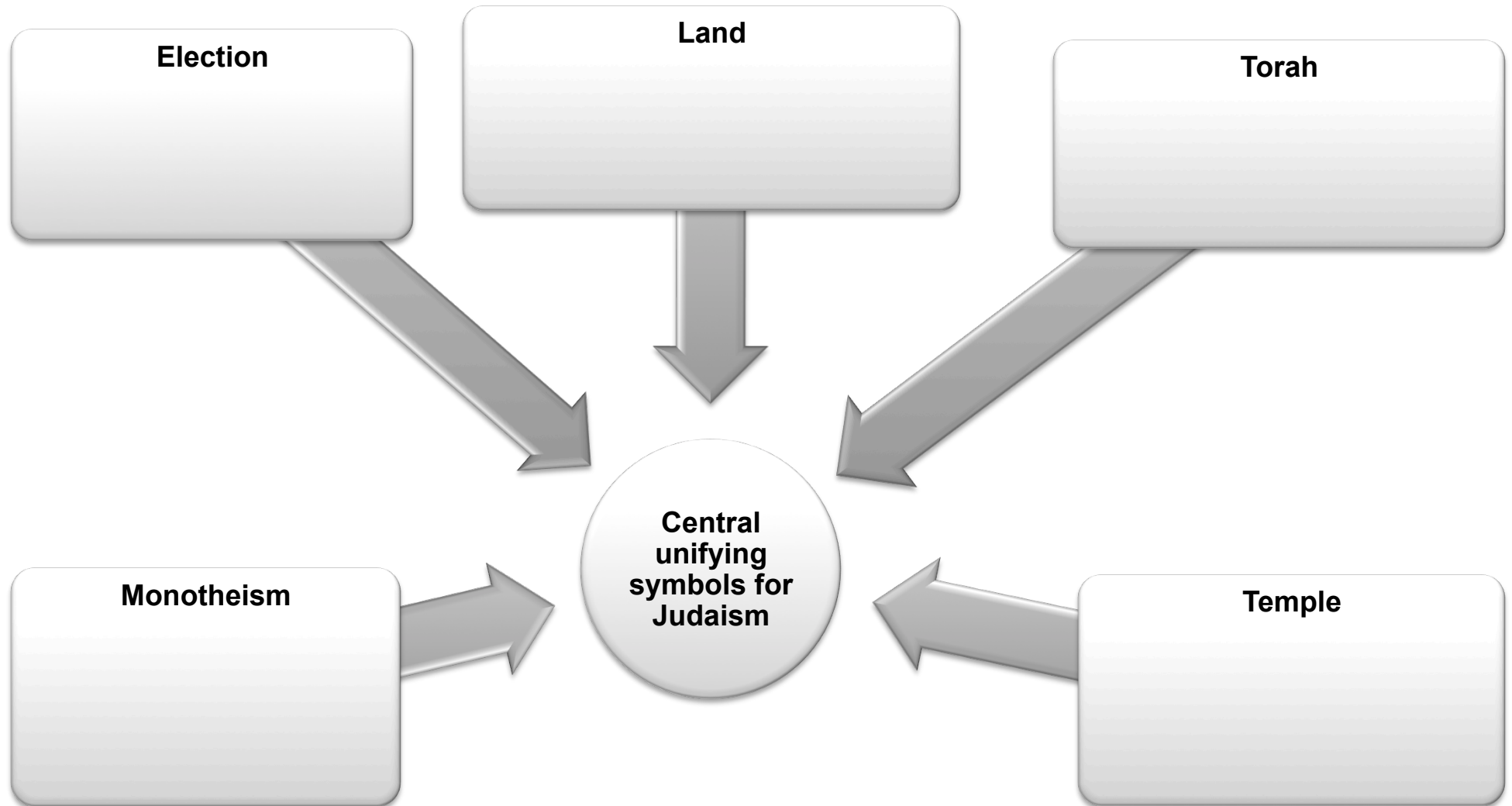
- What is the vineyard?
- Who are the tenants?
- Who is the owner?
- What is the fruit?
- What is the crime?
- What is the consequence?
- What is the hearer's response?

Isaiah 5:1-7

‘Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved has a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry.’

- Ps 118:22-23; Is 8:14-15; Dan 2:34-45
- *ben* and *‘eben*

How Did Jesus Treat the Central Symbols and Beliefs of Judaism?



Jesus Redefines the People of God

Consider how the following verses challenge the notions of what it means to be the people of God

Group 1: Matthew 3:5-12

‘Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to [JTB], and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers!

Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

Group 2: Matthew 8:5-13

‘When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.’

Jesus Redefines the People of God (cont.)

Consider how the following verses challenge the notions of what it means to be the people of God

Group 3: Mark 3:13-21

‘And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”’

Group 4: Mark 7:24-30

‘And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.” But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.” And he said to her, “For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.” And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.’

