



Teaching the Bible Classically with Dr. Fred Putnam

Lecture 10: Narrative (III): Gospels & Acts (A)

Outline:

Introduction

- During the intertestamental period, books were written. These books are actually useful for getting an understanding of what the Jewish mindset was at the time. The first edition of the King James Bible included the apocrypha.
- Rome is now the dominant world power.
- The Jews are now in the eastern end of the empire.
- There is a shift in how the Jews viewed the world.
 - The thought forms of the Greeks and Romans were prominent.
 - They viewed the idolatry and polytheism of the Greeks and Romans as a foreign intrusion.
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the synoptics.
 - The only miracle they all have in common is the feeding of the 5000.
 - Don't get bogged down in comparing the parallel accounts. The question is not are all of these equally accurate. You tell the story differently to your grandmother than you would to your friend.
- Gospel means good news. It is good news of fulfillment, of completion.
- The gospels are an apologetic, not just biographies. John says that he wrote this to persuade that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."
- The message of good news is a redemptive message. Everything that Jesus does and says is redemptive ("I have come to seek and to save the lost.").

Jesus is the focus of every story.

- The central character in each gospel is Jesus himself.
- He is always interacting with one other character.
 - Jesus and crowd, Jesus and disciples, Jesus and Peter, Jesus and the demonized, Jesus and opponents (rabbinic debate)
- Jesus is an itinerant rabbi. Jesus has disciples. These disciples are always with him.
 - The rabbis debated by telling a story or by quoting other rabbis.
 - Jesus quotes scripture or speaks from himself. He taught as one who had authority.
 - Jesus disciples are watching and listening.



- To the people around them, the Pharisees were the heroes. They were trying to hold onto the Mosaic law and obey the covenant.
- Even Jesus's condemnation of the Pharisees is about redemption, he is trying to wake them up.

Exercises

- Semi-rabbinic exercise:
 - Pair off students, one student reads the story out loud to the other, the second person explains it, and then they discuss the explanation.
 - Each student reads the story silently and then one retells it without looking. The second student checks the retelling against the text.
 - We are not asking what a story means were, but we are talking about are we reading it, are we hearing what it says.
 - What is the redemptive point that the story is making? How does this story accomplish the mission of the author?