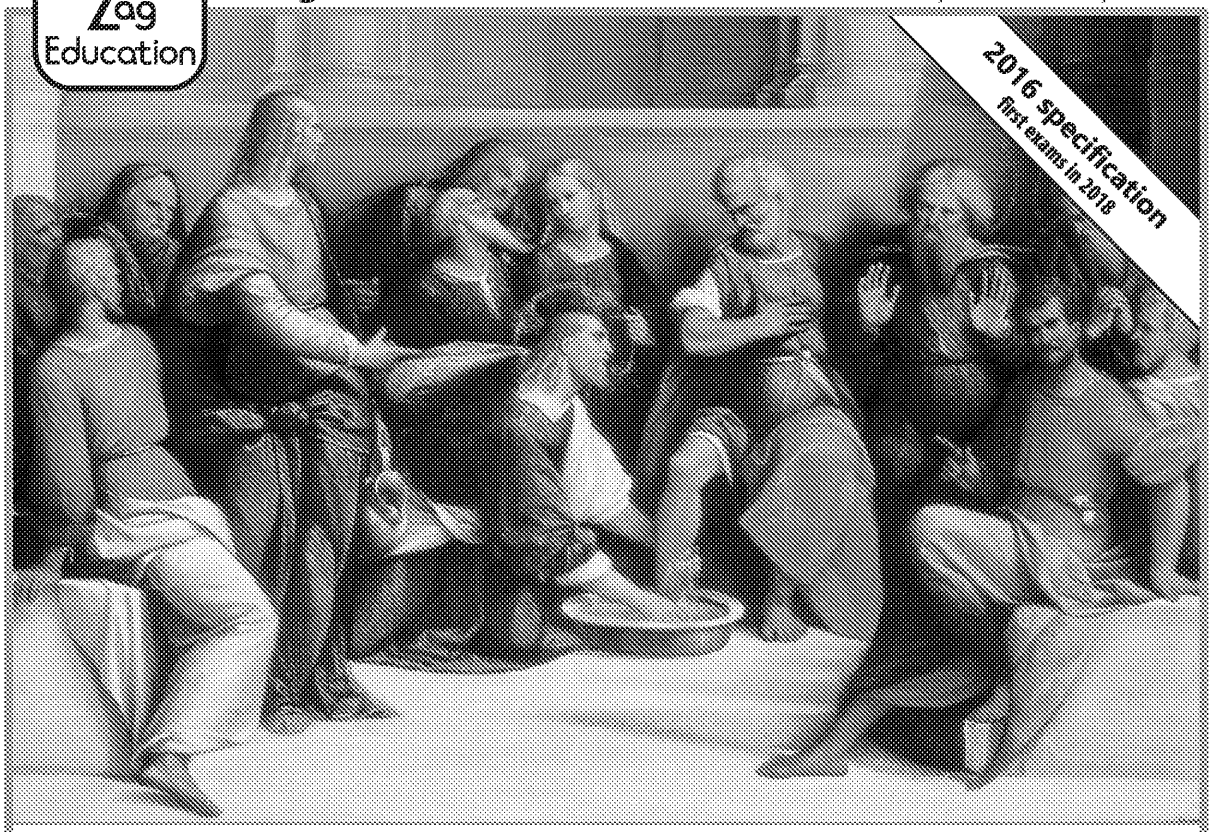
Zig Zag Education

Religious Studies A Level | Edexcel | 9RS0



Course Companion

for A Level Year 2 Edexcel
Paper 3: New Testament Studies

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POD 12055

Contents

Teacher's Introduction

This resource provides comprehensive, student-friendly coverage of the A Level Year 2 Edexcel material for Paper 3: New Testament Studies.

The material is covered in the order given in the specification:

- **Ways of interpreting scripture**
- **Texts and interpretation: the Kingdom of God, conflict, the death and resurrection of Jesus** (The Kingdom of God in Luke: parables of the kingdom and eschatology; Why did Jesus have to die?; The crucifixion and resurrection narratives in Luke's Gospel)
- **Scientific and historical-critical challenges, ethical living and the works of scholars** (Faith and history: the death and resurrection of Jesus in modern scholarship; How should we live?)

For the first three topics of the New Testament, see ZigZag Education's AS / A Level Year 1 resource (POD 9798).

At the beginning of the resource, a list of **'Key Terms'** is provided for the three main areas of study to help students to better understand important terms before learning about them.

Each subtopic starts with an introduction that includes **'Learning Objectives'** and **'Key Thinkers'**. Throughout, there are a variety of **'Starter Activities'**, **'Activities'** and **'Discussion Activities'**, which are designed to consolidate knowledge and stimulate class discussion.

Also included are **'Quick Quiz'** sections throughout each topic, which should provide a fun way to check comprehension and help students remember key information. **Answers** for the Quick Quiz sections are also provided at the back of the resource.

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Key Terminology in Ways of Interpreting the S

Hermeneutics	A discipline that focuses on the theory and methodolo particularly of religious or literary texts.
Source Criticism	A form of criticism that seeks to identify and detail the particular text.
Form Criticism	A form of criticism that attempts to classify and trace original oral or written traditio th the aim of disco part and the historical on ex om which it arose.
Redaction Criticism	A form of crit is at focuses on how the author of reinterpreted it to suit their theological goals.
Narrative Criticism	A form of criticism that focuses on analysing a biblical connected story with a particular goal.
Literary Criticism	A form of criticism that analyses texts based on their t number of literary techniques the interpreter can obs
Allegory	A story, teaching or other literary text that can be inte deeper meaning.
Liberal Theology	A form of theology that emerged during the Enlighten primacy of reason when interpreting and understandi
Natural Theology	A form of theology that attempts to discover truths ab and reasoning on the external world.
Revelation	The truths that God is supposed to have delivered or world to human beings.
Bibliolatry	Barth's term for the false worship of scripture, which Christians hold the Bible to be the inerrant 'Word of G
Kerygma	The Greek word for the preaching and proclamation o argues is the most essential part of the Bible and Chris
Demythologisation	The process of stripping myths from the biblical text i or cosmological claims are separated from its other p theological teachings.
Existentialism	A field of philosophy that deals with questions about t human existence.
Rational Approach	An approach to biblical interpr on that focuses on reason and scientific k ow dge
Historical Approach	An appro o ical interpretation that focuses on s h background and context detailed by a particul
Sociologi roach	An approach to biblical interpretation that focuses on views and patterns of human activity to understand t particular text.
Literary Approach	An approach to biblical interpretation that focuses on the literary methods and techniques found within its