Jesus, Forgiveness and the Temple

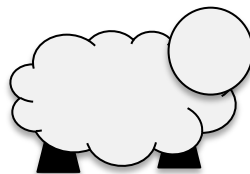
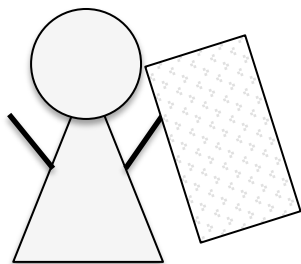
“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27)

‘Your sins are forgiven’
(Mark 2:1-12)

‘Now unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic... In the mouth of any speaker who is not God, these words would imply what I can regard as a silliness and conceit unrivaled by any other character in history.’
(C.S. Lewis – *Mere Christianity*)

Nathan to David: “**The LORD also has put away your sin.**” (2 Sam 12:13)

‘The point is that *Jesus was offering the return from exile, the renewed covenant, the eschatological ‘forgiveness of sins’* – in other words, the kingdom of god. And he was offering this final eschatological blessing outside the official structures, to all the wrong people, and on his own authority. That was his real offence.’
(NTW, JVG, p272)



Jesus and the Temple: Riddles, Figs and Mountains

'...he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.' (Mark 11:11)

'On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward... the whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.' (Zech 14:4, 10)

'Just as the leaves of the tree concealed the fact that there was no fruit to enjoy, so the magnificence of the Temple and its ceremonies conceals the fact that Israel has not brought forth the fruit of righteousness demanded by God.' (Lane, *Mark*, p400)

'On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it [...] As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.'" (Mark 11:12-14; 20-26)

'Fig trees have leaves in the spring at the end of March or the beginning of April. Early green figs appear before the leaves, but they are not good to eat, and in fact often fall off, leaving only leaves. Mark's reference that this was not the season for figs alerts the reader that this likely transpired in Nisan, the month in which Passover falls.' (BWIII, *Mark*, p312)

Fig Tree = Peace and Prosperity

Zech 3:10; Mic 4:4

Fig Tree = Israel

Joel 1:7; Mic 7:1-6; Hos 9:10.

'When I would gather them, says the LORD, there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has passed away from them.' (Jeremiah 8:13)

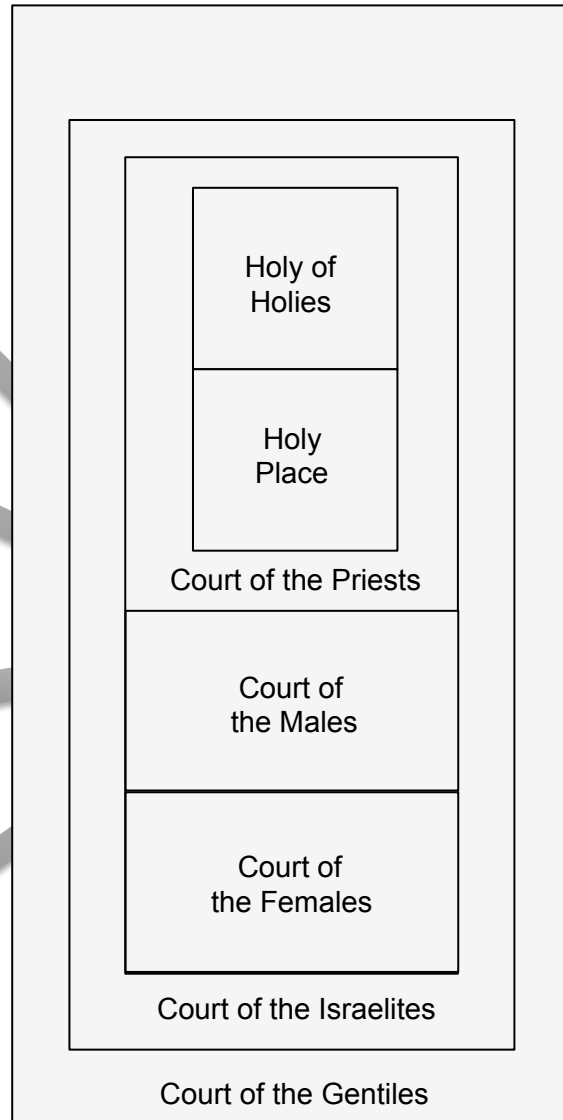
Jesus Cleanses the Temple – But Why?

Isaiah 56:6-8

Jeremiah 7:3-15

Iesutes = zealots /
revolutionaries
(Luke 23:18-19;
Mark 15:27)

