

FAITH AND CRITICAL READING OF THE BIBLE

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1. John the Baptist
2. Source criticism
3. Historical Criticism
4. Redaction Criticism
5. Other "criticisms"
6. The special place of John's Gospel
7. Open conversation

Church documents which may help (all available on www.vatican.va)

The historicity of the Gospels (1964)
Dei Verbum (II Vatican Council (1965)
On Sacred Scripture and Christology (1984)
The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church (1993)
The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible (2001)
The Bible and Morality. Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct (2008)
The Word of God (Benedict XVI; 2010)
The Joy of the Gospel (Francis; 2013)

1. John the Baptist

John the Baptist

- JB was a 1st cent. Jewish prophet, proclaiming an eschatological message with some apocalyptic traits.
- His message was imminent judgement and the way to avoid that was by repentance, illustrated by his baptism.
- There is an implied critique of the adequacy of the Temple worship.
- The differences between JB and Qumran are greater than the similarities.
- He anticipated “the coming one”, but it is difficult to be more precise than that - an angel? the messiah? a heavenly figure? God himself?
- He had a big influence in his day - as the need to execute him illustrates. Still, any idea of a revolt is due to Herod’s paranoia rather than to anything JB actually said.
- The relationship between Jesus and John is hotly disputed - e.g. did Jesus follow his “mentor’s” example and baptise?

Now we try to see what happens to him in the tradition.

Mark

JB is mentioned in Mark’s gospel either by name or implicitly in the following passages:

Galilee

1:4.6.9.14	Preaching/Baptism
2:18	Fasting, disciples
6:14.16-18.20.24.25	Preaching/Death - Herodian marriages!!
8:28	Identity of Jesus
9:11-13	Has Elijah come?

Jerusalem

11:30-32	John’s authority
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It is important to **exclude** what we recall from other sources. Mark’s John gives no fierce sermon; he does not positively identify Jesus; he is not related to him; he does not inquire about Jesus. Perhaps the most important datum is that Mark **shows no discomfort** at all with Jesus’ baptism by John, although the one coming is so much mightier.

Finally, there are four passages which can be used to identify tentatively John for Mark’s readers. In the first place, according to the prophecy, he precedes the one coming. Secondly, he is dressed as an Elijah figure. Thirdly, he is obliquely recognised by Jesus as the Elijah who was to come. Finally, the argument in 12:30-32 is not just a put-down. It makes explicit Jesus’ attitude to John: Jesus accepted his baptism and at 12:30-32 he recognises that John’s authority came from God.

JB plays a more important role in Mark than you might think from a first glance. It seems to me that the key: is 1:14. This bridges the arrival of John and the baptism of Jesus with the question of John’s arrest and the question of the identity of Jesus. **And 1:14 could certainly be read in the sense that Jesus was a disciple of John, who took his place on the stage at the point when John was removed from the stage.** This may not simply be a “theologoumenon”, i.e. a literary device to foreshadow the outcome of Jesus ministry by placing under the rubric of John’s martyrdom. It would be a common opinion among scholars that Jesus acceptance of his role coincides with his baptism; it would not be strange (psychologically) to think of him as starting his ministry when his “leader” was no longer available.

Matthew

JB is mentioned in Matthew's gospel either by name or implicitly in the following passages:

3:1.4.6.13.16	Preaching, Baptism [diff. wording]
4:12	Timing of Jesus' ministry
9:14	Fasting, disciples
11:2.4.7.11-13.18	John's inquiries [only in Mt/Lk]
14:2.3.4.8.10.13	Death of John, Timing of Jesus retreat
16:14	Identity of Jesus
17:10-13	JB = Elijah [not in Lk/ v.13 is unique]
21:25.26.32	Authority of Jesus/John
28:19	Baptism ordered (?)

Again here we have to notice what's missing and what is special. Missing again are **birth** stories. However, this time for Matthew, JB is brought much closer to Jesus, and yet is distinctly separated from him. They are brought closes in this way:

their preaching is identical (3:2: "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**") = 4:17

the effect is similar (21:32: **For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him**),

their opposition to the insincerity of the Pharisees expressed in similar words (23:33: **You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?**) = 3:7.

Likewise their fates are expressly alike (17:12: **but I tell you that Eli'jah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of man will suffer at their hands.**”).

Matthew can risk these similarities without danger because he has in subtle and unsubtle ways made it clear who John is.

(1) First of all JB simply is Elijah. That gives him a specific role quite distinct in Matthew's mind from the Messiah.

(2) That role is made very clear in JB's question - he is shows as the "precursor".

(3) Likewise, the little theological discussion about who should baptise whom makes it clear that Matthew is embarrassed by this event, cannot deny and is obliged to explicate it to avoid misunderstanding.

The disciples of John (and not the disciples of the Pharisees!!) in Matthew pose the question about fasting (compare Mark) and this could well mean that the continuing Johannine community has taken the side of unbelievers, according to Matthew. (This fits in with the discussion about the Baptism, which tends to show how right was John in recognising Jesus and how wrong are John's followers not to "follow" their own master.) Likewise, John is **somewhat mistaken** about Jesus - he does not come as a whirlwind - hence the **doubts of John about Jesus**. Finally, the ministry of Jesus is separated by a very long temptation story, which tends to detach the start of the ministry from the experience of the Baptism - a possible theological aim of Matthew.