Key Terminology in Texts and Interpretati

Eschatology	A field of theology concerned with matters of death, j end times.
Kingdom of God	A term used extensively by the Synoptic Gospels to ta between God and the world and the methods by whic
Parousia	A term used when referring to beliefs and anticipation Jesus Christ.
Futurist Eschatology	A form of esch[illegible] analyses the Kingdom of G
Realised Eschatol[illegible]	[illegible] eschatology that analyses the Kingdom of G [illegible]rought about by the arrival of Jesus.
Inaug[illegible] Eschatology	A form of eschatology that analyses the Kingdom of G reality and a future reality yet to come.
Covenant	A special agreement between God and humankind for throughout history.
Law of Moses	Also called the Mosaic Law, this consists of the first fiv (also known as the Torah) and was routinely used as t throughout history.
Two-level Drama	The ways in which the author of John potentially com for internal narrative purposes and to address key soc Johannine community.
Sabbath	The seventh day of the week in the Jewish calendar, w and worship.
Pharisees	A Jewish religious and social movement that was part Second Temple period in Jewish history.
Sanhedrin	A council of elders appointed to sit as religious author of Israel.
Salvation History	A key concept in Luke that refers to the ways in which to achieve salvation as part of an overarching historic
Atonement	The Christian belief that Jesus' death on the cross was enabled the possibility of salvation for humankind.
Ecclesiology	The branch of theology that de[illegible]ith matters of the relationship to the Bib[illegible]
Universalism	The view th[illegible] Ch[illegible]n salvation is not limited to one to[illegible]
Pro[illegible]	[illegible] prediction about what will occur in the future, often throughout history.
Fulfilment	A theme in the Gospel of Luke which states that Jesus Old Testament prophecy and God's plan for human sa
Martyr	A person who is killed due to their religious or theolog

Key Terminology in Scientific and Historical-critical

Empty Tomb	A term used to refer to the mystery surrounding Jesus which it was interred after his death.
Myth	A story that holds a particular importance in a society in beliefs in supernatural beings or events.
Miracle	An event which appears to transgress the known laws the intervention of God.
Joseph of Arimathea	The member of the Co[illegible]ho after the death of Jes his body t[illegible] empty tomb.
Mary Magdalene	[illegible] of Jesus who was one of the main figures t[illegible] first resurrection appearances.
Enlightenment	A seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophical argued for the importance of reason over adherence t
Sermon on the Plain	A set of important ethical teachings given by Jesus in L
Sermon on the Mount	A set of important ethical teachings given by Jesus in M
Reversal	A theme in the Gospel of Luke which emphasises how God will see an overturning of spiritual and material f
Repentance	The act or process of expressing sincere regret or rem
Forgiveness	The act or process of letting go or changing one's feeli offence committed towards oneself.
Parable	A simple story used by Jesus throughout the Gospels t theological or ethical message.

4.1: Ways of Interpreting Sc

What you will learn in this section

The different ways of interpreting scripture in Christian tradition and academic s

- Examining traditional views on biblical inspiration, including the literal, alleg to scripture.
- A comparison of the thought of two key twentieth-century theologians, Kar looking at key concepts such as the Bible being a 'witness' to revelation and biblical interpretation.
- An overview of four modern perspectives on biblical interpretation, includin sociological and literary approaches.
- The strengths and weaknesses of dif ap oaches to interpretation and and relevance of scripture fo s today.

Starter A

Revisit you from Year 1 on the different forms of biblical criticism. Did a h help give it more meaning and relevance? Or did it obscure the fundamental tea some notes on your thoughts and compare them to the different approaches studi

Key Thinker	
Name	Karl Barth
Born	1886
Died	1968
Key text	*Church Dogmatics* (1932–1967)
Why are they important?	Barth is one of the most important and controversial theologia whose work has inspired (and been criticised by) scholars acr notable for his Christocentric approach to theology and the di from this approach.

Key Thinker	
Name	Rudolf Bultmann
Born	1884
Died	1976
Key text	*New Testament and Mythology* (1941)
Why are they important?	Bultmann was one of the leading theologians of the twentieth c process of demythologisation and existentialist analysis of the N influential and deeply controversial within modern biblical scho

Introduction: How Should We Interpret Scripture?

As you are likely to now be appreciating after y ar o udy, the Bible is an incr one that has been pored over and in e countless ways. Yet, this presen scholars. How exactly should we e in erpreting the Bible? Should it be seen prim from which we aim t tract the life of Jesus as he truly lived? Or should we flawed in it an instead attempt to mine theological meaning from its page historical el s to the Bible may only be meaningful if they add depth or und

Beyond looking at the words of the Bible, there are countless debates around th common term you may encounter within these debates is **hermeneutics**. This is surrounding **interpretation** of texts in the humanities, and it is considered essen at least justify their approach to interpretation and why it is important when loo Bible. Now, hermeneutics can be quite a difficult field to initially learn about. The judge what is the right objective interpretation of a text. Instead, scholars are of of interpretation against our overall goals for interpretation.

Think for a moment about how we use the Bible in different contexts. Does the b
understand the life of Jesus examine scripture in the same way as the lay Christia
The answer is this is not likely. While their interests might overlap at times, there
way of interpreting a religious text. Many would even argue the historical details
underlying moral and spiritual teachings! So, immediately we encounter deep ar
we approach the Bible and what our goals should be when we do approach it.

At the minimum, we can begin by thinking about the different levels of understa
narrative. From these we can get a clearer sense of the different styles of herme
thinkers. For in comparison to the letters or other books in the New Testament,
clear. Are they meant to be primarily a historical account of the life of Jesus, or c
theological interpretation? In the former, we might exami[illegible]e Gospels from a
suggests. This is where we treat the narratives as [illegible]ory, with implicit mea
in time. Second, there is an '*authorial*' le[illegible]nderstanding. This is looking at h
have shaped the story to bring ou[illegible] theological meaning and make sure it i
addressed to.

Let's dwell [illegible]level for a moment. Authorial influence might be present in a
basic sense, it may just be the way historical sources are edited and arranged int
author was working with multiple sources and there would be no clear way to ju
what historical order they should be in and whether or not they should be worth
Jesus' life. Remember that the first Gospel is likely to have been composed deca
authors may well have been more radical in their approach, adding background
creative storytelling to join up these sources. Maybe even further still, they migh
that have no basis in history whatsoever.

But does all this matter? The third level of understanding we should consider is t
perspective of the reader, who may gain impressions, ideas, and insights that no
these may well be valid insights all the same that should not be discounted just b
the original authorial intention. This level is particularly important when we cons
Bible, which may present itself very differently depending on the background an
with it.

Different Forms of Biblical Criticism

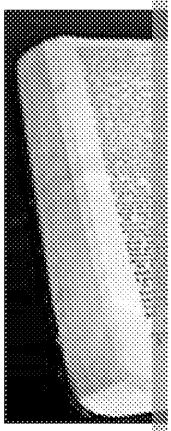
Before we go further into how we should engage with scripture, it is worth delvi
of hermeneutics (even if it might seem to be a little dry at first!). In particular, a
hermeneutical methods, known as the **historical-grammatical method** and the h
useful for distinguishing between what are more conservative and liberal approa
often share certain scholarly tools, but diverge in their goals, assumptions and id

Historical-grammatical: This method is primarily con[illegible]with discovering the
Christian text. However, it does so with a few [illegible]ground assumptions. The mos
passage is clearly intended to be po[illegible]taphorical, it should be taken to di
words, it should be interpre[illegible]*literally* true. However, this doesn't mean that
value. It is imp[illegible]op an understanding of the **historical context**, **gram**
of scripture[illegible]er to gain a full appreciation of its authorial meaning. Thus, the
with langua[illegible]tory and the culture of the author when interpreting it, even if
presents direct history throughout.