Zechariah 14:16,
20-21

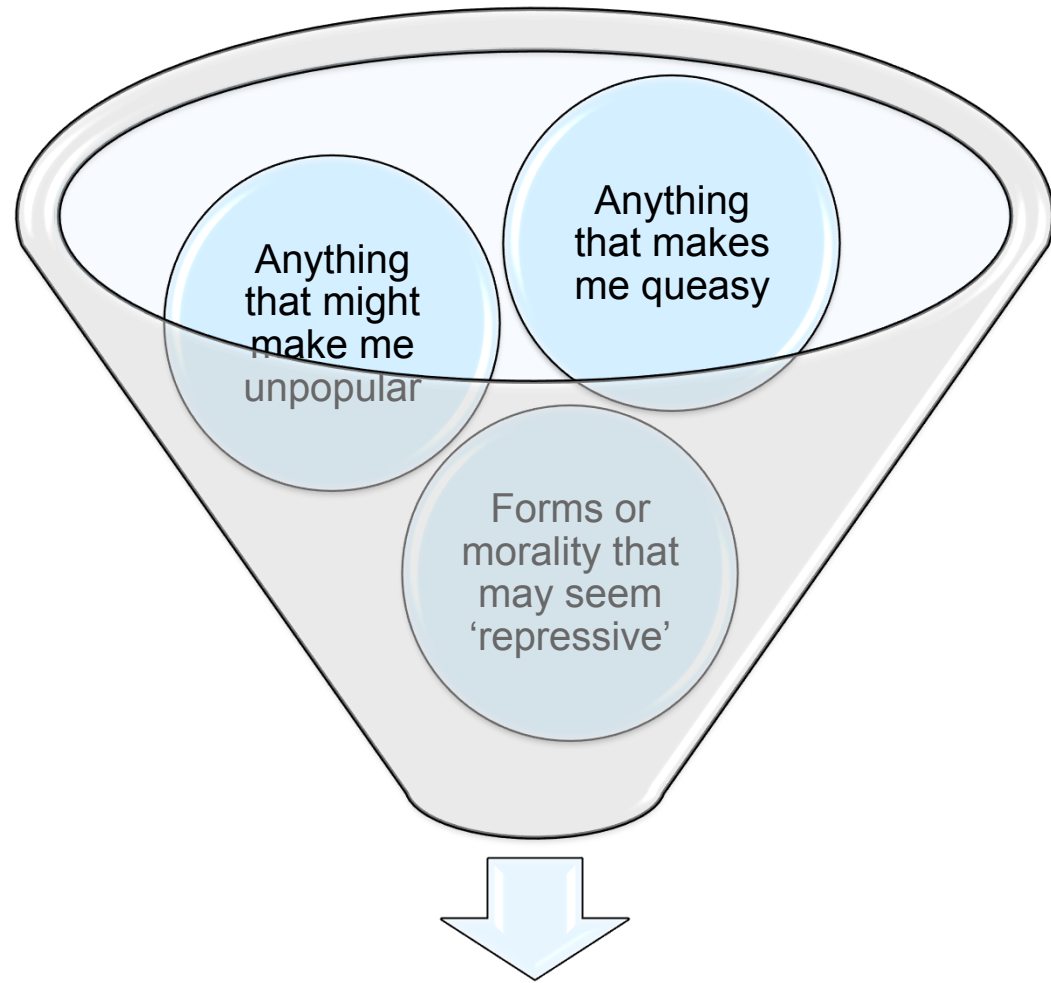


‘And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city.’ (Mark 11:15-19)

‘Why would Jesus banish the traders? [...] I suspect the answer lies [in] the mechanics of what actually happened in the Temple. Without the Temple-tax, the regular daily sacrifices could not be supplied. Without the right money, individual worshippers could not purchase their sacrificial animals. Without animals, sacrifice could not be offered. Without sacrifice, the Temple had lost its whole *raison d’être*. The fact that Jesus effected only a brief cessation of sacrifice fits perfectly with the idea of a symbolic action. He was not attempting a reform; he was symbolising judgment [...] The brief disruption which Jesus effected in the Temple’s normal business symbolized the destruction which would overtake the whole institution within a generation.’
(Wright, *JVG*, p422-424)

Chalke and Cheesus: A Five Step Guide to Making the Perfect God

- 1) Imagine the kind of God you would like to be/worship. Don't worry if he doesn't exist or is logically contradictory. He will be most believable if he happens to look and sound like you.
- 2) Give this new 'god' a name. For the purpose of the exercise, let's say... 'Cheesus'
- 3) Gather a collection of things you don't much like and chuck them in the top.
- 4) Churn Cheesus vigorously until he mangles your morals beyond recognition. The harder and louder you churn, the easier it will be to block out the sound of dissenting (evangelical/retrograde) voices.
- 5) You will be left with a small but potent residue. Serve with a good slug of smugness and garnish with strawmen. Guaranteed refreshment, easy to swallow, with no bitter aftertaste!



“Anything goes, and I LOL at anyone who dares say otherwise!”

Jesus and the Torah: Destroying? Reinforcing? Fulfilling?

What does it mean that Jesus 'fulfilled' the law?