"The care with which the authors seek to clarify the roles of and relationship between these two figures suggests that, because of the impact of John's ministry and the close proximity of John and Jesus, there was a distinct possibility of the readers confusing the two men and

their ministry. Indeed, when Herod, after having had John beheaded, is informed of Jesus' ministry, his first thought is that Jesus John has come back to life"

Matt. 14:1 ¶ At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus; 2 and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him."

Mark 6:14 ¶ King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptiser has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." 15 But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

Luke 9:7 ¶ Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, 8 by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. 9 Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he tried to see him.

Luke

JB is mentioned in Mark's gospel either by name or implicitly in the following passages:

1:13.17.60.63	Birth, Naming, like Elijah
3:2.15.16.20	Preaching (against Herod), Baptism, is he the Christ? John in prison
3:21	Jesus' Baptism reported by participle
5:33	Fasting, John's disciples
7:18-20.22.24.28-29.33	John's inquiry, John's identity
9:7-9.19	John's death abbreviated (!) [omit/history
11:1	Jesus' prayer - cf. John (!)
16:16	Exact position of John
20:4.6	Authority of John and Jesus

Parallel annunciation and birth accounts which carefully distinguish John from Jesus. The birth stories fall into a **chiastic** pattern:

Annunciation of John's birth (1:5-25)
 Annunciation of Jesus' birth (1:26-35)
 The two mothers meet (1:36-45)
 Mary praises God for Jesus (1:46-56)
 Zechariah praises God for John (1:57-80)

Thus we have a pattern: A-B-C-B¹-A¹. In this way Luke makes the basic two-sided point: John the Baptist and Jesus are closely allied in the scheme of salvation, but **John is subordinate to Jesus**. The question is explicitly asked if he, John, might be the Christ and explicit answer given.

3:15 As the people were in expectation, and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether **perhaps he were the Christ [Lk only]**, 16 John answered them all, "I baptise you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

The baptism is very peculiarly reported: apparently John does not even baptise Jesus, since he is already imprisoned (or at least not "narratively" present) when Jesus is baptised (3:20 and 21).

Luke 3:20 added this to them all, that he shut up John in prison. 21 Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened,

Thus John is quickly whisked off the stage. Later, the timing of Jesus' ministry is detached from the arrest of John (4:14: **And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country.**). Luke omits the story of John's execution by Herod (after 9:7-9), and this omission expresses Jesus' distinctive superiority to John, for it is the Messiah who must die in a special way (24:26: **Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?**). John the Baptist is a transitional figure between "the law and the prophets" and Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. John is not Elijah, tout court as in Matthew. In fact, the elements of the figure of Elijah are shared in Luke between John the Baptist and Jesus himself. This is because, for Luke, Jesus is "the" prophet, who bears the identifying marks of another great and well-remembered prophet, Elijah.

In the Acts, the story is similar:

1:5.22; 10:37; 11:16; 13:24-25; 18:25; 19:3.4

The "bridge" nature of the ministry of John is especially clear from

Acts 1:22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us --one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection."
[Hence the "problem" of JB for Lk/Acts]

Here, Luke places him on the Christian "side", so to speak. Disciples of John are mentioned at 18:24-25 and 19:3-4

Acts 18:24 ¶ Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

Acts 19:3 Then he said, "Into what then were you baptised?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." 4 Paul said, "John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus."

And he said, "Into what then were you baptised?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

Q

JB is mentioned in Q in the following places: Q 1, 2, 3, then Q 14, 15, 16 and finally Q 62

John

Here are the references to JB in John:

1:6-8.15	Prologue: comparisons [only in Jn
:19-23	Witness of John: not Elijah/ prophet
:24-28	The "voice" [= citation

:29-34	<i>Reports</i> descent of the Spirit [= report
:35-42	Jesus “detaches” John’s disciples
3:22-27	Jesus baptising (!); JB not in prison [4:1
4:1-2	Jesus did/did not baptise; makes more disciples
than John [tension!	
5:33-36	Jesus is greater than John
10:40-41	Jesus goes back to where John had been

Things to notice: there is a flat denial that JB is either Elijah or the prophet. Why? There is an emphasis on taking followers from John and gaining more disciples than John. Why? John fits no categories known to Jewish expectation, except the citation from Isaiah. He is, however, portrayed as the “friend of the bridegroom”:

John 3:29 He who has the **bride** is the **bridegroom**. The friend of the **bridegroom**, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the **bridegroom’s** voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled.

[Note Jn vocabulary; see the whole speech.]

