

20040828 How the Gospel was Presented in the First 40 Years HLH

I would like to extend a bit of information to you that is behind the subject today. Mr. Cornel Smith for several years was the facilitator of our East Valley group meeting at the residence of the Zagers and sometimes two other residences. But finally there comes a time when he can be of special help to a small group elsewhere. And so the question arose since we had no other one functioning as a formal facilitator could we continue effectively and that means that we would have to have let's say a kind of content that would enable us to keep moving. There's always of course the role of the host and hostess. Then there is the role of a facilitator. Facilitators and I'll say this I think I know of no one as effective for our small group as Mr.

Cornel Smith who was just up here. The important function of a facilitator is to have done his homework and to get us to do ours. I would not want to be a facilitator to a point I've done too much teaching which means that I'm likely to tell you what you ought to do by yourself for the good of your understanding to do your homework. On that basis I can say I hope I was helpful to Mr. Cornel Smith when there were things that would be brought up that he might not have had access to or for that matter anyone else. To be of help as a result of having taught varied subjects for a period of what amounted to some 20 to 25 years. But we do have a teacher in our small group and he's not here as far as I can see Mr. Carl Parker. He teaches at a level of minds where children need to learn to express themselves and communicate what they are grasping. In so doing we decided within our group with the approval of your pastor that we'd ask him to do the primary responsible work but not as a formal facilitator but as someone who is able to do work that we might not all be able to do if we have not been in the classroom experience. And I can be of help and then we have some others in the group. I suppose many of you know that one of those who attends is a Greek background who was born in Crete and Paul had something to say about those from Crete. Let's say more negative than I would have ever thought to say. Having been to Crete once in 1957 I founded a most remarkable area of the Greek world. So I appreciate Mr. Marinos is available for us and his wife. We have men and women. Sometimes women play a more background role and sometimes women are people of experience in the world and responsibility. And I want to thank Sharon Mills for being able to be there as often as she is which means she's always there for us. She's physically able. She makes a very insightful contribution. The voice of the experience of Christianity. Sometimes we hear in the voice of an individual that is people who tell you something more than what is in the mind but what is in the heart.

And Mr. John Brown is most helpful. I hope I make it clear. We all use our minds. We all need our hearts. But each one makes a contribution. Then there are those I haven't mentioned who come regularly or from time to time. We decided that after having completed as we did under Mr. Cornell Smith's supervision the story of the book of Acts followed by the epistles of Paul though we did not complete them without going next to James, Peter, John and Jude. And so on that basis we were able to complete all of the so-called letters as well as the book of Hebrews. And that left us with a question of what to do. I see Mr. Parker is here. Appreciate that. Mrs. Parker sometimes comes without him and very often he's also been able to come when she could not. But in this small group we thought what we needed was something that we could look at. And we could all examine. To do the background for an epistle is one thing. Not everybody might have a commentary of the varied epistles either individually or collectively. But we could all have a certain contribution if we had an opportunity to study what we had never done before and that is the four Gospels. We chose originally to start with the story of the church in 1995, late 1995. But now we thought we would go

back and the reason in part was that's the background about which Paul and the others wrote. In addition it was possible then for everybody to have a relatively inexpensive copy of the four Gospels as a harmony. And by a harmony if you have not seen one we mean let's say I turn to a page here. Here's Mark, here's Matthew, here's Luke. In this case that's the way the man arranged it. And once in a while here is John and John covers the topic that the others do not. So on John's page the whole page is from John. In that sense there's no harmony with any other content in Matthew, Mark or Luke. And sometimes there only may be two, sometimes three, and sometimes there are four. And that presents a problem like this where you can present it in such a way where the columns are very narrow. Now I just hold up one. There are several harmonies.

Mr. Parker chose one for himself that was to his liking and it was based on how the story is structured as presented. It generally will parallel but not entirely because it starts out let us say with the concept of the introduction. That is where we look at one of the four Gospels and say this is how this one is introduced, this one and third and fourth. But if you look at the subject matter you might conclude that John's Gospel starts before the others because it starts in the beginning.