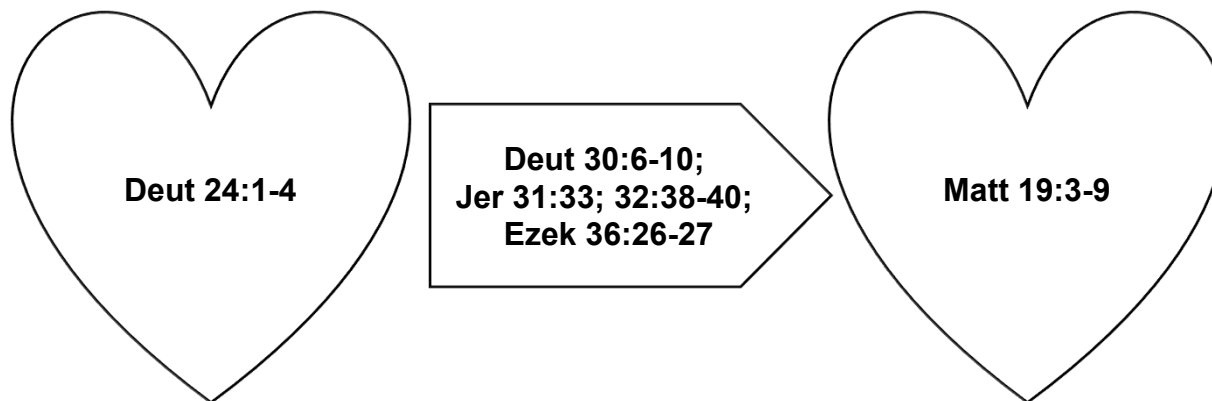
Some people differentiate between the moral, ceremonial and civil laws. Is that a helpful distinction? If so, are any of these still binding?

Jesus said he didn't abolish the law. So is it still binding? If not, why not?

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-20)

What did Jesus mean about the need for righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees?

Jesus and the Torah: The Original Intention



Sabbath

Healing on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17)

What does the Sabbath represent? (cf Deut 5:12-15)

How does Jesus fulfil the Sabbath law?

Picking Corn (Mark 2:23-28)

What was the context of the David story?

If Jesus is like David in this story, and the disciples are like David's crew, who are the Pharisees?