The picture of John the Baptist in the gospel of John is very clearly focused, and as in Luke’s case it may be summed up in one of the gospel’s pungent statements: “He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light” (1:8). In accordance with this gospel’s outlook, John the Baptist is not seen in strictly historical terms. Rather, the terminology is **abstract** and especially **legal**: John is a **witness** to tell the truth. This basic theme is sustained by two sub themes: John is not the light, rather Jesus is the light and since Jesus is the light he ranks before John and must increase in stature, while John must decrease. The imprisonment of John is reported **as not yet having taken place. But it and his death are not reported.** There is thus no chance of a comparison between the death of John and the death of Jesus.

Gospel of the Nazoreans

This apocryphal gospel can be approximately dated 180 because it is quoted by Hegesippus, thus providing a terminus a quo. [Hegesippus was in a way a predecessor of Eusebius as a church historian. He wrote a work called *ὑπομνηματα ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πράξεων* (Memoirs of the Acts of the Church). A terminus ad quem is provided by Tatian’s Diatessaron. The only solid date for Tatian in AD 172. It is not clear when he produced his Harmony of the gospels. In any case, the text from the gospel of the Nazoreans reads as follows:

- Behold, the mother of the Lord and his brethren said to him: John the Baptist baptises unto the remission of sins, let us go and be baptised by him. But he said to them: Wherein have I sinned that I should go and be baptised by him? Unless what I have said is ignorance (a sin of ignorance).

You see here from the text, that Jesus *refuses* to be baptised by John - a symptom of the growing Christian unease with this event.

The role of John may be seen as follows:

figure 1

Mark	Q	Matthew	Luke	John	GN
-	-	-	birth	-	-
“best man” (Elijah)	?	Elijah!	?	Not Elijah	-
baptises	passive	uneasy	relegates	omits	refuses
-	Mid-time?	OT End	Mid-time	Voice	-

Death disciples	prison disciples	Death disciples/ unbelief	omits	omits disciples/ converted	- -
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message

baptism	baptism	baptism	baptism	(baptises)
repent	repent	repent	repent	omits
forgiveness	judgement	kingdom	forgiveness	omits
		fierce	fierce	reasonable

The question arises: why all this variety, what is going on? What are the appropriate questions to put to this mass of material? Why the variety? Are the birth stories historical?

What about the death of John the Baptist?

The death of John the Baptist is reported in Mark and Matthew, but not in Luke and John.

Mark 6:14 Now King Herod heard this, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead, and because of this, miraculous powers are at work in him." **15** Others said, "He is Elijah." Others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets from the past." **16** But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised!" **17** For Herod himself had sent men, arrested John, and bound him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. **18** For John had repeatedly told Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." **19** So Herodias nursed a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not **20** because Herod stood in awe of John and protected him, since he knew that John was a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard him, he was thoroughly baffled, and yet he liked to listen to John.

Mark 6:21 But a suitable day came, when Herod gave a banquet on his birthday for his court officials, military commanders, and leaders of Galilee. **22** When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you." **23** He swore to her, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom." **24** So she went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" Her mother said, "The head of John the baptizer." **25** Immediately she hurried back to the king and made her request: "I want the head of John the Baptist on a platter immediately." **26** Although it grieved the king deeply, he did not want to reject her request because of his oath and his guests. **27** So the king sent an executioner at once to bring John's head, and he went and beheaded John in prison. **28** He brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. **29** When John's disciples heard this, they came and took his body and placed it in a tomb.

Interestingly, the death of John is also reported by Josephus, the Jewish writer, priest and historian. In *The Antiquities of the Jews*, we read:

Antiq. 18:116 (18.5.2) Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; **117** (18.5.2) for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. **118** (18.5.2) Now, when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his

power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. **119** (18.5.2) Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure against him.

A bit of complicated history

Antiq. 18:135 (18.5.4) But Aristobulus, the third brother of Agrippa, married Jotape, the daughter of Sampsigeramus, king of Emesa; they had a daughter who was deaf, whose name also was Jotape; and these hitherto were the children of the male line; **136** (18.5.4) but Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorce herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side; he was tetrarch of Galilee.

- Herod Antipas was a tetrarch, not a king,
- Herodias's first husband was not Philip (6:17) but another son of Herod the Great (called Herod II and Herod Boethus).
- Herodias and her first husband had a daughter named Salome, who is usually identified with the *unnamed* girl in the Markan tale.
- It was Salome, not Herodias, who married her half-uncle Philip.
- Antipas divorced his first wife, a Nabatean princess, in favour of Herodias, and contrary to Jewish law, Herodias divorced her first husband in order to marry his half-brother, her own half-uncle.

Why did Herod execute John?

While Josephus shared the Baptist's disdain for Herodias's divorce and remarriage to her husband's living half-brother as a violation of "the ways of our fathers" (*Ant.* 18.5.4 §§135–36; cf. Mark 6:18), the Gospel's account of Antipas's reason for executing John differs from the historian's account. Josephus claims that Herod feared that John had too much influence over the people and that he might incite sedition, so he had the prophet executed at his fortress at Machaerus.

Josephus's explanation appears more historically plausible. Herod is more likely to have acted preemptively against John to forestall insurrection than to imprison the prophet for his own protection and then have him beheaded on a whim.