Historical-critical: In comparison, this method is concerned with a variety of aim
Like the historical-grammatical method, it wants to discover the text's original m
concerned with the author, but also the world behind the text. Thus, those using
want to understand how a text would have been received by different communi
reconstruct those communities and recipients and how we might learn about the
described by a Christian text. In other words, there is no assumption that scriptu

And we may well adopt various perspectives and critical tools that initially challe
meaning of Christian texts. Let's take a quick look once again at some of these to
historical-critical method:

- **Source Criticism** – This focuses on the search and analysis of different sourc
particular Christian text. The most well-known result of source criticism is th
studies have shaped our understanding of the Synoptic Gospels.
- **Form Criticism** – This involves breaking down a Christian text into different
examined according to the kind of genre or concept they embody. From this
how this genre or concept might have been interpreted within a particular S
how it might have been used by communities within this setting.
- **Redaction Criticism** – This involves analysing how a particular author or par
compiled, edited and modified their sources. Key to this is often to re
particular text was aimed towards and how the intentions of the author affe
the context of this community or tradition.
- **Literary Criticism** – In contrast to the other kinds of criticism defined, literar
primarily uses tools from literary theory to analyse the narrative and rhetor
examining it as a story first rather than a historical record. The aim is to unc
what meanings and teachings the author attempted to convey by their rete
to break down the nature of a historical community or text.



Out of all of these, literary criticism is the only one not contained in either the historical-grammatical or the historical-critical method. For what is key to note is that although both these major forms of biblical criticism emerged during the Enlightenment period, they began to break down at the beginning of the twentieth century for modern scholars. In many ways, what was once formalised as the historical-critical method has been refined into numerous individual forms of criticism, such as source, form and redaction criticism. Moreover, historical methods of biblical analysis more generally have given way to literary methods as it became increasingly recognised that individual bias easily taints historical interpretation of a text, especially one written so many years ago.

In a sense, what Albert Schweitzer once classified as the 'quest for the historical
once had in theology. However, this does not mean that theologians don't still re
and provide new insights into how Christian texts might reflect historical facts ab
written within and what kind of person Jesus might have been. What it instead r
a **pluralistic** approach to interpreting the Bible, where using different tools, meth
insights into one of the most studied texts throughout history.

However, you may well disagree! Throughout this section we will delve into som
methods and aims of biblical analysis. In doing so, you will hopefully gain a great
key perspectives on biblical hermeneutics and come to some of your own ideas a
interpretation of Christian texts.

Discussion Activity:
What do you believe is the most effective form of biblical criticism in deriving me
pairs or small groups.

The Different Senses of Scripture

We have covered a lot of ground in the introduction, so don't worry if you're fee
debate around biblical hermeneutics is vast and individuals spend their lives stud
school. For the moment though, we can take a step back from considering differ
consider the different broad approaches we might adopt towards the Bible. For
even while scholars might disagree on the right way to interpret scripture, there
the different levels of understanding we can assume when talking about a biblica
different levels broadly correspond to distinct approaches which attempt to ana
So, let's take a look at one of the first commonplace approaches to scripture in C

The Literal Approach

The literal approach to the Bible is at heart quite simple. These texts are treated as
detail events and teachings that are factually correct. Whether we look at the vir
resurrection, the underlying assumption of literalist interpretations is that one has to
having actually occurred, with any associated teachings also being taken at face
approach is obvious, as treating the Bible as a true historical account of var
thinkers give an easy route to understanding its meaning and how we should
lives today.

Take the concept of **prophecy**, for instance. Throughout the Gospels, a common
the Son of God, but the endpoint of prophecies made throughout the Old Testam
the Baptist. Under a literal approach, we can take the fulfilment of such prophec
prophets who foresaw the coming of Jesus were graced with supernatural foresi
predictions about the coming of a messiah who arrived in first-century Palestine
of interpretation also is that it is likely the disciples and early Church perceived th
Although there were different spiritual meanings projected onto his teachings ar
the Gospels under a literal interpretation is that Jesus definitively is the Messiah
prophecies about his coming.

We've seen this kind of literal approach in action in the introduction as part of th
method. Here, despite a variety of interpretative techniques being used, the em
directly representing historical events. We don't have to try to second-guess why
might have included various elements while writing. If an event is in the Gospels
event occurred and so was necessary to include in any proper account of Jesus' li
considering more abstract Christian concepts such as heaven and hell. If Jesus sp
or punishment, these words should be accepted as literally representing states o
symbolic or allegorical speech.

Assessing the Literal Approach

So, why should we question the literal approach to scripture? Well, the most obv
degree of figurative and metaphorical language used within the Bible. Take the '
John, where Jesus makes a series of figurative statements about his identity, ut
Bread of Life'. Should we literally accept that Jesus is bread? The answer is of cou
grammatical approach has noted that interpreters still accept that some languag
interpreted literally.

But how exactly do we tell what language is intended to be interpreted literally a
figuratively? Certainly, there may be grammatical clues, but if Jesus is routinely s
metaphors, could not the author of the Gospels be doing the same? Why should
interpreting Christian texts literally when so much of their content may be figura
accept that there are some elements which should not be interpreted literally, th
about any portion of scripture.

This problem is exacerbated also by the many contradictions between Christian t
contain many contradictions, whether they be about the teachings Jesus uttered
he took during his ministry. We can't make easy sense of these contradictions or
approach to the Gospels, and some critical insight may be needed about the aut
arranging their sources. There are times also when the authors simply get histor
Think again about the virgin birth narratives. Are these really historically credible
sense to interpret factually wrong statements in a literal manner?

Finally, we arrive at the conflicts between our modern understanding of the wor
itself. Take miracles, for instance. Should we really be interpreting events such a
literally true when science now would hold such actions to be impossible? In one
can just accept the miracles as supernatural events caused by Jesus possessing d
stick to our scientific guns and say that a literal approach to interpreting the Gos
with our modern knowledge of the world. If this is the case, it may be that a diffe
needed to fully grasp how the Gospels and other Christian texts might be meani

The Allegorical Approach

In contrast to the literal approach, the allegorical approach to interpreting script
and occurrences to have a deeper symbolic or metaphorical meaning. While such
more in modern times, it certainly isn't controversial. For as we noted, there are
am' sayings in John) where it does appear as if the authors of the Gospels are wr
creating symbolic meaning through the images and concepts they use. Similarly,
parables, concepts and symbols during his ministry in an attempt to generate de
among those who were listening to him.

But a key part of an **allegory** is that it is something that does not just have a sym
its nature is to some degree *hidden*. This means that the allegorical meaning of t
not be revealed through a straightforward literal reading of their text. Consider,
sheep and goats in the Gospel of Matthew:

> *'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he w
> throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate th
> as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep o
> his left.'* (Matthew 25:31–33 NRSV)

Here, if we take a literal approach to the passage, we might hold that there will b
people will be separated left and right. But is this exactly what is intended by the
by comparison is likely to argue that there are hidden meanings about judgemen
shepherd and a flock represents some deeper symbolic meaning about the natu
actions will impact our experience of the afterlife. Either way, what is key is that
allegorical approach to scripture is required to potentially look for these *hidden* m
simple reading of the text.