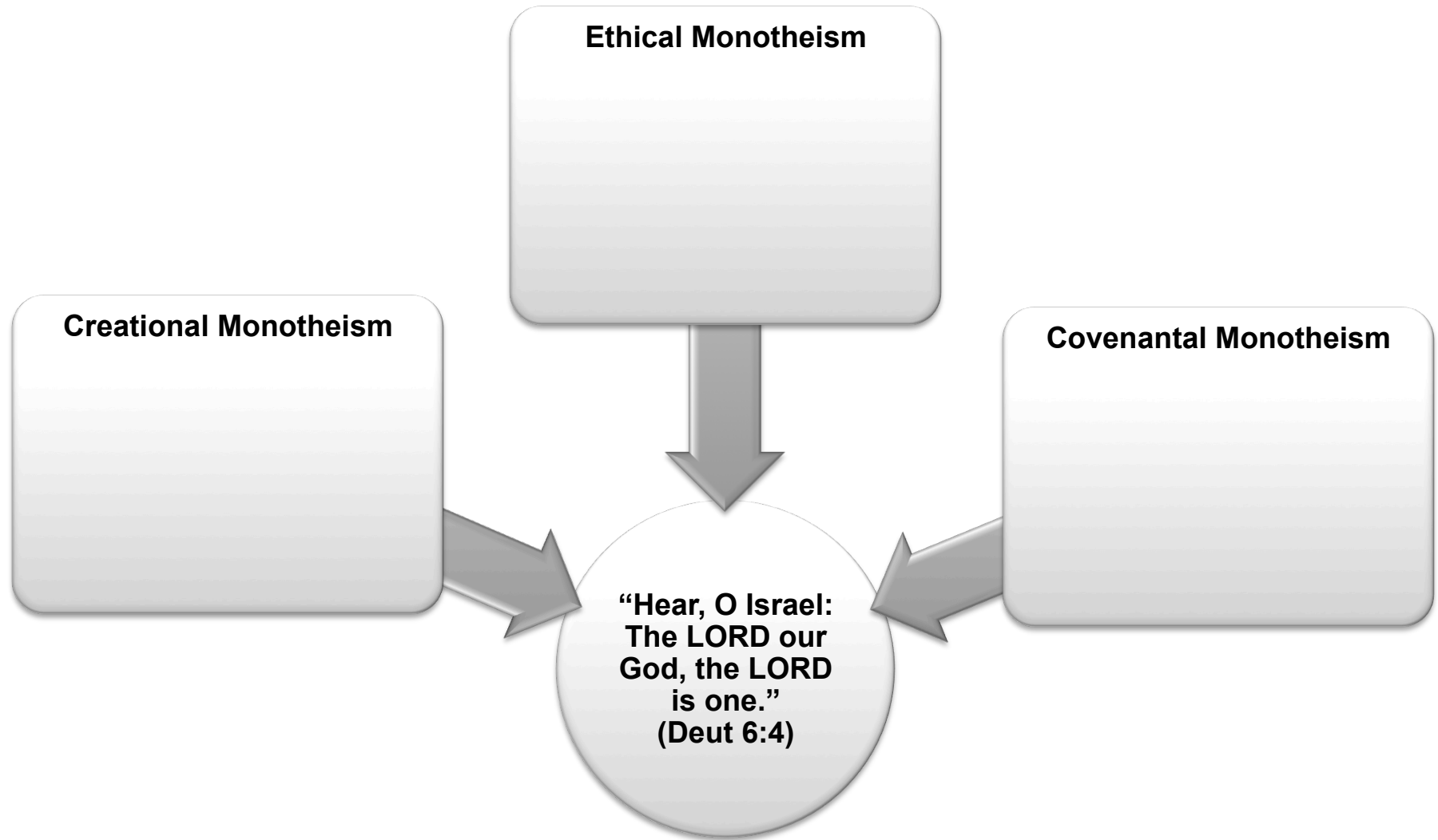
Food

What goes into a man... (Mark 7:1-23; Matt 15:1-20)

What was Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees? (Mark 7:9-13)

On what grounds does Jesus declare all foods clean?

Jesus and Jewish Monotheism



Jesus and the Return of Yahweh to Zion

What did people expect to happen when Yahweh returned? How did Jesus embody those expectations?