Historically, the Herods observed the Jewish custom of men and women dining separately. Excavations of the fortress at Machaerus have revealed adjacent dining rooms for men and women. To have a girl of Hasmonean descent dance before the male guests would have been exceedingly improper.

Culturally, the following may be observed: the scene for Herod's party is stock and stereotypical for the first century: an official performs an execution in the context of a banquet at the request of a courtesan (prostitute).

1. Mark's narrative echoes two biblical stories where women, deceit, banqueting, and death are connected. The book of Esther is directly cited in Herod's offer to give the girl up to half his kingdom (6:23), the same promise made by Ahasuerus to his young queen (Esther 5:3, 6–7; 7:2–3).
2. In the LXX, Esther and the other candidates for the king's harem are called *korasia*, the same word used to describe the dancing daughter (Mark 6:22, 28). Esther uses a

- banquet as a pretext for the accusation that prompts the king to order Haman's execution (Esther 7:1–10; *Midr. Esther* 1.19–21 even adds the head-on-a-platter motif).
3. In the book of Judith, the heroine decapitates the besotted and intoxicated Holofernes at a banquet (Jdt. 12:10–13:10a) and brings it back to Bethulia, where she removes it from her food bag and proudly displays it to the men of the city (13:15).
 4. There are also intertextual echoes of Jezebel's persecution of Elijah (1 Kings 19–21; 2 Kings 9). As Ahab is manipulated into killing the innocent Naboth by Jezebel, Herodias tricks Herod into ordering John's execution. Elijah is closely identified with John the Baptist in Mark (6:14–15; 9:11–13), so the implicit Jezebel/Herodias typology seems relevant.

Work sheet

A) He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them. And as he passed on, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

B) Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

C) And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--he said to the paralytic--"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

D) Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

E) And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

F) One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath;

G) No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins.

H) so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."

Mark 2:1 When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?" 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— 11 "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." 12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Mark 2:13 Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. 14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

Mark 2:15 And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. 16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Mark 2:18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" 19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

Mark 2:21 "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

Mark 2:23 One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" 25 And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? 26 He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." 27 Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; 28 so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

Mark 3:1 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." 4 Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. 5 He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Key: concentric layout

A	B	C	B ¹	A ¹
indoor healing Jesus' perception <u>divine claim</u> Jesus Scribes cripple				indoor healing Jesus' perception <u>divine claim</u> Jesus Pharisees handicapped man
	Eating Uncleaness <u>Disciples about Jesus</u> Jesus Disciples Scribes <u>punch line</u>		Eating Uncleaness <u>Jesus about Disciples</u> Jesus Disciples Pharisees <u>punch line</u>	
		Non-fasting Bridegroom Newness Jesus People		

Sequential reading

A: questioning in their hearts B: questioning his disciples C: questioning himself B ¹ : questioning Jesus about his disciples A ¹ : watching to accuse him	Scribes Scribes of the Pharisees people Pharisees Pharisees [Plot to kill him]	work day work day indefinite Sabbath Sabbath
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Christology

A: The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins B: I have come to call not the righteous but sinners C: Bridegroom, unshrunk cloth, new wine B ¹ : The Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath A ¹ : Jesus practices his power over the Sabbath.
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2. Source Criticism

a) Introduction to Source Criticism

The two advantages of source criticism is that it may allow you to see the genesis of the written work and secondly to understand the literary and theological character of the work better.

Having established the text, source criticism is the first of a series of questions one may put to the text.

b) The Methods of Source Criticism

Questions:

key questions

Has an author used one or more sources?
What sources are used by the author?

secondary questions

How much of the text is based on a source?
How much of the source is incorporated into the text?
How has the author made use of the source?

Criteria

Explicit Citation
Redundancy,
Context,
Vocabulary and style
Ideology
Structure

Explicit citation

The simplest example is Mk 1:2-3. Is the citation accurate? No - it comes from a mix of Is 40:3 and Ex 23:20/ Mal 3:1. This was spotted by Mt who disperses the citation at 3:3 and 11:10.

Redundancy

Redundancy or repetition is not actually that common in the NT. A glaring example is John 13-17 where 13 and 14 are more or less repeated in 15 and 16. In Mt there are two statements on divorce - from different sources: 5,32 (from the Sayings Source) and 19,9 (from Mark). The two miracles of the loaves would have been seen as an example.

Context

Sometimes a text shows hard connections or inconsistencies or even contradictions - and that can indicate that an author is using undigested source material. There is a famous example in Mark 9,14-29. An example of a clear break can be found in John 14:31.

vv.14 and 25: the crowd is introduced twice
vv. 17. and 20: the boy is twice presented
vv. 17 and 25: the spirit is called dumb and unclean.

A certain critique of this could be made from a narrative point of view.

Another technique in Mark is the so-called "sandwich technique" in which one story is squeezed into another. This is common in Mark - e.g. 5,21-43.

Vocabulary and Style

Here you have to notice changes in vocabulary and terminology and the author's style. For instance, Luke 1,1-4 is written in an excellent Greek style and is difficult to read. However, his stories of the birth of Jesus are written in a different Greek, more Jewish, more like the Greek of the Greek OT (LXX). Likewise Mark 16:9-15 would be an example.