Assessing the Allegorical Approach

One of the key issues with the allegorical approach is that it isn't always clear w
particular passage or text might have. Although Jesus often takes in parables, or
teachings often appear straightforward. Thus, we arrive at two of the key trouble
The first is how we can tell whether a passage does in fact possess an allegorical
author or Jesus, and second how we can tell whether we are in fact extracting th
meaning from the passage.

The first problem to some extent is easy enough to overcome. Where we encoun
figurative language, we are likely to be encountering a conceptual discussion wh
enough to convey the deeper kinds of spiritual meaning intended by the text. Fo
don't make much sense when we examine them literally, so the natural conclusi

fact be looking for an allegorical meaning. Furthermore, we might even say that
history or factual content, we might be served best by looking for allegorical mea
events throughout the Gospel may highlight some deeper meaning to Jesus' min
the miracles actually occurred.

So, although it may not always be exactly clear what is allegorical, we are not com
analysing scripture. But how exactly do we know we've got the right allegorical me
question, especially when we are so far removed from the original communities, c
Gospels were written. The work of the **historical-critical method** is thus often linke
in order to understand the deeper meanings behind the Gospels and other biblica
reconstruct who they were written for and how these texts might have been unde

The trouble is of course that this process is far fro[illegible]ve. Bias and subjectiv
how careful we are with our reconstructio[illegible], even if we avoid simply
understanding or meaning onto t[illegible], the allegorical approach always fac
those favouring more lite[illegible]nes. The argument is no matter what we do
biases and id[illegible]nt[illegible]e, many of which the author may not have intended
through a l[illegible]terpretation.

Discussion Activity:
Is it ever possible to avoid bias when searching for allegorical meaning? Or can
objective meaning of a passage using the right kind of biblical criticism? Discuss i

The Moral Approach

The final broad approach we can use instead is the moral approach. This eschew
Bible but also does not take an allegorical understanding of its teachings. Instead
practical document or guide to life, which is primarily examined in order to unde
lives. At times this might encompass a kind of literal or allegorical understanding
overall commitment to either kind of interpretation where moral teaching is not
the miracle event the feeding of the five thousand:

> *Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loav
> giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the discip
> crowds. And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken p
> baskets full.* (Matthew 15:35–37 NRSV)

Here, the literal approach might interpret this as a historical event, a demonstra
allegorical approach might well look for deeper meaning in what such feeding m
fulfilment of earthly and spiritual desires. However, the moral approach would p
guidance can be gathered from this miracle event. Sim[illegible] we could derive a
with others, even when it might result in yourself ha[illegible]ess'. Or we might inter
compassion and faith to be essential fo[illegible]ian moral life. In either case, the
appreciation or interpretation of biblical passages, rather than a theological sear

Assessing the Moral Approach

The strengths of this moral approach are arguably clear. We abandon the often ar
theological meaning or interpretation and focus on how the Bible can help us live i
on interpreting moral principles, Christians can gain valuable moral guidance in the
question whether this focus is too narrow. Is it enough to read these kinds of mora
might we risk missing important theological elements that lend context and mean
instance, while the feeding of the five thousand illustrates the importance of chari
explain why these acts are good or important. Rather, the critic might contend tha
judgement, atonement and the afterlife, these moral concepts aren't rich or mean

Moreover, as we noted when discussing the literal approach, the Gospel writers
not to have interpreted scripture or Jesus' ministry in this manner. Instead, their
and as a community they probably did believe that Jesus' arrival held more than
humanity. Moreover, like the allegorical approach, we risk making interpretation
the moral meaning of certain passages isn't always clear. If we take the example
Samaritan, on the face of it we might simply hold it declares we should help othe
the historical context, where the Samaritans were often looked down upon by Je
meaning of the passage is transformed to 'one should help others regardless of t

However, as we move towards the end of this section, it is important to note tha
these approaches in different contexts. For the theologian seeking historical or t
approach may be necessary, but for the biblical scholar, it may prove too restrict
today, the literal or allegorical approaches may not be useful or pertinent, with t
required in order that proper moral guidance can be derived from biblical passag
shall see how these approaches in fact exist in the work of two thinkers and how th
prove deeply important to consider when considering how we should interpre

Activity:
Read the short parable the parable of the mustard seed, detailed in Matthew 1
main approaches listed above, detail how you believe they'd interpret this para
most accurate?

What Value Does Scripture Have?

In the last section, we analysed some broad approaches to scripture, each of wh
However, each of these still relies on examining the Bible as an authoritative doc
deep and revealing truths about the world. In other words, the Bible is automati
to Christians and to others seeking a spiritual understanding of the world. But wh
first place? Is the Bible not just another document written by human hands? Mig

Think for a moment about the **historical-critical method**. Often it is closely tied t
which attempts to recontextualise and understand the Bible from the vantage po
of the world. Yet, considering the deeply mythological nature of the Bible, this po
Christians. For at what point does our modern understanding of the world start t
interpretation of the Bible? If miracles cannot occur, what importance can the m
have for us today? If we can question the existence of concepts such as the soul,
afterlife in which our essence as human beings is preserved?

In other words, historical criticism of the Bible seems to undermine its value for C
face a fork in the road. Do they continue to assert the truth of the Bible and its te
conflicts with our modern scientific knowledge (**the literal approach**)? Do they se
meaning behind its passages which can cohere with this understanding (**the alleg
give up on such a search and instead focus on the practical benefits the Bible can
(**the moral approach**)?

In this sect[illegible] will turn to the thought of two major thinkers who sought to a
provide a way forward for modern biblical interpretation. And although their ori
how they arrive at very different conclusions and what implications these conclu

Karl Barth and Scripture as 'Witness'

Karl Barth was a Swiss theologian and perhaps one of the most influential Christian thinkers in the twentieth century. Yet, ironically, there is still extensive debate about where Barth actually stood on issues of biblical interpretation. This is partly because his views cannot be neatly slotted into any of the approaches we've analysed so far. Nor can they be easily understood from Barth's work itself. His most well-known work, *Church Dogmatics*, is four volumes and thousands of pages long, making grappling with his ideas an exercise in extreme patience! But despite this inaccessibility, we can detail the foundations of his approach to scripture and why he thought it necessary to readjust contemporary methods of biblical analysis.

At the time Barth became involved in [illegible] life at the start of the twentieth [illegible] becoming increasingly popular in [illegible] German universities where Barth studied. [illegible] theology tended to [illegible] or recontextualise the more mythological or supernat[illegible] as the miracles. Due to such criticisms, it often emphasised a more allegori[illegible] Bible. As a consequence, liberal theologians also often tended to endorse **natura**[illegible] God and religion are shaped more by human reason than faith in the Bible or oth[illegible] what tended to emerge was a much more rationally constructed picture of God t[illegible] contemporary scientific knowledge and historical knowledge of the Bible.