That's the way it is introduced.

So we now have a few types that have been presented by scholars.

This way every family has access to a harmony of the Gospels and you can read and compare, ask yourself questions. I happen to have brought up a harmony of the Gospels by A.T.

Robertson which is the one we historically used and generally speaking among those who were called evangelicals, people who make a serious study of the Bible for both academic and very personal and family reasons as distinct from those who simply professionally study as you study literature. So there are different approaches. There will be great similarities and so we thought it was interesting then to see the differences and immediately we noted that the one that I have here has a slightly different approach as to how to organize the beginning of the story. So let me just point up in case you have never had one, this author starts with Luke because from his point of view he'd like to address how a written document is introduced to the public. I'll come to that later but we won't turn to it now. Then he goes to John and in each case there is no parallel or harmony.

Harmony in this sense means how close they resemble one another because he starts with what John says in the beginning. Then we come to a third portion here of Matthew and Luke which happen to deal with a similar content and then we come to further material in Luke and we notice we're still moving through Luke who is completely separate from anything in any of the others. What we then notice is that you have a separate content of Matthew, a separate content of Luke again and there are no parallelisms. So you learn in a harmony that sometimes the Bible has only one account, sometimes two, sometimes three and in certain cases especially near the conclusion a significant number have all four and it is not till I come to the fifth section that I find anything from Mark. So that's just the background.

When I was asked by Mr. Smith what could I let's say be available should the minister not be here? I immediately thought of the logic of what he's no longer experiencing that is Mr. Smith because we're here in a kind of new world that's limited to a period of time, life of a single individual as others touch upon that life. So I said yes and for my purpose I'm trying to give you today just an overview of what is a way to look at the four books that are called the Gospels and different ways of reading you can read one through another, another in a fourth one.

Just like the Old Testament let's say you can read the law, the prophets and the writings.

Most people have never seen the law, the prophets and the writings of the Old Testament in the correct order in which they exist in the Hebrew nation, the Jews. If I were to ask most Christians I think most. What's the last book of the Old Testament? The majority who have looked at the Bible would certainly say Malachi, but the last book of the Old Testament is Second Chronicles.

If I were to ask which book is the first book of the prophets I know that most people would say Isaiah. No, Joshua. So what I'm telling you is that if you've never seen how the Hebrew Scriptures are organized there is much that we would miss.

Now in the same way we take for granted that the historic order within the church of the four Gospels is Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Of course there I would concur, not a problem, but the real discussion would come if I want to look at a harmony is why if we have at Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are we told that Mark came before any of the others that Luke certainly came later and that we're not sure that Matthew wrote Matthew or who the John was who wrote the Gospel according to the account given under the name John. That is we discovered to what extent the world of criticism at the higher level has many and varied ideas.

But now that's not how we wanted to approach it. We wanted to approach it simply. What is the content? What do we sometimes miss when we only read one book at a time? This way we can look at a number.

So I said to myself partly when we were asking each other what the title should be that I realized that what we needed to do is to set down a period of time within which sensibly our perception would agree with the historic view that the Gospel accounts were not later than within the first 40 years after the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth before he ascended to the throne of God. That means about 40 years, the same period between the near close of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies under Titus. It also enabled me to give you just a bit of background of what it was like to live within that 40 years and then to go further than our study so far has taken us and to show you the content. I want to show you why Matthew writes as Matthew does, why Mark writes as Mark does, and Luke and John, depending on when, based on what traditionally, I say traditionally, was the knowledge handed down over centuries and how that transformed the perspective of these three.

One of the things that we need to discuss right off is that we're dealing with a book, that is, four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and we're dealing with what we call a book.

And this is one of those simple things. Did you know that when Jesus was on earth, we have not a single indication that the human mind had conceived of a book with a binding and with pages like this. It was either on tablets or on some kind of scroll, and if it wasn't big enough, just simply a sheet. So I have explained before and I think it worthwhile.

When the New Testament literature was written, it was written on scrolls.

To my knowledge, I don't know of any indication that has been found that at the death of Paul, at the close of the reign of Emperor Nero, that there existed the idea of a bound book.