Ideology

By this is meant, ideas, theme, theological tendencies and points of view. Now if we find in a work such ideas etc. which jar or are far from typical, then we may have a source. The most typical example is Phil 2,6-11. Also Mark 2:1-3:6 - different ideology.

Structure

As a supporting argument, the discovery of a tight structure might help confirm the identification of a source. On its own, however, it is insufficient.

So far the method sounds simple. But it is a little subjective and hard to use - the strongest criterion is really context.

A distinction may be made between a source which is traditional and written. The criteria for a written source have been sharpened by Koch in his article on source criticism in the ABD VI 165-171 (Source Criticism [NT]). *Verbatim, as follows:*

- (A) The traditional material included in an extant writing cannot be regarded to be transmitted orally either because of its size or because of its literary structure.
- (B) This material forms a text which can reasonably be assumed to have been an independent writing; that is the case, if it reveals a literary structure and theological ideas fundamental to the whole body of material.
- (C) In addition, insertions interrupting the body of the supposed source are clear indications for the use of a source. Such insertions point to the author of the extant writing, who is interpreting in this way an already written text.
- (D) If the supposed source forms a collection of different traditions originally orally transmitted, a decisive criterion in the proving that there are editorial links or remarks which cannot be assigned to the author of the extant writing. Such editorial links or remarks point to an early stage of editorial activity, i.e. to the editorial framework of the source.
- (E) No definite evidence, however, can be drawn from differences of vocabulary and style, as any author is able to remould a written text (although not all NT writers do this), or, on the other hand, to adopt the style and vocabulary of a source in passages which he is going to write himself. Therefore, observations on different style and language can only have subsidiary importance.

c) The Synoptic Question

For the Synoptics, the most important element of Source Criticism is the Synoptic Fact - the use by Mt and Lk of Mk, and the identification of the material they have in common apart from Mark. That helps a lot. We will see this synoptic problem much later. Here are a few facts:

Only in Mark:	5% of the gospel
Only in Matthew	20% of the gospel
Only in Luke	43% of the gospel of which 2 fifths appear in Lk 1-2

Sayings Source **253 vv. found in Mt and Lk.**

Of Mark:	90% in Matthew
	50%+ in Luke

Questions to be asked:	Verbatim agreement?
	Sequence?

Best edition:	Kloppenborg (Greek plus s, and translations Havener (English))
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3. Historical Criticism

1) Introduction

2) The criteria used in this work

a) DISSIMILARITY OR DISCONTINUITY: a saying may be attributed to Jesus when it cannot be traced to any other source in contemporary Judaism or to the concerns of the early church

b) MULTIPLE ATTESTATION: this is perhaps the least dangerous - it means that a saying crops up in the different strands/sources which make up the NT: Mk, Q, M, L, John, Hebrews, Revelation, James.

c) CRITERION OF EMBARRASSMENT. If a story is awkward to remember, it is unlikely to have been invented.

d) THE ANTIQUITY OF THE SOURCES: Using literary criticism, form criticism and genre criticism, older material can be distinguished from later texts which have been edited or under the redactional influence of the final writer; if after all that, the saying fits the setting in Palestine - either by the language used (it can be retrojected into Hebrew or Aramaic) or it reflects the culture, life and customs of Palestine of the first third of the first century, then it can with probability be linked to the historical Jesus.

e) COHERENCE: if we find other teachings which do not “pass” the above criteria but which are consistent with material so passed, then we may have an original saying of Jesus.

f) SUFFICIENT GROUNDS: a fact or event is to be taken as historical when without the acceptance of its reality a whole series of other facts cannot be properly understood or explained.

There are of course weaknesses in all these criteria.

Stanton suggests the following “working hypothesis”. Taking account of the following four factors we may assume that the traditions of the actions and teachings of Jesus preserved in the synoptic gospels are “authentic”.

- (i) the evangelists have introduced modifications to the traditions;
- (ii) and they are largely responsible for their present contexts;
- (iii) some traditions can be shown to stem from the post-Easter period rather than the lifetime of Jesus;
- (iv) since certainty nearly always eludes us, we have to concede that some traditions are more probably authentic than others.

4. Redaction Criticism

(1) What is Redaction Criticism?

Redaction Criticism grew up largely after WWII and was an attempt to go beyond the disintegrating tendencies of form criticism by seeking out the editorial policy of the different writers, or better their theologies, and to treat them as authors.

(2) What questions does Redaction Criticism ask?

- a) What choice of texts has the writer made and why?
What has been included from sources and what has been excluded and why?
- b) What modifications has the writer made to his sources
- can we see any particular theology emerging in the “editorial policy”?
- c) What is the overall structure and arrangement of the gospels?
Does the structure reveal a plan, even a theology?
- d) What contributions can we notice from the authors own ideology and style?
Are there passages which are clearly editorial, which allows us to put our finger again on the author’s special interests?

(3) What are the presuppositions of Redaction Critics?