Group 1

Isaiah 4:2-6

Isaiah 24:23

Isaiah 25:9-10

Group 3

Zech 2:4-12

Zech 8:2-3

Zech 14:1-5, 6, 16

Group 2

Isaiah 35:3-6, 10

Isaiah 40:3-5, 9-11

Isaiah 52:7-15

Group 4

Mal 3:1-4

Psalms 96:12-13

Psalms 98:8-9

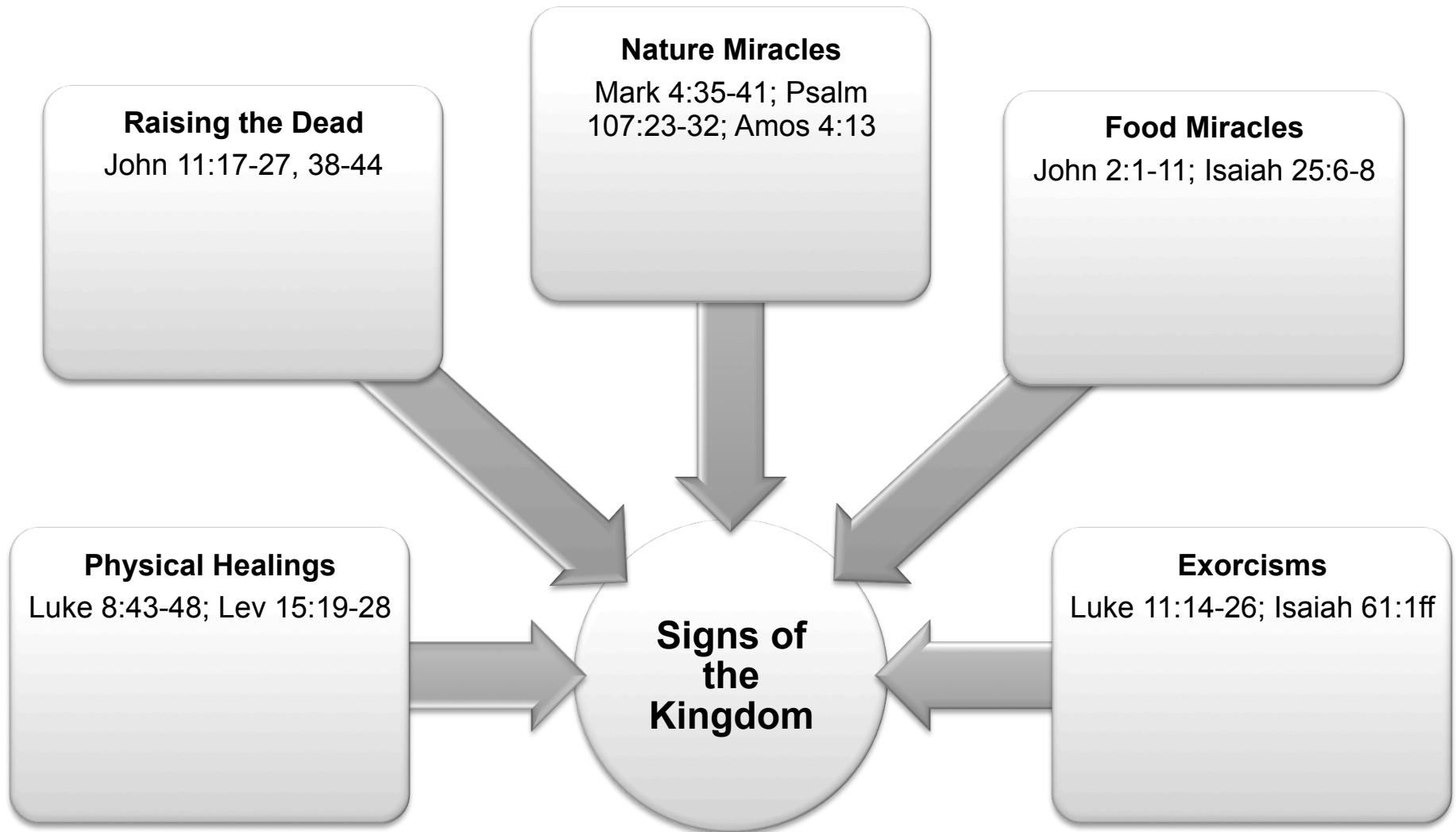
Monotheism Redefined

Interaction between the members of the Trinity in the gospel of John

<p><u>Group 1</u></p> <p>1:1-3, 14, 18</p> <p>1:32-33</p> <p>2:16</p> <p>3:16-18</p> <p>3:31-36</p> <p>4:10, 13, 21-24, 34</p>	<p><u>Group 2</u></p> <p>5:17-27, 36-44</p> <p>6:27-29, 32-40, 43-46,</p> <p>7:37-39</p> <p>8:14-19, 27-29</p> <p>8:34-47, 54-55</p> <p>9:14-18, 25-39</p>
<p><u>Group 3</u></p> <p>11:41-44</p> <p>12:23-33</p> <p>12:49-50</p> <p>14:1-14</p> <p>14:15-31</p>	<p><u>Group 4</u></p> <p>15:9-11, 15-17</p> <p>15:26-16:16</p> <p>16:25-28</p> <p>17:1-5</p> <p>20:19-23</p>

How Does Jesus Demonstrate the Kingdom?

What did Jesus' miracles communicate about him and the kingdom?



The Gospels

- I. Context
- II. Genre
- III. Christology and Crisis
- IV. Stories and Symbols
- V. Death and Resurrection**
- VI. God, Gospel, People, Mission

The Final Days of Jesus

Adapted from *The Final Days of Jesus* by Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor

Day	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Sunday	Jesus enters Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19
	Jesus predicts his death				12:20-36
	Jesus visits the temple	21:14-17	11:11		
Monday	Jesus curses a fig tree	21:18-19	11:12-14		
	Jesus cleanses the temple	21:12-13	11:15-18	19:45-48	
Tuesday	The lesson from the fig tree	21:20-22	11:20-26		
	Jesus teaches and engages in controversies in the temple	21:23-23:39	11:27-12:44	20:21-21:4	
	Jesus predicts the future	24-25	13:1-37	21:5-36	
Wednesday	Jesus continues his daily teaching in the temple complex			21:37-38	
	The Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus	26:3-5	14:1-2	22:1-2	
Thursday	Jesus instructs Peter and John to secure a large upper room in a house in Jerusalem and to prepare for the Passover meal	26:17-19	14:17-23	22:14-30	

The Final Days of Jesus (cont.)

Adapted from *The Final Days of Jesus* by Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor

Day	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Thursday contd.	Jesus eats the Passover meal with the Twelve, tells them of the coming betrayal, and institutes the Lord's Supper	26:20-29	14:17-23	22:14-30	
	During supper Jesus washes the disciples' feet, interacts with them, and delivers the Upper Room Discourse (Farewell Discourse)				13:1 - 17:26
	Jesus and the disciples sing a hymn together, then depart to the Mount of Olives	26:30	14:26	22:39	
	Jesus predicts Peter's denials	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-34	
	Jesus issues final practical commands about supplies and provisions	22:35-38			
	Jesus and the disciples go to Gethsemane, where he struggles in prayer and they struggle to stay awake late into the night	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46	
Friday	Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested by the authorities (perhaps after midnight, early Friday morning)	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
	Jesus has an informal hearing before Annas (former high priest and Caiphas' father in law)	26:57, 59-68	14:53, 55-65	22:63-71	
	As predicted, Peter denies Jesus and the rooster crows	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22:54b-62	18:15-18, 25-27
	After sunrise the final consultation of the full Sanhedrin condemns Jesus to death and sends him to Pontius Pilate	27:1-2	15:1		

The Final Days of Jesus (cont.)

Adapted from *The Final Days of Jesus* by Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor

Day	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Friday contd.	Judas changes his mind, returns the silver, and hangs himself	27:3-10			
	Pilate questions Jesus and sends him to Herod Antipas	27:11-14	15:2-5	23:1-7	18:28-38
	Herod questions Jesus and sends him back to Pilate			23:8-12	
	Jesus appears before Pilate a second time and is condemned to die	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:38b - 19:16
	Jesus is mocked and marched to Golgotha	27:27-34	15:16-23	23:26-49	19:17
	Jesus is crucified between two thieves	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33-43	19:18-27
	Jesus breathes his last	27:45-56	15:33-41	23:44-49	19:28-37
	Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a new tomb	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:38-42
Saturday	The chief priests and Pharisees place guards at the tomb with Pilate's permission	27:62-66			

Why Did Jesus Die?

How do each of the gospels reflect on the significance of Jesus' death as the culmination of their message?

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Why Did Jesus Die?