Although Barth was enmeshed in this intellectual environment, he came to find i[illegible] sense, this was due to the historical events happening around the Christian Chur[illegible] wars, in which many liberal Christians ended up supporting German military and[illegible] also came to believe that in a theological sense, liberal Christianity had become c[illegible] spiritual issues and had become wholly concerned with the human world. Such t[illegible] his 1919 *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,* which warned that a 'time o[illegible] liberal theology was becoming complacent. So, let's dig into Barth's attitude here[illegible] disillusionment with liberal Christianity informed his views on the nature and val[illegible]

Natural Theology, Idolatry and Revelation

We've noted that Barth rejected not only **liberal theology**, but also **natural theo**[illegible] this latter field in many guises. Famously, the cosmological and teleological argu[illegible] examples of natural theological reasoning. But why did Barth oppose such exerc[illegible] answer is in the question. For Barth, natural theology was a transparently *human* [illegible] theology is not one which truly reflects his being, especially if God is transcenden[illegible] commonly claim. For if God is actually transcendent, there must be a deep divide[illegible] world, one which human intellect cannot reasonably or reliably bridge.

In this sense, Barth is attempting to express how [illegible] alien God must be to say God can't communicate with human [illegible] Rather, it is pointing out that th[illegible] way due to the gulf in being and understanding between God and human beings. [illegible] omniscient, powerful [illegible] how can human rational minds actually compr[illegible] even to cap[illegible] foundations of our world, let alone a being outside o[illegible] refers to th[illegible] of natural theology to capture God as **idolatry**. For the proce[illegible] conceptualise God doesn't result in truly understanding God himself, but rather [illegible] human construct of what we wish God to be. Thus, natural theologians are argua[illegible] Second Commandments and worshipping a false God (see Exodus 20:1–17).

This might appear strange at first, for surely human reason exists due to creation[illegible] But if we follow liberal and natural theology to its natural conclusion, we end wit[illegible] perspective on the Bible and a God divorced from traditional Christian concepts. [illegible] crafting a new God that is just a product of our intellect or imagination. Yet this s[illegible] can't know God through reason, intellect or imagination, how could we ever pos[illegible]

Barth's Calvinist roots show themselves. For like Calvin, Barth argued that God is through his **grace**. It is God alone who reveals himself to human beings and this cannot be replicated through any kind of human endeavour.

Moreover, this revelation is not a universal enterprise. It is concentrated in a sing holds that despite the protests of many Christians, there is no true revelation ou we can truly learn about God is through Jesus. In this way, Barth's theology is de at the centre of all proper theological enquiry, and it is God alone who reveals hi cannot come to revelation by historically researching and interpreting Jesus' 'rea a kind of allegory. Think for a moment about passages such as Luke 10:22:

> *'All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows w Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son c* (Luke 10:22 NRSV)

Here, Jesus' teaching seems to [illegible] support Barth's interpretation if ta are of course other interpretations of this passage). But if this is the case then a scriptural p[illegible]s emerge. Most importantly, we are left with a dilemma when we can't go [illegible] time and observe Jesus' teachings and life ourselves, but neit to reconstruct what we believe is the 'historical Jesus'. Here is where Barth's ide contends that ultimately human beings should give up searching for God. Instead themselves to be *found* by God.

The Value of Scripture as Witness

Barth's theology, as we've analysed to this point, is not a far cry from traditional many critics have characterised Barth as conservative when analysing his though revealed theology over natural theology. Yet, this categorisation also misses a gr work, especially around the value of scripture. For unlike conservatives, or even hold that scripture is inerrant. True to form, he ultimately insists that the Bible is be? It was written by human beings, and he accuses Christians who view it as ine as they are still idolising human work rather than searching for God himself.

Yet, the problem is, if the Bible is inherently flawed then how can it be a good ve the clever part. Barth argues that although the Bible is not revelatory itself, it is a Jesus Christ and his **proclamation** to the world. In this sense, the Bible becomes

Let's spell this out a bit more. What the notion of medium means for Barth is tha revelatory. However, they become revelatory when it is read by a human being w grace. They, in a miraculous sense, temporarily transform and allow God to com beings. This might sound a little strange and Barth himself often illustrates this p such as the one below:

> *The Bible is God's Word to the extent that God [illegible]ses it to be His Word, to through it;* CD I/1, 109

What this means is that the Bible is not itself as an object the 'Word of God'. Rat the reader, [illegible]m [illegible] the **Word of God** when read. It is God who searches for h through the [illegible] and the Church) and who chooses to reveal himself through it preserves the one-way relationship between human beings and God, while also of the Bible for Christians. For it is only the Bible that is a witness to Jesus Christ, only the Bible is capable of mediating revelation between God and human being

The Implications of Barth's Thought

It is perhaps easier to see now why Barth's thought has a bit more of a radical edg
this idea of scripture as witness, we arrive at some pretty interesting implications.
Barth's views affect interpretation of the Bible. For what becomes apparent is that
only on its words but how a reader engages with those words. Barth has much to s
be good **exegesis**; the process of discovering the right meaning of the Bible. Consid
Torrance, a well-known scholar on Barth, that details his attitude towards interpre

> *Biblical exegesis takes place therefore in a strenuous disciplined attempt to
> the Word of God speaking to us, to read what the Word intends or denotes
> interrupting it or confusing it with our own speaking, for in faithful exegesis
> be told what we cannot tell ourselves.*
> (Torrance, *Karl Barth: Introduction to Early Th[illegible]* 2004, p. 22)

The idea as before is not to read our (human) ideas into scripture. That is w
natural theology in the first place. Rather, Barth almost encourages a childlike ap
the reader a[illegible]s a certain degree of humility when engaging with it. One key c
sign of heal[illegible]esus at the Pool of Bethesda, a key story in John 5. In this chap
bathe in a pool, believing it has healing powers. However, contrary to his expecta
heals him. The traditional interpretation of this story holds it to demonstrate the
points out the crippled man wouldn't have been healed at all if he had not gone
possibility of being healed. In a similar manner, the Bible is a medium or place th
encounter Jesus if they too approach it with openness.

But how should we deal with the many historical inaccuracies in the Bible? Well,
Barth argues that we shouldn't discount them, nor should we wholly endorse the
should read the Bible as if it were a story, rather than a strict historical account.
trying to adjudicate as to what parts of the Bible are human and which are a witn
focus on reading its stories receptively, trying to acknowledge and understand ho
encounter with the divine. For we are not trying to historically reconstruct Jesus'
communicate with God himself. The Bible is thus not meant to be treated as a ki
unique theological document with the power to reveal God.

In fact, Barth notes that there are two distinct events in scripture which might be
history'. These are the creation of the universe and the resurrection of Jesus Chr
Barth's point when using this phrase is that neither of these events is comprehen
they be meaningfully imagined by the human mind. Thus, they cannot be dealt w
by weighing up textual evidence or testimony. There simply is no way of rationali
exist beyond our intellectual capabilities. But despite such issues, the challenge f
that these events happened all the same, even if they seem impossible to grasp

Evaluating Barth's Thought

From our analysis of Barth's ideas, it[illegible]ar[illegible]his world view doesn't fit neatly
approach to the Bible, and is[illegible]ly rejects each as unsatisfactory. What Ba
prevent what he sa[illegible]tianity's descent into idolatry. This is clearest when
earlier nine[illegible]century critics of religion such as Ludwig Feuerbach, who Bart
and when te[illegible]g his students. For what Feuerbach argued was that God was n
way for human beings to give their own desired qualities and characteristics to a
true way to study religion in human beings was through an anthropological appr
kind of human abstraction.