- (1) That the synoptics are not homogeneous compositions, but collections of small units of narrative and discourse material
- (2) That in the oral tradition which preceded the documentation of these units of material, only small units were handed on - i.e. single sayings, small collections of logia, singles stories.
- (3) That each of the units of material presently contained in the synoptics had a definite oral form (and has a corresponding literary form) that corresponded to a particular life situation in the early Church.
- (4) That each of the evangelists made use of this oral tradition in the composition of his gospel. In doing so, Mark created the gospel genre. Matthew and Luke made use of Mark but also made use of traditional material which was known to them independently of the Markan Gospel.
- (5) That the Resurrection faith of the early church shaped and moulded the transmission of these units of material as well as the composite Gospels themselves.
- (6) That the biography format is a literary construction of the evangelists; accordingly it is methodologically illegitimate to attempt to write a life of Jesus on the basis of the Gospels.
- (7) That it is quite likely that some of these units of material were collected into relatively homogeneous documents prior to their appropriation by the evangelists; and that it is possible to discern the theological tendencies of these source documents.

(4) What are the methods of Redaction Criticism?

The chief method is very careful comparison of texts.

(5) What are the risks of redaction criticism?

(6) For example the calming of the storm in Mk and Mt

Mk 4:35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

4:36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

4:37 And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

4:38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?"

4:39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

4:40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

4:41 And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Mt. 8:18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.

8:19 And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

8:20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

8:21 Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

8:22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

8:23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.

8:24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves;

but he was asleep. 8:25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save, Lord; we are perishing."

8:26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

8:27 And the men marvelled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

5. Other “criticisms”

Literary

Narrative, structuralist, rhetorical, deconstructionist

Liberation theology

Post-colonial, imperial, feminist, ecological

Special Example: Emmaus

Luke: the pilgrims on the road

Sequence

- Reading the Emmaus story
- Background
- Source
- Narrative
- Concentric layout
- Coming to Easter Faith
- Back to the story itself
- Prayer

Luke 24:13-35

Luke 24:13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” 19 He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” 25 Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

Luke 24:28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Background

- Reference to Moses (= the Pentateuch), the Prophets (meaning both historical books and prophets) and all the Scriptures (possibly meaning the last part of the OT, “the writings”). To find out which texts resonated with the early Christians, read Luke-Acts and see which texts are consistently referred to. E.g. Isaiah 53, Psalm 110, Psalm 118 etc.
- In the programmatic scene in Nazareth, Luke 4:16-30 refers to Isaiah 61:1-2; 48:6 as well as to 1 Kings 17:1, 8-16; 18:1; 2 Kings 5:1-14.
- Perhaps the story nearest is that of Abraham’s hospitality to his three guests, unaware that they are “angels” (= God really). The Graeco-Roman reader would be familiar with such stories about the gods disguised.

Source

Now (lit. and behold): 28-0- 26-8	Stand: 21-10- 26-35	To be about to do (mellō): 9-2- 12-34	To interpret: 0-0- 1-1
Two: 40-18- 29-13	Sad: 1-0- 1-0	To redeem: 0-0- 1-0	Scripture: 4-3- 4-7
of them: 9-3- 9-7	Answer: 55-30- 46-20	Israel: 12-2- 12-15	To act as if: 0-0- 1-0
On the same day: 0-0- 2-0	Only: 14-6- 10-8	Third: 12-7- 10-14	Further (comparative): 0-0- 1-0
Going: 29-3- 51-37	Stranger: 0-0- 1-0	Since: 0-0- 5-0	To urge: 0-0- 1-1
Village: 4-7- 12-1	Know: 20-12- 28-16	Woman: 29-17- 41-19	To stay: 3-2- 7-13
About 5-2- 4-2	To happen: 75-55- 131-125	Astound: 1-4- 3-8	Evening: 0-0- 1-2
Jerusalem 2-0- 27-37 (there are two forms in Greek for Jerusalem; the occurrence of the other form is: 11-10- 4-22)	In these days: 0-0- 3-1	Morning: 0-0- 1-0	To be nearly over: 1-0- 4-0
Name: 23-15- 24-60	What?: 7-4- 8-4	Tomb: 7-8- 8-1	Already: 7-8- 10-3
Emmaus 0-0- 1-0	Jesus: 152-82- 88-69	Find: 27-11- 45-35	Day: 45-27- 83-94
Talking: 0-0- 2-2	Nazarene: 0-4- 2-0	Body: 14-4- 13-1	To be at table: 0-0- 5-0
With each other: 0-4- 8-4	Man 8-4- 27-100	Vision: 0-0- 2-1	To take: 53-20- 21-29
Happened 0-1- 1-3	Prophet: 37-6- 29-30	Alive: 6-3- 9-12	Bread: 21-21- 15-5
Discussing: 0-6- 2-2	Powerful: 3-5- 4-6	Foolish: 0-0- 1-0	To bless: 5-5- 13-1
Drew near: 7-3- 18-6	Word: 33-24- 32-65	Slow: 0-0- 1-0	To bread: 3-3- 2-4
Went with: 0-1- 3-0	Deed: 6-2- 2-10	Heart: 16-11- 22-20	To give: 56-39- 60-35
Eye: 24-7- 17-7	Before: 0-0- 3-2	Believe 11-14- 9-37	To be opened: 0-1- 4-3
Prevented: 12-15- 2-4	Hand over: 31-20- 17-13	To declare: 26-21- 31-59	Vanished: 0-0- 1-0
Recognise: 6-4- 7-13	High Priests: 25-22- 15-22	Necessary: 8-6- 18-22	Not (<i>ouchi</i>) 9-0- 18-2
Discussing: 0-0- 1-0	Leaders: 5-1- 8-11	To suffer: 4-3- 6-5	To burn: 1-0- 2-0
Walk 7-9- 5-8	To be condemned: 1-1- 3-1	Christ [messiah]: 16-7- 12-25	Road (way): 22-16-20-20
To open: 0-1- 4-3	Death: 7-6- 7-8	To enter: 36-30- 50-34	
To get up: 4-17- 27-45	Crucify: 10-8- 6-2	To begin: 13-27- 31-10	
	To hope: 1-0- 3-2	Moses: 7-8- 10-19	
	Hour: 21-12- 17-11	To be gathered: 0-0- 1-0	
	To return: 0-0- 21-11	Eleven: 1-1- 2-2	
			Rise: 36-19- 18-13
			Appeared: 1-1- 3-5