But by the end of the first century, and I mean before, that is, some time between the destruction of Jerusalem to use a benchmark and the end of the first century after the birth of the Messiah, which we think of as around 100. Someone had come up with, and we have in fact pages, an idea that came from a scroll, but instead of having to roll it and unroll it and look on the other side, you know, somebody came up with the idea that you could, in fact, take a long sheet of paper and simply bend it this way and then this way and then this way, you know, so that it's like folding it back and forth

and back and forth. You have a kind of accordion, if you stretch it out, you know what I mean. Then what you do is to think that it's a long sheet, but relatively narrow. Now the top or the bottom of, sorry, of that long sheet, pardon me for striking the, I look too far, I'm normally slightly more nearsighted, but that's all open.

Now if you were to press it down, you have two things to do. You could glue one side, seal this side that could have opened this way, seal that side. These were all open pages, as you open, let's say if you call it a page, and that, but this one would also have no way to get in, that is, you'd have a fold. So they came up with the idea of pasting shut and or sewing shut, one part, and when that was solid, taking a knife and cutting all the folds on this side, you don't have to do it here, you don't have to do it here, and suddenly now you can write what you want to, here and here and here, and then there. And that's how a book got started.

So the remarkable thing is that the invention of the book, and that's why I think it important, we often think of it in terms of each individual document, the invention of the book is significant because it made it possible to determine the sequence of which come in what order.

And that's historically a separate question. I'm not answering every question today about those first 40 years, but I'm trying to paint a picture of what gives you, let's say an insight into the matter, and what we bring up in our group to help us better understand as each one poses questions, and perhaps has thought through an answer or has read an answer. So we come to the first place as to how we got the four in the sequence. The original writers never mentioned their names, though one writer implies that he's the writer because he describes a person who historically was regarded as the writer. That's the young fellow. As Jesus was being seized, who would have been seized, he escaped. Somebody got him by his cloak and kept the cloak, and the author kept running.

So he tells the story indirectly. That's Mark, who was a cousin of Barnabas, the one of whom we know something from the island of Cyprus, and the one who accompanied Paul.

Anyway, at some point the church has told us in tradition, that is all the ancient comments by writers, that the apostle Matthew wrote one. Mark was not one of the 12. Luke was not one of the 12. He's called a doctor, but it's attributed to Luke, see, and one John. Now originally, if you were to examine what different individuals said or thought or wrote, you know, some people have said it and been reproduced in print as having said so. Others are thought to have implied that in the way they wrote, and then we have the body of information from local groups, like in Egypt, where Mark is clearly associated, but not always with Egypt.

But the Egyptian church has something to say, not merely the Greek or the Latin.

Why it is that today Matthew is not seen to be the logical Matthew, but somebody who, let's say, wrote and it has been attributed to Matthew. There are critics who simply have gone so far afield that all we do in our small group is simply to say, historically, the church has said this, anything else is a matter of reasoning and speculation with no confirmable evidence. I'll be plain. Why it is that the original apostles should not have written any and it was left solely to others would be a problem in my mind that would have to be answered.

Now historically, the first Gospel account, the first of the four that we have, is attributed to a person who had legal training, was a tax collector, and it was a Levite.

The Levites were one of the most professional of the tribes, and the House of Judah included primarily the House of Judah, Levi, no insignificant portion of Benjamin, and fragments of any of the tribes that might have migrated after the breakup when the ten tribes set up Jeroboam, Jeroboam

with the support of the Egyptians, and in this case after Solomon's death, Judah became a kind of new state that the Egyptians now had to deal with.

Egypt was then one of the what we call superpowers, the great powers of that day.

It's interesting to take note that we are dealing with Matthew as a professional person, and being first in order, we would have expected it to be written in Hebrew.

