

New Testament Survey Class Introduction

1. Language

Greek (Koine period)

Some liberal scholar believe the NT (or at least the Gospels) was first written in Aramaic and then translated into Greek. However, Robert Gundry has shown that Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek were all commonly used during this time period in that area in roughly the same proportions.

2. Inspiration

Jesus' Statements

Matthew 7:24 - Claimed authority

Matthew 10:19-20; cf. John 14:25,26; 16:13 - The Holy Spirit would speak through Apostles

John 5:19; 6:38 - Jesus only did the will of the Father

John 7:16; 8:28,29, 40; 12:49; 17:8 - Jesus' teaching came from the Father, He only spoke the things the Father taught Him

John 14:10,11 - Speaks the words of the Father

John 17:17 - "Thy word is truth"

Apostolic claims

Galatians 1:12 - Paul received the Gospel from Jesus Christ

Ephesians 2:20 - The Prophets & the Apostles lay the foundation

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - Paul said he was speaking the word of God

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is inspired

Hebrews 1:1,2 - God has spoken to us by His Son.

1 Peter 1:10-12 - They preached by the Holy Spirit

2 Peter 3:2, 15,16 - Remember the prophets & commands of the Lord given by the Apostles

2 Peter 3:15,16 - Peter says Paul was speaking Scripture

3. Manuscripts, Versions & Transmission

About 5,000 manuscripts which include

papyri (p⁴⁵ - part of Mark, Luke & Acts with fragments of others - early 3rd century)

(p⁴⁶ - portions of Pauline epistles - about year 200 A.D.)

(p⁴⁷ - portions of Revelation - mid/late 3rd century)

(p⁵² - portions of John - early 2nd century)

(p⁶⁶ - Gospel of John - about year 200 A.D.)

(p⁷⁵ - Luke & John - between A.D. 175-200)

Unicals (Ⲛ - codex Sinaiticus - complete copy of NT in uncial script - 4th century)

(A - OT & most of NT - 5th Century)

(B - codex Vaticanus - OT, NT & Apocrapha - mid 4th century)

(D - codex Bezae - Gospels, Acts & part of 3 John - 5th or 6th century)

Minuscules

9th - 16th century

Translations - various languages - from 3rd century on

Patristic Quotes

4. Greek Canon (divisions)

Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)

Historical (Acts)

Epistles of Paul (Rom., Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., 1 & 2 Thess. 1 & 2 Tim., Titus, Philemon)

General Epistles (Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1,2 & 3 John, Jude)

Apocalyptic (Revelation)

5. Modern Textual Criticism. (See Essay 3, 4 & 5 in *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Thomas & Gundry)

Source Criticism: Attempts to devise a scheme of literary dependence to account for the combinations of similarities and dissimilarities in the synoptic gospels.

Liberal scholars promote the idea of the priority of Mark with Matthew and Luke writing based on Mark and a theoretical document “Q.” However, church history records Matthew as writing first [c. 50 A.D.], then Luke [c. 58-60 A.D.], then Mark [c. 60+ A.D.] with each writer drawing on their own sources of information. Matthew would draw from his own experience. Luke states that he wrote based on his research. Mark is said to have relied on Peter. John wrote much later [c. late 80's A.D.] based on his own experience. In addition, Robert Thomas has demonstrated that the same methods used to supposedly establish the priority of Mark can also be used to establish either the priority of Matthew or Luke.

Form Criticism: Attempts by liberal scholars to investigate the units of gospel tradition developed in the 20 year period of oral history before any of the Gospels were written. These critics attempt to classify material into “forms” of oral tradition and thereby discover the historical situation within the early church that gave rise to these forms. Form critics accept source criticism as valid, but insufficient. Form criticism is not a method of literary analysis devoid of value judgements, but is founded in the belief that the gospel writers (and early church) lacked both genuine biographical material concerning Jesus and personal integrity to seek truth so that they made up stories to fit their own needs. However, the gospels consistently give eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ life which if not true could easily be refuted by those still alive at the time the gospels were written. The NT writers consistently claim their accounts are accurate on the basis of eyewitnesses (cf. Luke 1:2; Acts 3:15; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1, etc.). In addition, the early church consistently demonstrated great concern about the accuracy of what was said about Jesus because faith in Christ was central to them, and a false Jesus would mean a false faith.

Redaction Criticism: This is a further refinement of Form Criticism by liberal scholars who deny authorship of the NT books to attempt to determine when redactors (editors) added material from the Christian community to the core of material developed by the evangelists. The result is the belief that each gospel writer presents stories about Jesus for hidden theological reasons concerning the church at the time of his writing rather than recounting an actual historical event concerning Jesus.