

NEW TESTAMENT BIBLICAL LITERACY

Lesson 10

The Synoptic Problem – Part Two

I. INTRODUCTION

Why is the Synoptic problem a problem? Have you lost sleep over it? A Parable of an auto mechanic examining all the parts
A Story from President Reagan on good intentions
What is a Gospel anyway? Why were the Gospels written? Luke 1:1-4, John 20:30-31

II. HELPFUL OBSERVATIONS

Analogy of reports on an accident.
Difference in western and eastern culture and thought
Different witnesses have different perspectives.
So much depends on the perspective you bring to the text.
Are you trying to prove something or be an honest learner?

III. David L. Dunga's book, A History of the Synoptic Problem

(The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels). The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1999)

Three different approaches to the Synoptic problem
3rd century Origen: two levels of truth, literal and symbolic
5th century Augustine: all literally true by harmonizing
19th century historical-critical scholars: almost no literal truth, seek a purely literary explanation for similarities and differences. accept the "Two Source Hypothesis"
Dungan's view of modern historical criticism
Confession of a "foot soldier"

IV. COMPARING TEXTS

The temptations of Jesus: Matt. 4:1-11, Mk. 1:12-13, Lk. 4:1-13
Disciples seeking preeminence: Matt. 20:20-28, Mk. 10:35-45

V. THREE PASSAGES UNIQUE TO MARK

The Parable of the Growing Seed: Mk. 4:26-29
Healing a deaf and dumb man: Mk. 7:32-37
Healing a blind man at Bethsaida: Mk. 8:22-26

VI. David A. Black's article, "The Historical Origins of the Gospels,"

Faith and Mission, Vol. 18, No. 1, Fall 2000, pp. 21-42.

This is probably the best brief, easy-to-read presentation I have seen of

Matthew as the first Gospel, then Luke sponsored by Paul, then Mark as written reminiscences of Peter. Black theorizes that Mark served as a unifying document drawing western churches of Peter (circumcision) and Paul (uncircumcision) together by validating the Gospel of Luke.

VII. POINTS FOR HOME

1. Don't miss the point of all the Gospels! Is your faith in Jesus growing by reading them carefully and often?
2. Good intentions do not justify stupidity and wrong actions.
3. Decide that your perspective will be one filled with faith each day.
4. Jesus was tempted; so are we. Scripture will protect us as it did Jesus.
5. The only preeminence worth pursuing demands servanthood and sacrifice.
6. Jesus can heal you and your family. Will you let Him?
7. Jesus, not the details of the Gospel story, is our Savior and He knows the answers to ALL our questions.