It might have been written in Aramaic, and here I want to add a footnote again. We have a little study group in this sense, our small group, for a long time the argument was that the Jews knew Hebrew, we might call it Biblical Hebrew, but they were speaking Aramaic, and then there is Greek and Latin that day. It is now much clearer, and it has taken even the Jews centuries to rethink how they should explain it. That is, the Jews never have lost Hebrew. They simply were using Hebrew in a world in which a very similar language, Aramaic, was being spoken also by Syrians, people from Babylonia, people from Parthia, from other countries nearby. You had non-Semitic languages. Aramaic is still preserved as the language of the Assyrian Christian community, and the Chaldean Christian community, the bulk of whom once lived in Syria and in Iraq.

If I said Syria, I mean that, but let me correct something.

The Assyrian Christians, I mean to say, are a group that go under the name Assyrian, like Chaldean.

It is really a matter of a description. If you lived in southern Iraq, you were called Chaldean Christians. If you lived in northern Iraq, you were called Assyrian Christians, but most Assyrian Christians migrated into Syria because that was the one country that preserved the ancient name of the Assyrian Empire, even though the bulk of the original people were Aramean, hence the word Aramaic. Anyway, there are a significant number of Assyrian Christians in the state of California. I met a Chaldean Christian who came to visit Ambassador College not so long ago before this war. I think it was only a year before the war began, the second one.

We have had members in our Fresno church, a man who was Armenian, married to an Assyrian Christian wife, and they still debated all the historic events from the news. It was thought, had come to speak Aramaic, and let's say a religious language was preserved as Hebrew.

That's now seen as a mistaken view, though most books you will read out of the recent past have kept the old idea. Christians in the West didn't know, and Jews in many cases who remembered Hebrew in reading the book, the Bible, and who were studying the Talmud had never grasped that, in fact, the difference between Hebrew and Hebrew as written in the Talmud is simply that Hebrew had, over time, become significantly modified by Aramaic, just like the old Anglo-Saxon was modified by Norman French. So let me tell you something that I think I have never heard from anybody, but I saw it written up very carefully in a dictionary.

We think of English today as composed of a huge number of words that have come into the language, which is true. We see how many words seem to have Norman French background, Latin, and Greek.

What is not realized is, let us go back to 1950 before a whole new vocabulary of technical terms has arisen. 95 percent, half a century ago, of English would be represented by non-Anglo-Saxon words. That is, 95 percent of our vocabulary is made up of the impact of Norman French, Latin, some Spanish, of course, of more recent centuries, and Greek. And once in a while you will find oriental words like to kowtow. There are African words that have come into a significant number of Arabic,

algodon, cotton, alcohol, alcohol. Some from all those languages and not more than five percent of our vocabulary actually goes back to Anglo-Saxon.

But when we analyze speech day-to-day talk, 95 percent of our vocabulary is Anglo-Saxon.

Five percent are the learned words that have come in since.

Now, you may not guess that. You have to know a little bit. I would say if we were to discuss it, you would be surprised how many sentences you can create without a single foreign word other than the Anglo-Saxon and modernized speech.

Hebrew was greatly influenced by Aramaic. As any learned Jew today would say, the modern Hebrew of the state of Israel is more like old Hebrew in terms of its roots than what was happening in the days of the Roman Empire with so many Jews living in the Aramaic area of Babylonia, Syria, other parts of the Empire. So the Jews today would describe the story.

And that is this, that Hebrew came to be affected by the Aramaic language such that the language of the Mishnah, which is the heart and core of the Talmud, and the Gemara is the later commentary, yes, the Mishnah is the heart and core, the additional commentary is the Gemara, and the total is the Talmud. So the Jews would say today at Hebrew University, the scholarly world says there, that what we have is that Hebrew had changed so that it isn't Aramaic that Jesus was using all the time as distinct from Hebrew, but Mishnahic Hebrew, that is the Hebrew of the Mishnah, that was far removed from the form that we might have thought of if we had simply heard Moses. That's a very important concept. I say it because the church tells us in tradition that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew. Now let me let me pose a question so you see why I bring it up.

If you presume that no gospel writer ever wrote in anything but Greek to start with as scripture, then you must ask yourself, when did they realize that Greek was going to be the language of the future when Hebrew had been the language of the past? There are Aramaic expressions very clearly in the book of Daniel, quotes out of Ezra, Nehemiah, Late Second Chronicles, and so forth.