Feuerbach might seem a strange character for Barth to cite, but he saw his appro
theology. If we draw upon our human reason to talk about the Christian God, the
The only way to avoid this for Barth was to develop a form of theology that reco
makes himself known to human beings. It is then up to human beings to study th

revealed himself to them, not to try to reconstruct God based upon what human
can't be reduced to an allegory or a set of morals. Nor can we develop a literally
have to locate a new kind of Christian theology with the witness to revelation th

So, what are the problems with Barth's thought? Well, for the liberal theologian,
speculative than theirs. For one of the central claims of liberal theology is that if
nature, then it is coherent to suggest that God would have made himself at least
faculties such as reason, which are by most Christian's standards the faculties th
animals. The task of the liberal theologian is thus not to make God human projec
true essence of God using the faculties that God gave us. In fact, one can suggest
revelation hinges upon a philosophical argument based on the nature of divine t
ramifications of theorists such as Feuerbach!

But these considerations are unlikely to f[illegible]rth who is based in the tradition
ultimately proves more difficult f[illegible] to explain how human beings can co
revelation of the Bible in [illegible] does not violate the epistemic gap between
transcende[illegible]. L[illegible]ak this thought down a bit. If God is the only source
and God ha[illegible]mmunicate this revelation to human beings, then how does Go
a way that is [illegible]derstandable for our fallible minds? For traditional Calvinists, this
principle of accommodation, the view that God naturally reveals himself in a way
minds and does not truly reveal himself.

But if this is true, then the revelation we are getting from the Bible is not really r
still seems to be a kind of human projection, albeit one that God controls throug
Barth hasn't really solved the problems that liberal theology grapples with. What
was assert that in some important way, revelation and God were identical. So, w
in Jesus Christ, we are in fact getting an unobstructed view of what God really is.
strange implications, the most prominent being that the life of Jesus Christ isn't a
know important theological teachings but rather a kind of performance or repres
Altogether this defies the way we traditionally view the Bible, and theologians to
exactly what Barth meant when he talked about God in this way.

Perhaps most importantly though, it reinforces a kind of mystical approach to Go
to understand from our modern perspectives. Whether or not you agree with Ba
radical position on the Bible, it is difficult to deny that it is hard to square with ei
Bible or a critical approach to its underlying message. We are constantly having t
treating our understanding of the Bible as a real understanding of God or as the
shortcomings. Altogether, while Barth might have made some good criticisms of
implement his view when analysing biblical teaching itself.

Discussion Activity:
Does Barth succeed in establishing the Bible as a[illegible]es[illegible], accessible witness to
the problem of biblical interpretation a[illegible]en Christians from developing a
'Word of God'? Discuss in pairs and [illegible] groups.

Rudolf Bultmann and Demythologising Scripture

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) was a German Lutheran theologian and perhaps one of the most important figures in biblical studies in the twentieth century. Although he was a very radical and controversial figure to begin with, many of his texts are now recognised as foundational when analysing the Bible. Yet, his writings can be difficult to work out at the beginning and easy to get wrong, especially when it comes to his famous detailing of the process of '**demythologisation**', which will be central to understanding his overall beliefs about the value of scripture.

What's key to note though when comparing Barth and Bultmann is that they bot theology. Bultmann in fact was greatly influenced by Barth's early critiques, and they later grew apart, partly due to their differing theological opinions. For like B liberal theology was effectively a dead end. If we follow through with a rational a Christianity, we effectively end up with a religion possessing little to no substanc somewhat shallow, just reflecting whatever cultural opinions the reader possess

However, Bultmann didn't really want to do away with liberal theology like Barth needed somewhat refocusing. It had to end an obsession with discovering the **hi** instead on what the Gospels actually proclaim and how it can be related to mode advances in historical and sociological knowledge of the world of Jesus, Bultman to arrive at a true account of what happened during Jesus' life. The Gospels by a locations or dates, vary wildly in their reports, and are not corroborated by othe important sense, historical analysis of the Bible is important to a degree when de as an end in itself.

However, Bultmann also just thought the quest for the historical Jesus was unnece to build a new way to interpret scripture, built partially upon his fascination with t

Existentialism, Mythology and Christianity

Bultmann was deeply influenced by the work of the philosopher Martin Heidegg influencing the field of philosophy generally known as **existentialism**. It is a broa approach, which focuses on the dimensions and nature of human existence as a the world. Most importantly, existentialists tend to view the human person as fu world', with every person a free (though often unwilling) agent who has the abili course of life. A basic principle for an important later existentialist, Jean Paul Sar precedes essence'. It emphasises that the nature of human beings is less importa

So why is this important to understand Bultmann? Well, as soon as we begin to foc quite frightening realisations emerge. If we are fundamentally thrown into the wor guidance or purpose to our lives. And as self-aware beings such freedom is quite di grappling with our freedom is one of the most significant parts of living, such that man freedom and allow their lives to be overpowered by elements of their nature, culture, or other existentialist theologians, Christianity can be a real and meaningful answer to

The problem is that liberal theology, in its state at the time, could not provide that we possess what can be characterised as a **modern scientific world view**. W naturalistic explanations of phenomena and analyse the world in light of these e **ancient mythological world view** of the authors of the Bible. Theirs was a world about supernatural forces were commonplace and expected. The trouble is that mythological beliefs provided comfort, especially around religious topics such as audiences cannot take such comfort from these beliefs, ensconced as we are in o are perhaps made even more anxious when dwelling on our existence and have material comforts we can find.

Moreover, whatever we do, we can't force the mythological world view of script put, we've moved on and trying to find a rationally or scientifically satisfactory v So, what should we do instead? Bultmann argued that we have to find the essen the philosophical teachings and stories which we scientifically minded people ca its meaning through mistranslations or misunderstandings. This, Bultmann argue process he termed **demythologisation**.

Demythologising the Bible

So far, we've seen how we're at a bit of a crossroads. If we are firmly stuck withi cannot make proper sense of a text written by those with a mythological world v can scripture have for modern audiences? Trying to find the historical Jesus or a can only either distort its message or reflect our own existing attitudes. The **approach** to scripture. But we also can't do what fan does and just read the Bi minds cannot reconcile the myths of the Bible with our search for naturalistic ex impossible to interpret the Bible with any kind of **literal** or straightforward appro

So Bultmann offers a kind of allegorical approach to the Bible instead. He hol process of **demythologisation**, whereby we strip scripture of its antiquated myth its underlying messages transparent and relevant to modern audiences. This is n looking for moral messages. Bultmann is always keen to stress that demythologi theologically rich ideas, particularly those which give guidance and wisdom on h Christianity can provide a proper answer or response to existentialist issues, with attachments to material things and identities.