Election

Land

Torah

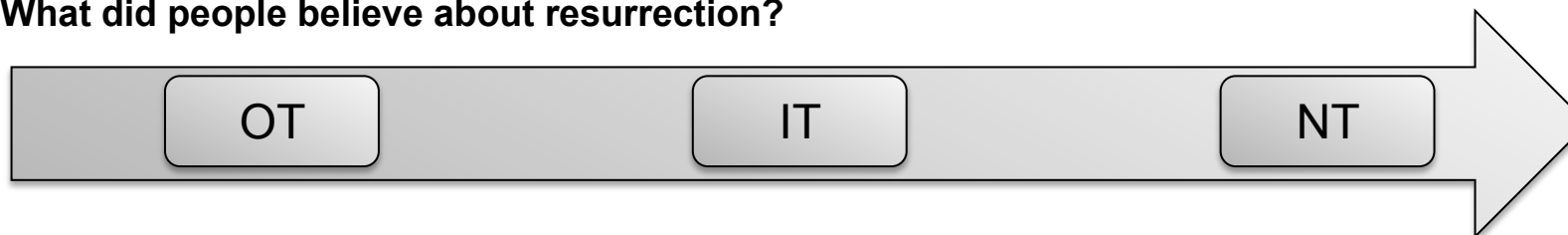
Monotheism

Temple

'My proposal, then, as the way of making sense of all the data before me, is that Jesus believed it was his god-given vocation to identify with the rebel cause, the kingdom-cause, when at last that identification could not be misunderstood as endorsement. Israel was in exile, suffering at the hands of the pagans; the Roman cross was the bitterest symbol of that ongoing exilic state. He would go ahead of his people, to take upon himself both the fate that they had suffered one way or another for half a millennium at the hands of pagan empires and the fate that his contemporaries were apparently hell-bent upon pulling down on their own heads once and for all. The martyr-tradition suggested that this was the way in which Israel would at last be brought through suffering to vindication. Jesus' riddles, binding the fate of the nation to his own fate, suggested strongly that he intended to evoke and enact this tradition. The 'messianic woes' tradition indicated that this suffering and vindication would be climactic, unique, the one-off moment when Israel's history would turn their great corner at last, when YHWH's kingdom would come and his will be done on earth as it was in heaven. The central symbolic act by which Jesus gave meaning to his approaching death suggests strongly that he believed this moment had come. This would be the new exodus, the renewal of the covenant, the forgiveness of sins, the end of exile. It would do for Israel what Israel could not do for herself. It would thereby fulfil Israel's vocation, that she should be the servant people, the light of the world.' (N.T. Wright, *JVG*, p597)

The Meaning of Resurrection

What did people believe about resurrection?



Majority View

Life, Love, Land
(Gen 1:26-30; 15:5-7 etc)

Minority Views

Sleep – Next to Nothingness
(Psalm 6:5; 115:17; Ecc 9:5-6, 10; Is 14:9-11 etc)

Disembodied Soul

Delivered from Sheol
(Ps 16:8-11)

Glory after suffering
(Ps 49:14; 73:18-20, 23-27)

Wake up to Resurrection

(Dan 12:2-3; Is 26:19; Hos 6:1-2; 13:14; Ezek 37:1-14)

LXX Translation

(Hosea 13:14; Job 14:14)

Apocrypha

(2 Macc 7; 12; 14; 1 En 25:4-6; 62:13-15)

Pharisees and Sadducees

Majority View

‘Life After Life After Death’

Resurrection Sayings in the Gospels

Peter rebuked Jesus (Mark 8:32)

They didn't understand him and were too afraid to ask (Mark 9:32)

They were extremely sad (Matthew 17:22)

After the transfiguration Jesus told them **‘to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean’** (Mark 9:9-10)

At his trial false witnesses quote Jesus as saying **‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days’** (Matthew 26:61; 27:40; Mark 15:29)

Jesus **‘was speaking about the temple of his body ... when, therefore, he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken’** (John 2:21-22)

Why Did Jesus Rise Again?

How do the gospel-writers portray the resurrection?

- **MATTHEW 28**

- Mountaintop Discourse
 - **‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee...’ (v7)**
 - **‘Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.’ (v16)**
- The Guards’ Report (v11-15)
- The Resurrected Saints
 - Who are they?
 - Does this mean the final resurrection has happened?
 - Are they still alive?
 - How should we interpret it?

- **MARK 16**

- Strange sense of mystery, doubt and bewilderment
- How should the gospel end?
- The longer ending continues Jesus’ confrontation with ‘the powers’