Do we say that no one ever wrote a gospel account until the world of the Greeks had been so penetrated, most unlikely, just by logic? The tradition is that indeed Matthew wrote an account of the gospel. Just because someone has written an account does not mean that it's necessarily the one that will be preserved for future generations. The question of the books of the New Testament or the canon is clearly a decision that has been made as to what book shall be preserved.

If you think that Paul's letters have all been preserved then you were saying Paul never wrote any other letter and those whose works have not been preserved never wrote. Well that doesn't make sense. The fact remains Paul wrote extensively for the Greek world, Peter wrote only two, John wrote three letters, Jude wrote one. All of these now are in Greek.

I'm not going to debate the arguments that the whole of the New Testament was written in Aramaic.

I regard that as nonsense and say no further. The scholarly world overwhelmingly would say it has never been proved, even though there are rare individuals. Dr. Lambser was one whose native language was Aramaic. All that I can say is very simple on it. The first Aramaic Bible that exists today in terms of its reproduction is a translation from the Greek.

That's all I need to say. It's a translation from the Greek. We know it because when Jesus is quoted in Aramaic then you have the Aramaic expression which is to be interpreted and then you have the same Aramaic word which is nonsense. That is if Jesus spoke in Aramaic and that is quoted that's all you have to say in Aramaic. But if you have Jesus quoted in Aramaic and that's of course the word

that was used it could be called Mishneh Hebrew today. Then in Greek you would say which is to be interpreted as and then you give the Greek word. When you have this statement more than once in the New Testament where whenever the original Greek has an Aramaic word and it is said to be translated as then you realize that if you translate it into Aramaic you should have either left it out and if you didn't you were simply giving away that it is a translation in which you have the Aramaic word stated again but the phrase which is to be interpreted as and then the same word appears that's sufficient. No scripture has been preserved of the New Testament in other than Greek.

But Matthew according to Eusebius and others who had no problem with his historic statement he was a friend of Emperor Constantine you remember for the time setting he said that Matthew communicated as you might well expect in the language of the people. Mark and Luke and John communicated in Greek and at the time when Greek came to be the language of both the learned Jew and the Eastern Roman Empire fundamentally even into the West Greek was used as the primary language of communication. Then we recognize that all of the literature came to be preserved as the language of the Greek speaking world no matter whether you had Jewish background, Latin background and there came to be translations all translations have been taken from the Greek the Coptic from the Greek the Arabic from the Greek the Georgian and ancient one Armenian and Latin all the translations come even the Aramaic as it is used in the Aramaic speaking churches come from translations out of the Greek. Now with that in the background we also are told that Matthew also wrote his account in Greek it is not a translation from the Hebrew it is written fresh as he would have spoken in one he now speaks in another language.

Jews in particular scattered as they were are a bilingual and normally gifted and able to pick up the language of the street. I remember the first Jewish person that didn't speak German I knew numerous my father and mother knew numerous German speaking Yiddish speaking Jews but I met a man who counted in Spanish and I knew he was Jewish I mean to be in the business he was you know he if you've ever been in the Jewish community there was the personality and I said where are you from he said I am from Turkey well when a Jew is from Turkey and now sorry incorrect when a man speaks Spanish came from Turkey and lives in the United States then what you're really talking about is a person who is of Jewish background when my wife and I were in the former Soviet Union in 1967 we met numerous Jews in prominent places and Jews who were of course ordinary citizens sometimes we met them at night didn't see them the street is dark there's a oh yes way down the end there's one light at the end of the street but it's amazing you feel free under communism you know in the Soviet Union and you can talk to people in Russian we Victor Kubik was with us as a student who knew Russian some of them knew some English they obviously knew Hebrew I met the Jews who spoke Yiddish who spoke German some few spoke good English it was just normal to have access to another language furthermore the Jews were highly respected for their accomplishments in the Roman world there is no doubt about that they were also targets but the Jews started out as the friends of Rome that means they once were regarded as those who were not subject people but who made an agreement with Rome to come to the aid of Rome whenever Rome would need and that the Romans would support them the Jews whenever it was not that the Jews had a need but at least that Rome had a need to support the Jews so it was not quite balanced but Rome was the bigger power see but it started out that way and it ended up in the terrible crises some 40 to 100 years after the death of the Messiah in the two wars with Rome anyway with this in mind we first have to ask ourselves the remarkable thing when we look at a harmony is that we have a book and how we got it as a book and how we got it in the order in which we did and in what language it had come down as the official form of the message and it came down and has come down in Greek it was preserved in western Europe only in translation not until the Reformation was Greek really introduced as a language of significant learning to affect the Latin Bible and then not until Pius XII did