Simon (meaning
the apostle): 5-7-
12-4

To tell (explain):
0-0-1-4

Breading of the
bread: 0-0-**1-1**

In the analysis of the vocabulary count, unique means that it occurs only in Luke or in Luke-Acts. Strongly Lucan vocabulary means any word which occurs in another Gospel but which occurs 50% more frequently in Luke. Non-Lucan means any word that does not occur elsewhere in Luke or Acts.

- **Unique vocabulary:** one the same day, Emmaus, talking, discussing, stranger, in these days, before, to redeem, since, morning, vision, foolish, slow, to interpret, to act as it, further, to urge, evening, to be at table, vanished, to return, to be gathered, to tell, the breaking of the bread.
- **Strongly Lucan vocabulary:** going, village Jerusalem, with each other, to draw near, to happen, man, leaders, to be condemned, to hope, to find, alive, necessary, to suffer, glory, to begin, to stay, to be nearly over, day, to bless, to be opened, not (ouchi), to burn, to open, to get up, eleven, appeared, Simon,
- **Non-Lucan vocabulary:** (none)

Narrative

- It is a narrative, that is, a story with a plot
- Within the biblical tradition, it is a theophany
- A story unique to Luke (the story of Philip and the Eunuch in Acts mirrors it).
- Both belong to a type of folktale in which the welcome to the unrecognised stranger turns out to be the decisive event of your life.
- In the Jewish tradition, there are stories of Elijah, interestingly, exactly in this role.
- The Lucan version exhibits the typical features of resurrection appearance stories: doubt, lack of recognition, revelation and mission.
- Plot structure
 - Exposition
 - Inciting moment
 - Complication
 - Climax
 - Dénouement
- Kinds of Plots
 - Plots of Action “Reversal” (they return)
 - Plots of Knowledge “Insight” (hearts burning)
 - Plots of Character “Growth” (“had hoped”)
- All three kinds of plot play a role and the climax varies accordingly
- Watch when the story “turns”
- **Knowledge:** “At this point their eyes were opened and they recognised him.” (Luke 24:31)
- **Character:** “They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32)
- **Action:** “So they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:33)

3. Narrative of Jesus’ condemnation and death

2. Narrative of Jesus’ ministry

4. Narrative of the women at the tomb

5. Narrative of “some of us” at the tomb

1. Narrative of Old Testament hopes

7. Narrative of the appearance to Peter

6. Narrative of the pilgrims’ moment of recognition

1. Narrative of Old Testament hopes

2. Narrative of Jesus’ ministry

3. Narrative of Jesus' condemnation and death
4. Narrative of the women at the tomb
5. Narrative of "some of us" at the tomb
6. Narrative of the pilgrims' moment of recognition
7. Narrative of the appearance to Peter

Concentric

Chiastic patterns: ABB*A*

Concentric patterns: ABCB*A*

Q: is the *physical* centre the centre of *meaning*?

- A 13 (in the same/Jerusalem/going)
 B 14 (they were talking to each other)
 C 15ab (Jesus himself drew near)
 D 16 (something prevented them from recognizing him)
 E 17-19a (he makes a request which stops them)
 F 19b-24 (ministry, death and tomb, no sight)
 G 25 slowness of heart/ slow to believe
 F' 26-27 (ministry, death and tomb, in the light of SS)
 E' 28-30 (they make a request which stops him)
 D' 31a (their eyes were opened, they recognised him)
 C' 31b (He disappears from them)
 B' 32 (they speak to each other)
 A' 33a (in the same/ Jerusalem/returning) + Coda: 33-35

13f This sets up the story, the characters and the situation. The reader knows it is Jesus and becomes an observer of the birth of faith.