> *Myths express the knowledge that man is not master of the world and his which he lives is full of riddles and mysteries and that human life also is ful*
> Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology,* 1958, p. 19

Yet, Bultmann's ideas about demythologisation have been difficult to grasp for m Bultmann is not arguing we should get rid of myths in the Bible, in the way that l sought to. In fact, Bultmann holds that myths are deeply important to human life the meaning behind myths, not take them at face value. So, demythologisation d quest for the historical Jesus nor a strict historical reconstruction of the commun process that aims to make the messages or meanings of a text relevant to audien which the text was composed.

So how does this relate to Christian scripture? Well, Bultmann holds that the cen Bible is contained in Jesus' teachings and proclamations, which Bultmann appro word for preaching. While the Bible is a basic record of this preaching, its clarity Christians creating myths around the figure of Jesus (such as his divinity), which accessing the true meaning of the kerygma in the Bible. However, this doesn't m wholly concerned with mythologising. At times they did the exact opposite, such apocalyptic expectation of Christian follo[illegible]ep[illegible]sented in the theological dif works in the New Testament. The[illegible]ices, Bultmann believes, are the resu downplaying the possibility [illegible]nd Coming.

> *Dem[illegible]is[illegible]has its beginning in the New Testament itself, and therefo demy[illegible]sing today is justified',* Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology,*

But how does this process of demythologisation work in action? Does it not requ most of what we read in scripture as false? For Bultmann, balancing our perspec of myth is a difficult and careful process. Take the resurrection, for example. We doubting that such a supernatural event could have occurred. However, for the meaning of the resurrection act and what it means for our lives, we should read resurrection did occur. However, this is not the same as trying to somehow belie happen historically!

So, the resurrection is not a literal event. Yet it occupies an important part of the meaning to Jesus' teaching throughout, showing that if we live like Jesus, we will and, most importantly, **authentically**. To live life authentically is the aim of the e according to one's own choices and purpose and not according to the roles, char The story of Jesus' resurrection, therefore, represents a deeper victory over **inau** Christian teaching can be a meaningful answer to our existentialist problems. If v Christian life, we can't simply discard elements of the Bible due to historical prec simply pretend that the resurrection literally occurred and base our lives on this

However, it would be wrong to also suggest that Bultmann is advocating some ki choices. Bultmann's approach is fundamentally different in scope and aim. For h draw out theologically rich kerygma that is relevant and accessible to modern au simply identifying moral messages Jesus conveyed or just recognising the goodne overarching moral message behind events such as the resurrection, atonement a resolutely *theological* events that carry a deeper meaning for Christians beyo approached with Bultmann's method of demythologisation to find what this dee for religious understanding in the modern world.

The Implications of Bultmann's Thought

Compared to Barth, the implications of Bultmann's thought are perhaps a bit cle directly denying we should endorse a literal interpretation of the Bible. Equally, l approach, whereby we eliminate myth completely and simply look for underlyin also can't simply be equated with an allegorical approach to the Bible. For the pr simply looking for an underlying meaning, a correct form of exegesis that gives u scripture. What Bultmann requires is that the meanings we unearth become rele have to serve a specific theological purpose in connecting the kerygma of the Bib

Let's spell this out a bit more. Say I suggest that we take an allegorical approach the underlying message is that God is the spiritual saviour of humankind. It's a b assume it's correct for the purpose of this argument. What Bultmann might argu ultimately still not appropriate for modern audiences with their scientific world v this interpretation, they might simply say 'well that makes no sense because the spiritual realm'. Such an interpretation still rests on the old myth that there is th world which are connected in our daily lives. As such, it cannot be truly relevant

So, it's clear that a direct allegorical approach doesn't quite hit the mark when w arguing. At the same time, it is uncertain what kind of kerygma taken from the B audiences. We will explore this problem a little more in the next section, but Bul rejects both a mythological and a scientific world view, and instead tries to carve perspective that can address the existential questions other world views cannot, charting a similar course to Barth. Both are attempting to find a new way forwar world. For Barth of course this is to reaffirm the centrality of revelation in Christ, the importance of a contemporary kerygma relevant to modern audiences.

Bultmann's arguments are just as controversial as Barth's in many ways. Fo demythologised kerygma, we also seem to imagine a very different way of interp implementing it in our daily lives. For example, we might abandon traditional litu endorse such a mythological world view or perhaps just transform them into a fo In many ways, the development of Christianity arguably reflects such transforma and interpretation of the Eucharist, different denominations have changed the f sacrament to reflect the beliefs of their congregations, often because it is percei meaningful in light of contemporary beliefs. But naturally, this creates a tension, more when we evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Bultmann's thought.

Evaluating Bultmann's Thought

One problem that we've seen emerge from Bultmann's approach is how to reconc the Bible with ones that grant a central role to demythologisation. For we can reas the world views of modern people? For scholars such as Bultmann, the ways in wh often very different from ordinary people. Moreover, there are still just as many a there is a spiritual dimension to the world, which is at least partially mythological i actually need demythologisation to make the stories and teachings of the Bible rel

The general continuing popularity of religion across the world might suggest not science now plays in our everyday lives, there are millions of Christians across th meaning in the traditional myths of the Bible, and in this sense, perhaps do not n their world views. Of course, there are plenty of more sci c Christians who m continuing popularity of traditional or even funda ta Christianity takes the Bultmann's argument. The most we might h le say is that for certain group demythologisation might be an im cess to help them connect with the perhaps not a universal re n to create a modern kerygma.

Equally, Bu fa es another problem from supporters of a historical approa recall, Bultm gued that the quest for a historical Jesus was ultimately fraug be truly recovered. Yet, the last century since Bultmann's first statement of this a progress in understanding the historical and sociological background of first-cen have been like and how his message might have been received. Naturally, there questions, but in the view of many New Testament scholars, researchers really h understanding who Jesus really was.

If this is the case, then the argument can be made that Bultmann's specific proce necessary. Instead, we can embrace a scientific world view and look for the Jesu Bultmann would say, rather than just his 'thatness'. We can look for the Jesus wh important moral and spiritual teachings that modern Christians can embrace, no preached and was crucified. Altogether, Bultmann may have just jumped the gu searching for the historical Jesus was a fruitless endeavour. Even if we can't arriv able to develop a picture that not only coheres with a scientific world view but t importance of Jesus' teachings. In this sense, Bultmann's focus on kerygma migh the Bible can retain its relevance for modern audiences!

Discussion Activity:
Do you believe demythologisation is capable of making the Bible relevant to mo result in the Bible becoming a text devoid of Christian identity? Discuss in pairs o

Modern Approaches to Biblical Interpretation

So far, we have looked at three broad ways of approachi e Bible and the wo figures who attempted to craft new ways of inter ristian teaching. As p out some key drawbacks with each appr ot how each might not fully re and dwell upon when we read scr t Moreover, it appears that the complexi deep variation and incon s em to indicate that there might not be a str its essential ain er it be mythological, allegorical or even just moral. Bultmann l t this problem, with both attempting to chart a new path forw never quite ping the traditional issues associated with biblical exegesis.