the Pope at Rome issue a document suggesting that Catholic scholars should carefully examine the Greek and not rely on the premise that the Latin was the correct original and the Greeks didn't have it correct it's taken a long time for western Europe to realize that eastern Europe had possession of the texts now we discover therefore there's every reason to see that Matthew's approach is how Matthew would have expressed himself to the Jews of his generation and when he chose to present that message he chose to present it again in Greek for the church to preserve but what it was in Greek and Hebrew is fundamentally each an original creation of the mind of the author now we will skip over and make a statement to be of some guidance to you Luke was written approximately when the gospel of Luke answered we can't know without some further information so we look at the introduction of Luke and find that it is in reference to a man whose name is given who supported the production of or who was the patron of Luke a doctor this doctor had a patron and patrons traditionally underwrote the financial production of the book now when we come to the book of acts we discover that Luke addresses the same patron again and said this is now the second book for which I am very grateful and let's say dedicated to you that means Luke was written before acts a logical thing isn't it and then you look at the end of Luke incorrect the end of the book of acts and you see a very strange thing it stops just let me turn to the end of the book of acts this is where the kind of research you do or study it would be helpful to see what may be available to give an answer to the question verse 30 last chapter 28th chapter of acts then paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house and received all who came to him preaching the kingdom of god and teaching the things with concern which concern the lord jesus christ with all confidence no one forbidding him to have done so for two whole years is a very important statement and to stop the story with nothing after this can only have one meaning this book was published the book of acts was published approximately the time when paul was nearing release because in roman law if you were charged with this kind of offense you would remain upwards of two years in prison until your accusers had come after which you would be free to leave it implies that luke concludes his book of acts at a time when paul was still imprisoned no accusers had come and when paul and luke and the church anticipates paul's release the date of this almost certainly without any further statement as evidence but if you know the story of when paul was taken prisoner the story of phoenix uh festus the journey to rome and now two years there let us say approximately 62 the present era that's ad 62 now if acts stops at ad 62 and we have nothing else it's like this was where it was intended to conclude otherwise there would be no reason to leave it there without finishing the story of paul and rome suppose this had been written five or ten years later would you think that the book should stop after only two years in prison if another ten years had gone by if you say it was written after 70 ad and no gospel account was written before why did luke stop no later than 62 now if luke finishes the book of acts in 62 and it comes out with this information then luke writing the gospel must have written before because when i look at the beginning of the book of acts here's what i find the former account i made theophilus of all that jesus both began to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up after he through the holy spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen etc so he is addressing a noble theophilus there was a former document now i look at the beginning of luke here it is in as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivering them to us it seemed good to me also having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first which is quite a claim for a doctor to have made to write to you an orderly account most excellent theophilus therefore luke was written before acts and acts was completed by 62 if nothing was written as the most extreme scholars had been saying until after 70 ad and paul couldn't have lived beyond the period of the last year of nero's life 67 to 68 luke should have finished as a responsible person the rest of the story of paul till his death at Rome in execution now all of this gives you an idea of how one should look at the story now this is