17 He makes them stop.

18f Highly ironic that they should tell him, of all people, the story of his own death and resurrection!

25f Luke makes Jesus do what the early Christians did: look to the scriptures to understand their astounding experiences.

28f They make him stop. The scene does echo the Eucharist, but that is not the chief point: the Risen Lord comes in to us to stay with us when we desire it (cf. they urged him strongly).

33f Mutual confirmation of faith stories

- So, the centre is overcoming "slowness of heart to believe"
- Cf. "Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)
- I.e. the needs of a much later generation are being met

Coming to Easter faith

- Awareness of longing ("We had hoped")
- Familiarity with the Jesus story
- Jesus' story read in light of Scripture (continuity / faithfulness)
- The witness of the early church (the women etc.)
- The sovereign self-presentation of the Risen Lord
- The fleeting character of our elusive "epiphanies"
- The key role of our desire ("Stay with us...")
- The celebration of the risen Lord in the breaking of the bread
- The confirmation of the faith through the experience of the community
- The power of retrospective reflection

Back to the story

Prayer

O God of mystery, out of death you delivered Christ Jesus, and he walked in hidden glory with his disciples.

Stir up our faith, that our hearts may burn within us at the sound of his word, and our eyes be opened to recognise him in the breaking of the bread.

6. The Special place of John's Gospel

7. Open conversation

RESOURCES

José Pagola *Jesus. An Historical Approximation* (5th edition)

(i) Bibles

The basic resource is the text itself and it is advisable to have a few versions to hand:

- *HarperCollins Study Bible* (HarperCollins, 2006) e text is the New Revised Standard Version, offering an inclusive language translation with extensive notes on the text.
- *Catholic Study Bible* (OUP, 2011) uses the revised edition of the New American Bible; prepared by Donald Senior and John J. Collins.
- *New English Translation* (available through <https://bible.org>) is always updated and fresh. Printed copies can also be bought. It is particularly successful in some 'neuralgic' passages in Paul.
- *The Jewish Study Bible* (OUP, 2003) A terrific resource for the Hebrew Bible (in English!) based on the Jewish Publication Society Translation. The notes on the text are really good.
- *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. The text is again the New Revised Standard Version, but the notes are directed at Jewish readers and are by renowned Jewish New Testament scholars. The goal is not at all conversion to the re-appropriation of their own heritage.

(ii) Dictionaries of the Bible

- *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Harper Collins, 2011)
- *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Eerdmans, 2000)
- *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon Press, 2009) A multi-volume dictionary covering absolutely everything, written with pastors in mind.

(iii) Commentaries

Of the making of commentaries, there is no end! However, certain series do stand out as especially helpful.

- *Sacra Pagina*, a familiar commentary series on the New Testament – now a little old, but still good on account of the high quality of the writers.
- *Berit Olam* corresponds to *Sacra Pagina* for the Old Testament.
- *Reading the New Testament Series* is an absolutely excellent commentary for the pastor. It covers all the books in considerable detail. It can be bought in hardcopy, but it is much more economical to buy the full set and use it through the software provided by Olive Tree
- *Paideia* is an incomplete series from Olive Tree Software or from Accordance, specialising in the cultural background of the history and writings of the New Testament.
- *The New Interpreter's Bible* is a twelve-volume commentary on the whole of scripture, including the books regarded as canonical by the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. It manages to be both academically reliable and pastorally attuned. This resource is in hard copy and also may be downloaded digitally from Accordance.
- Finally, the *Word Biblical Commentary* is very complete. This series is not new but the authors are, for the most part, top-notch. The complete set is expensive but individual

volumes may be bought in hard copy form or downloaded digitally (Olive Tree Software and Accordance).

The emphasis on digital resources is for two reasons. First, digital books are usually more cost-effective. Second, the biblical references in the books are in hypertext. All the reader has to do is touch or click and the reference appears in an extra window. This makes the checking of references much easier and more attractive for the everyday user of the Bible.

(iv) Introductions

There are very many introductions to the Bible and to the Old and New Testaments. Speaking personally, two stand out as especially helpful.

- *The People's New Testament Commentary* by Eugene M. Boring and Fred Craddock. is one-volume commentary surveys the entire New Testament in a clear, pastorally sensitive way. The writers are not afraid to take on theological questions raised. It is available also for Kindle.
- Corresponding in some ways to the theological project of *The People's New Testament Commentary*, the great Walter Brueggemann has penned many studies, combining penetrating pastoral insight with contemporary scholarship. Good examples are his *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* and his *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (written in conjunction with B. C. Birch, T. E. Fretheim and D. L. Petersen). Both are available in hard copy or for Kindle.

BOOKS TO DO WITH FAITH TODAY:

- Francis Spufford: *Unapologetic. Why despite everything, Christianity makes surprising emotional sense.* (paperback / Kindle)
- John Cottingham: *Why Believe* (paperback / Kindle)
- John Cottingham: *How to believe* (hardback / Kindle)
- Rupert Shortt: *God is No Thing* (hardback / paperback)
- Terry Eagleton: *Reason, faith and revolution* (paperback / Kindle)