- **LUKE 24**

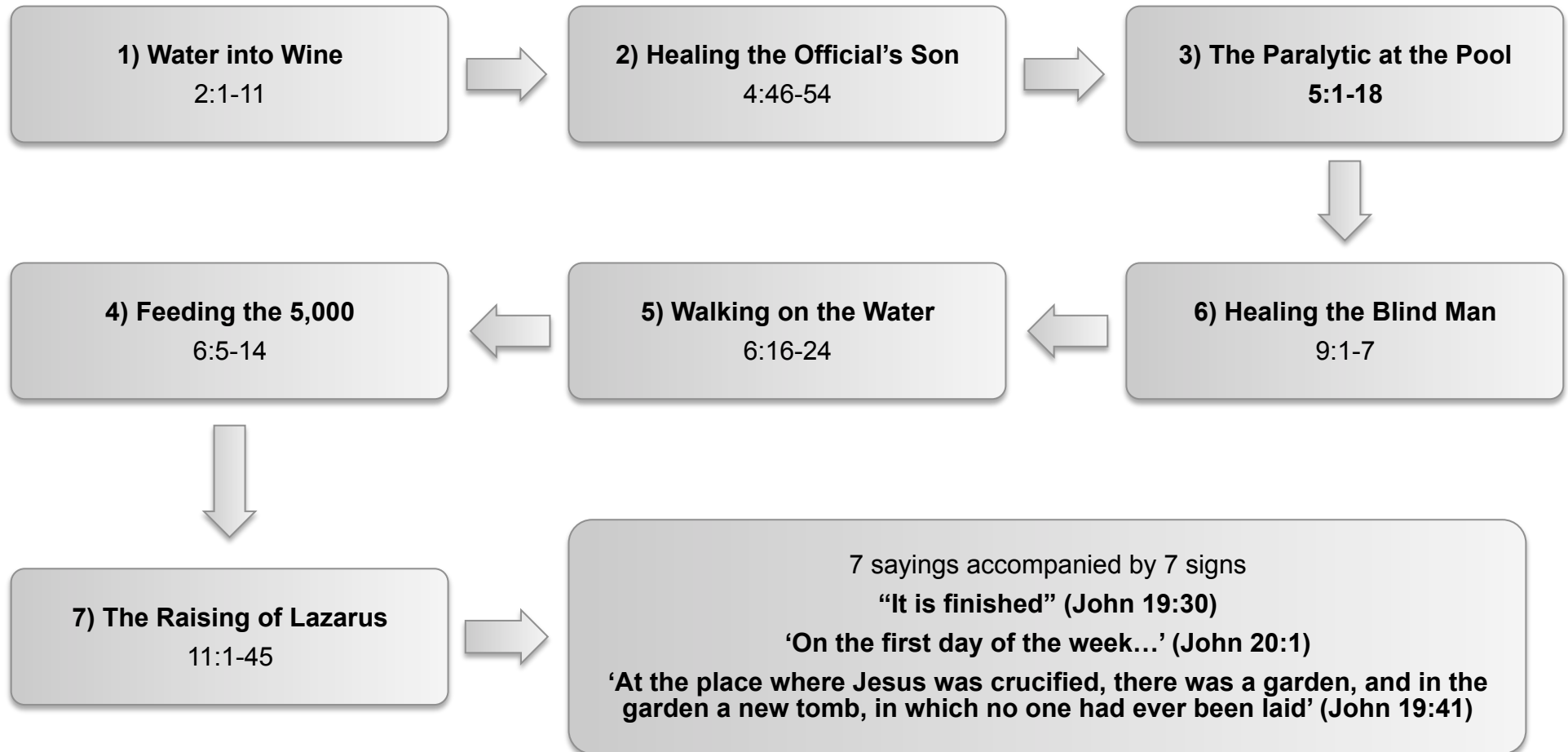
- Multiple appearances
- Christ in all scriptures – The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (v27, 45)
- Beginning in Jerusalem... but wait for the Spirit

- **JOHN 20-21**

- Jesus continues to give signs as proof
 - Thomas (v24-29)
 - The purpose of the book (v30-31)
 - Disciples (21:1-13)
- Reinstating of Peter (21:15-19. Compare 21:9 with 18:18)

The Eighth Sign?

John's seven signs



The Gospels

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- II. Genre
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- V. Death and Resurrection
- VI. God, Gospel, People, Mission**

God, Gospel, People, Mission

Summarise what we've learned about the gospels under the following categories:

God: Trinity and Attributes

Gospel: Problem and Solution

People: Community and Ethics

Mission: Kingdom and Eschatology

Suggested Reading

Author		Title	
General Reading			
Bailey, Kenneth		Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes	
Bauckham, Richard		Jesus and the Eyewitnesses	
Beale, G.K. and Carson, D.A.		Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament	
Burridge, Richard		Four Gospels, One Jesus?	
Carson, D.A. and Moo, Douglas		An Introduction to the New Testament	
Köstenberger, Andreas and Taylor, Justin		The Final Days of Jesus	
Leithart, Peter		The Four	
Wright, N.T.		The New Testament and the People of God	
		Jesus and the Victory of God	
		The Resurrection of the Son of God	
		Simply Jesus	
		When God Became King	
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Carson, D.A. (EBC)	Lane, William (NICNT)	Bock, Darrell (NIVAC / IVPNTC)	Carson, D.A. (Pillar)
Morris, Leon (Pillar)	English, Donald (BST)	Morris, Leon (TNTC)	Morris, Leon (NICNT)
France, R.T. (NICNT)	Wright, N.T. (For Everyone)	Green, Joel (NICNT)	Witherington III, Ben