really the background but the reason you were here is to examine the introduction of each of the gospel accounts so let me now turn to that in simple order and since you have all of you these let me just take matthew i want to take matthew first because it's the first in order it is called the book of the generation of jesus christ the son of david the son of abraham now here is a document when written in greek it says this is the and the word book it isn't necessarily a reference to our modern meaning of book let me tell you that it means it has to do with the written record that's the sense of it has come to be translated as book and we think of a book as a certain format different from a manuscript see different from a scroll different from a tablet but anyway writing to jews listen carefully you pick it up somebody hands you a copy of a scroll you have it read to you remember most people had no money even to buy extensive scrolls jesus addressed this question he said now when the Pharisees say no well let's stop he said now the scribes and the Pharisees sit in or have seated themselves on mosa's seat now whatever they tell you that do but don't do after their works now many individuals myself for a time including not understanding the nature of the problem didn't understand what jesus was saying any jew of that day would have understood that the jews were answering a question you come to a Pharisee a rabbi and the synagogue to someone Pharisee background most certainly who was a scribe and you ask what does the scripture say on this i have a question what does it say the jew either quotes it verbally because he knows what you are asking or he reads the text you aren't carrying a scroll around you might see one in the synagogue if you don't study at the synagogue you don't have one at home you have only to ask you don't find the disciples even running around with scrolls they would have asked the question so jesus said when they say this what he means is when they are telling you what the wording of the text is he said do what it says not what they are doing you do what it says they have read it to you now you know what you ought to do now he sent a message and that message is we have to have a whole new look at the revelation of god because indeed that revelation is being lived in the life of this person jesus of nazareth so we start out the book of the generation of jesus christ of in other words a man who had the name yashua in a kind of modernized hebrew or joshua his real his real name was the same name as joshua who led the children of israel into the promised land and he is called here christ which would have been yashua meshiach the messiah so here suddenly is a book in which we are introduced to the lineage of jesus christ one who is being called messiah son of david son of abraham and then we are introduced to a lengthy lineage i don't have to read that but we discover the first thing of significance in matthew how the story was presented he was presented with his hebrew name that he is called messiah already among the believers that he descended from abraham and descended from david and here is the evidence and here is the story we go to mark mark most certainly is the next one who wrote this is not to say that matthew wrote in greek before mark did this is to say that matthew wrote in greek and what he wrote in hebrew was before what mark wrote one is the apostle who was responsible for telling the whole story one of the most professional of them not a judian fisherman but a levite tax collector mark you need to go back to the first place where it appears and now i think i will at this point turn to my new king james version the beginning of the gospel good news of jesus christ same concept his name and his office the son of god as it is written in the prophets behold i send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you the voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare the way of the lord make his path straight then john came baptizing so mark starts out and he is writing in greek he's writing in greek he's not writing in hebrew there's not a shred of evidence that he chose to start writing in hebrew greek was far more common than most people know in the jewish world but by the time mark writes he is introducing jesus of nazareth not the son of david not the son of abraham as matthew introduced it the son of god now remember all the great heroes descended from the gods do you hear me that was in their minds the gods were the ancestors of all the great men of the past who ruled not that there were many gods but the gods had been made out of the ancestors of men you

