

Newman Institute  
Introducing the New Testament  
The Gospel of Mark Continued  
(2)  
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### Welcome

- Session 1: The New Testament
- Session 2: Mark continued

### The New Testament

- No dispute about the number of books
- When did the canon of the New Testament appear?
- The variety of the contents
- Dating the contents
  
- The Bible of early Christianity was the Old Testament.
- The collection is referred to as the “holy writings” (= scriptures).
- What we call the New Testament emerged over a very long period.

### Canon

- Canon: literally a measure rod (cf. cane)
- Canon: the list of authoritative books

### Justin Martyr

- Justin Martyr (ca. ad 150-60) describes the use of Scripture in a Christian worship service thus:
- “And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles [the Gospels] or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits” (1 *Apology* 67).
  
- The New Testament Scriptures had their origin in a story that gave identity, hope, and clarity of mission to the early Christians.
- Gradually, a common “store” of writings was recognised.
- An important trigger was Marcion of Sinope.

### Marcion

- Marcion (c. ad 140) was a priest in Rome.
- Programme: get rid of the Jewish roots of Christianity.
- Two books: *Evangelikon* (Luke, edited)  
*Apostolikon* (Paul, edited).
- The church used a wider canon, which prevailed.

### Irenaeus

- Irenaeus of Lyon (c. ad 180)
- It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the church is scattered throughout all the world and while the “pillar and ground” of the church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting, therefore, that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. (*Against the Heresies* 3.11.8-9)

### Eusebius

- Eusebius (ca. 320-30) simply introduces them as the “holy tetrad of the Gospels” without any defence (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.25.1).
- This suggests that by the 4th century the canonical Gospels were well entrenched, but that was not the case at the end of the 2nd century when Irenaeus defended his selection of four Gospels.

### **Constantine**

- Constantine asked Eusebius to produce fifty copies of the church's Scriptures to be used in the churches of the New Rome, Constantinople, the new capital of the Roman Empire.
- The contents of these volumes likely had a significant influence on many in the church in the vicinity of Constantinople (Greece and Asia Minor) and even farther away.

### **Criteria**

- Apostolicity
- Orthodoxy
- Antiquity
- Use

### **Canon**

- Codex Vaticanus (ca. 331-350, from Alexandria/Egypt)
- Codex Sinaiticus (ca. 331-350, from Alexandria/Egypt)
- Codex Alexandrinus (ca. 425, from Asia Minor)
- Syriac Peshitta (ca. 400, from eastern Syria)
  
- Council of Nicea (325)
- Date of Easter
- Easter Letters of the bishops of Alexandria
- Letter 39 of bishop Athanasius (c. ad 296-298 - 2 May 373)

### **Athanasius of Alexandria: Festal Letter 39**

- He lists the books of the New Testament as the familiar 27:
- The 4 Gospels
- The Acts of the Apostles,
- The 7 General or Catholic epistles (listed in the order in which they appear in modern editions of the New Testament),
- The 14 Pauline epistles (listed with the Letter to the Hebrews placed between those to the Thessalonians and the Pastoral epistles),
- The Book of Revelation.
- Although the order in which Athanasius places the books is different from what is now usual, his list is the earliest reference to the present canon of the New Testament.

### **Evolution**

- 1) The acknowledgment of Jesus as the central authority figure for Christian faith;
- 2) The recognition of the value of Christian writings for preaching and catechetical instruction that reflected the teachings, activity, death and resurrection of Jesus (Gospels), as well as the literature that reflected the continuing mission of Jesus in the world (the rest of New Testament literature);
- 3) The rise of the NT writings to the status of Scripture (2nd cent. and later);
- 4) The conscious groupings of this literature into closed collections—e.g., the four Gospels and the epistles of Paul (2nd and 3rd cent.);
- 5) The formation of a closed list of Christian Scriptures by the early to mid-4th cent. CE, to which nothing could be added or deleted.

### **Later Church Councils**

- There were a number of church councils, beginning at the end of the 4th cent., that dealt with the closure of the biblical canon, but it was settled for most Christians at the Council of Trent in 1546.
- Even then, some debate continued over the inclusion of some books of the biblical canon (e.g., Revelation, James, Hebrews).