remember the romans made augustus a god he was tiberius sorry he was octavian augustus and when he died he was the divine augustus so mark calls to our attention that the scripture says in the prophets that the way before the messiah would be prepared by a man of remarkable impact in his nation and elsewhere john john was so significant that josephus has to mention him mark is writing to both greek-speaking jews aramaic people greeks and the knowledge of john was all over the middle east in this part of the world because of his impact on the jewish nation mark starts out introducing the messiah jesus as the son of god who was foretold by the prophets of whom the interpreter and the full filler is john the baptizer Luke doesn't start out like this at all here's a learned treatise if you please in which he addresses the patron this is written directly to the greek world not so much to the jewish world in which mark grew up and certainly matthew did and we read and this is an orderly account and how does it start well it starts by telling us there were many things fulfilled among us who were eyewitnesses and others have taken the opportunity to explain it and i am taking this opportunity through your generosity to explain the information in circulation among us now in this case the us clearly indicates that by the time luke was writing more and more a division had occurred between jews who were christian and those who were not and so he says there wasn't the days of herod herod was known throughout the roman world and in that time we take up the story of the birth of john the baptist he goes to the background so when we understand the impact that john the baptist had jesus said of john there has been no man born of women greater than he didn't say equal to one way or another but none greater than john the baptist's impact personality influence from the beginning till that time and so what we are dealing with is an introduction to the story that was already in circulation there is no reference to jesus here yet there's reference to what we christians believe you get the picture now time is moving on matthew is writing about the son of abraham the son of david and the lineage that's how you've started it with the jewish nation mark is telling the story of jesus the messiah who is the son of god now we have taken a new major step of emphasis point three it is information that is in circulation within the christian community you see now we see already a clearly developing christian community and greek is the language of general contact and we are introduced to history in the days of herod and i will skip and not do more because that's you'll see quickly and then there was something in the days of augustus so the story goes to what everybody had heard about john the baptist now remember when paul came to Ephesus he met in Ephesus people who had never heard of the spirit of god as a gift that god gives to us to dwell in us who do you think the teacher was who mentioned that there was one who would have said later give you the spirit it was john the baptist they said we know nothing other than the baptism of john this is in Ephesus this is not in some village in galilee this is in the great metropolitan city of Ephesus in possession of the statue that fell from jupiter of diana you realize how important we aphasians are this is the greco- roman world and in that world john the baptist disciples had already come so luke is addressing the story not as let me tell you about the man whom we call the messiah the son of abraham the son of david not even yet the son of god but let me highlight a matter you know how matthew starts out with the lineage from matthew sorry from abraham to david and david to the messiah now when you look at the lineage that is given in luke you are impressed with the story you are impressed with the fact that you start with the mother and the husband of the mother of jesus who was the son of david who was the son of abraham who was the son of adam who was the son of god now you greeks realize jesus was a son of god just as much as you thought the jupiter or aries may have been i should have said zeus or aries those were the greeks uh in fact the new testament doesn't use jupiter it uses zeus so luke is now addressing let's say something for the greco- roman world the world of herod and augustus the world in which deities lay behind the story this is not how matthew first presented it ah but if you think we're making progress wait till you look at john and with this we'll draw the conclusion john writing in greek in the beginning was the logos and the logos was with the god i'm translating it as literally as is

understandable because it's important to know and god was the word in the beginning was the logos and the logos was with the god and god was the word or the logos what a remarkable statement where is david where is abraham where is john the baptist this one was in the beginning with the god all through him came to be and without him came to be not even one thing which has come to be now you greks you may have heard of augustus you may have heard of herod let me tell you you may have even have heard of the gods who were your ancestors but the philosophers have been telling us that undoubtedly we have to understand logos as fundamental to why the creation is as it is logos reason the fundamental concept reason thought there's another word for wisdom rational not chaotic not confusion the universe has underlying it thought and reason and wisdom if you please that's sophia john is not even addressing the question of messiah ship yet he's addressing something that the philosophers finally had brought to the attention of the people when you read what paul faced in the 40s in asia minor or in the 50s you realize that most people were sunk still deep into idolatry but ever since alexander the great in the fourth century bc the disciple of aristotle who was the disciple of plato who was the disciple of socrates for 500 years the greeks were being influenced by people of philosophic mind and idolatry was gradually becoming who what does it matter people were more and more asking the big question why is the universe as it is it is it a universe that is based on shall we say understanding shall we say rational thought and the answer is that that rational thought that underlies the universe was in the beginning not came to be it was in the beginning the verb is expressed not merely to be filled in as sometimes happens in greek wording in the beginning was the word that word was with the god the creator had reason had thought had understanding and in fact god was the word that's the order of the greek it means the word was god it doesn't say the word was the god because if the word were the god then the god would be equivalent simply to the word but we soon discover that not only was the word god but if we go through let me just drop down a little bit into the rest of it and we'll stop with this yes and the word became flesh verse 14 and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten from let me leave the the out and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory the glory of him glory as of only begotten from father that's a literal form we would say the only begotten from the father that's our expression there's a reason god inspired the new testament not in english but greek when it comes to the word the the greek is able to highlight what our the is often unable to do the greeks did not have to have a or n so in conclusion we discover