### **Kinds of writing**

- Biographies (the four Gospels)
- History (the Acts of the Apostles)
- Letters (Paul, James, John, Jude, Peter)

- Sermon (Hebrews)
- Apocalypse (Revelation)

### Dating

The period of charism (c. ad 30-60)

The period of memorialisation (c. ad 60-90)

The period of institution (c. ad 90-120)

Charism C. 30-60	Memorialisation c. 60-90	Institutionalisation c. 90-120+
7 Pauline Letters	Mark, Matthew, John	1+2 Timothy, Titus
Romans 1+2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon	Ephesians and Colossians	Luke and Acts
	2 Thessalonians (?)	1+2 Peter
	Hebrews	Revelation
+ <i>Q Sayings source</i>	James (1), Jude (1) + John (3)	+ <i>The Apostolic Fathers</i>
7	12	8

### 2. Mark continued

- Gospel Sources
- Sources for Mark
- E.g. Mark 2:1-3:6
- E.g. Mark 4:1-34
- Parable of the Sower in three stages
- Conversation
- Matthew and Luke: Mark and the Q Saying sources
- Mark?
- The story of the passion (Mark 14-15)
- Controversies: Mark 2:1-3:6
- Parables: Mark 4:1-34
- Apocalyptic Discourse: Mark 13

### Mark 2:1-3:6

#### New Testament Parables

Concentric				
A 2:1-12	B 2:13-17	C 2:18-22	B* 2:23-28	A* 3:1-6
indoor healing Jesus' perception divine claim Jesus Scribes cripple				indoor healing Jesus' perception divine claim Jesus Pharisees handicapped man
	Eating Uncleanness Disciples about Jesus Jesus Disciples Scribes punch line		Eating Uncleanness Jesus about Disciples Jesus Disciples Pharisees punch line	
		Non-fasting Bridegroom Newness Jesus People		

	Mark	Matthew	Luke
In each	4	19	26
In all three	3	3	3
In two		6	6
In only one	1	13	20
Total	42	John: no parables	

- John P. Meier A Marginal Jew (5 volumes)

I. THE MUSTARD SEED	(Mk 4:30-32; Mt 13:31-32; Lk 13:18-19)
II. THE EVIL TENANTS OF THE VINEYARD	(Mk 12:1-11; Mt 21:33-43; Lk 20:9-18)
III. THE GREAT SUPPER	(Mt 22:2-14; Lk 14:16-24)
IV. THE TALENTS/POUNDS	(Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27)

### Mark: Parables

#### Parables proper

4:3-8	The sower
4:26-29	The seed growing
4:30-32	The mustard seed
12:1-11	The wicked tenants
13:28-29	The fig tree
13:34-37	The door keeper

#### Parabolic sayings

2:19-20	the sons of the bride chamber
2:21-22	the patched garment and the old wineskins
3:23-27	Beelzebul parables
4:21-25	Four parabolic sayings
8:14-15	The things that defile

### Mark 4

1-2	Introduction
3-9	The Parable of the Sower
10-12	The Reason for the parables
13-20	Allegory of the Sower
21-25	Parabolic Sayings
26-29	The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly
30-32	The Parable of the Mustard Seed
33-34	Conclusion

- The setting in the life of Jesus
- The setting of the life of the early church
- The setting of the evangelist

### In the life of Jesus

Mark 4:1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 3 "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." 9 And he said, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!"

### In the life of the church

Mark 4:13 And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. 18 And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the age and the lure of wealth and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. 20 And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

### In the Gospel of Mark

A			1-2	Introduction	2vv.	46 words	
	B		3-9	Sower	7vv.	105	
		C	10-12	Reasons	3vv.	52	
			D	13-20	Allegory	8vv.	146
		C*	21-25	Enigmatic Sayings	5vv.	74	
	B*		26-32	Seed Parables	7vv.	117	
A*			33-34	Conclusion	2vv.	26	

Prologue	Galilee	The Way	Jerusalem	Epilogue
1:1-15	1:16-8:21	8:22-10:52	11:1-15:47	16:1-8
	Calling, Sending	1. <i>Passion</i> <i>Prediction</i> <i>Discipleship</i>	No calling, no sending	
	Miracles Exorcisms	2. <i>Passion</i> <i>Prediction</i> <i>Discipleship</i>	No miracles, no exorcisms	
	Discourse Kingdom parables	3. <i>Passion</i> <i>Prediction</i> <i>Discipleship</i>	Discourse Apocalyptic	
	Symbols bread, sea, boat		Symbols cup, way, cross	

### Conversation