While many modern scholars still find themselves inspired by the work of these tw endorse a broad **pluralism** when it comes to biblical interpretation. This term ackn present, there cannot be a wholly authoritative approach to analysing scripture. In a variety of approaches, all of which carry the possibility of generating new insight In this section we will examine four different modern approaches, picking out key significance and relevance for Christians today. Furthermore, we will look at how t with each other and whether they support and refute other methods for analysing

Rational Approaches

We begin first by talking about **rational** methodologies for examining the Bible. W analysed these in part in our discussion of Bultmann and Barth, both of whom wer responding to the spiritual crises they believed had been caused by the rising prom of **liberal theology**. For a rational approach to the Bible is one of the defining mark liberal theology, both past and contemporary. It holds that biblical interpretation s always be made to cohere with our rational, scientific understanding of the world. practice, this usually means discarding elements of biblical narratives that affirm th existence of supernatural elements, powers and events.

The Role of Philosophy and Science

It is important to note that liberal theologians do not usually perform such a proce approach is informed by a mixture of contemporary philosophy and science whic in the other sections of your Religious Studies course. For example, the problem necessarily benevolent and all-powerful in the traditional sense, or at least does not i manner sup[illegible] by traditional Christians. Similarly, the theory of evolution cal creation in [illegible] and the belief that God created human beings directly in his problems, the rational theist recognises that the strength of these philosophical they are fundamentally required to re-evaluate the way they interpret the Bible

So, what does the rational theist look for in scripture? Well, there are various pe depending on the beliefs held by the scholar in question. In the Enlightenment p much more fashionable to believe in **deism**, the view that although God exists a not intervene in creation nor is his continual power or action required to mainta terms of scripture, this means that events in the Bible where God directly appea individuals cannot have happened, and perhaps most importantly, the resurrecti occurred either. If we thus strip out such supernatural forms of intervention, wh set of moral and philosophical insights into the nature of God and his being.

Importantly, liberal theologians may still have a strong belief in salvation and life to develop accounts that cohere with a modern scientific perspective. For examp argues that life after death involves God creating a 'replica' of our earthly mater assertion that the afterlife requires the existence of souls. Hick also argues that t us to **religious pluralism**, the recognition that Christianity does not hold the excl salvation. Other religions may be experiencing the same God in different forms. Hick's assertions as too radical, instead asserting that human beings may enter a death which is inaccessible so long as we remain in our physical bodies.

Reason in Biblical Analysis

It is not always the case that such philosophical and scientific considerations exp to biblical interpretation. We've talked a bit about the 'quest' for the historical Je locate what Jesus' life actually looked like usually involves the assumption that human life. In other words, we must initially assume that history is uniform to simply took it to be the case that Jesus was a divine figure then it would hardly b life! Thus, in many ways the rational approach is tied to the quest for the historic biblical scholars practising Christianity, for the purposes of their studies they not divine as part of this quest. The rational approach, therefore, may be **metho** philosophical or scientific.

We will explore this discussion further when we look at historical approaches to for the moment it is useful to see here how these two approaches may overlap. the Bible then we are also arguably trying to understand the actual historical eve necessary means to uncover the real **universal values** given by scripture that co scientific and philosophical beliefs. Otherwise, supernatural elements might still Bible and its underlying message.

Problems with the Rational Approach

For those scientifically minded, it might appear as if the rational approach is the o
looking for an interpretation of the Bible that doesn't contradict the evidentially s
recognised throughout the scientific community? Well, this potential strength of t
some issues with a stringent focus on reason, many of which we've partially expl
and Bultmann. For, as both these thinkers noted, the project of liberal theology s
version of religion once one follows it through to its natural conclusions. Either w
Bible down to a set of moral messages that could be taught outside the Christian
God that reflects what we psychologically wish God to be, not what he actually is

We can think about this in a few ways. The first might be to look at Christian trad
today, which still largely adheres to the rites, rituals and beliefs held by Christians
this tradition is often what is thought of *as* Christianity itself. If we strip the supe
away, we also strip away much of this tradition and along with it many of the tra
from the Bible. This doesn't mean that such a process is wrong, just that we end
of Christianity at the end of this might be closer perhaps to the beliefs and pra

Yet if we take Barth and Bultmann as examples, this stripped-back version of Chr
for example, argues in part that it is the challenge of the Christian faith to open o
God through the Bible as a witness to revelation. As such, one has to suspend on
understand its message. For Bultmann, on the other hand, the rational approach
the real existential questions of life, which the Bible and its kerygma is uniquely e
we refashion its myths for a modern audience. In both cases the rational approa
importance of Christianity and its myths are for religious audiences.

We can also question the rational approach in a similar manner when we look at
perfectly rational view to believe in the existence of a deistic God that does not i
exactly is the point of scripture which details a wide variety of cases where God i
words, if we are only looking for naturalistic explanations of the world, how can s
science is much better equipped? The rational approach may not really give a me
scripture at all, instead just making it obsolete altogether! For the atheistic or ag
but for the Christian it is probably not.

Historical Approaches

Let's take a step back now. We saw how the rational approach can be considered
was from a scientific and philosophical vantage point, where our pre-existing wo
interpret scripture. However, the second was much more methodological, taking
view of scripture that naturally sidelined theological questions in favour of objec
approach did not explicitly deny the possibility that supernatural events occurred
assume that these events occurred from the outset when studying the Bible, in o
remain unbiased when trying to locate the actual, historical events of scripture.

This is the kind of thought pattern that underlies the historical approach. Those f
original historical events behind the Bible through a variety of methods, many of
throughout your studies. Some key examples include form criticism, redaction cr
each of these cases, though, the scholar is typically attempting to strip the theolo
to not only identify what the actual historical events were but also how these we
throughout different sources and compositions. Thus, one is not seeking to ident
occurred but also trying to understand what the actual world of the Bible looked
develop deeper insights into the teachings and events of scripture.

You will perform this historical approach yourself throughout this course compa
crucifixion and resurrection, or ethics in the Gospels. Even in Christian preaching
used to strengthen the understanding and meaning of Christian teaching. As suc
importance of the historical approach, at least in a broad sense. Yet for all its stre
criticised those who develop an over-reliance on historical analysis, and in the ne
take at a look at some of the issues with prioritising history in biblical interpretat

Problems with the Historical Approach

One major issue with the historical approach is what we might call the **epistemic** rejection of the quest for the historical Jesus for a moment. He noted that ultima Jesus and the relative paucity of historical sources about his life means we'll nev or his life was actually like. This is a sincere problem for biblical scholars, even to this companion, the biblical authors weren't exactly objective historians trying to life as accurately as possible. They were writing with a religious purpose in mind, that served a theological purpose for their respective communities. In fact, throu the notion that we should try to capture history objectively was barely considere retelling of historical stories, it was often to serve some present motive the histo

Now, we can of course use the texts themselves to di[illegible] motives of the Gospel authors, but this is alwa[illegible] Essentially, we are trying to discover the inn[illegible] individuals 2,000 years ago and then use this understanding to uncover historical e[illegible] the character of a person we also know very [illegible]. This is why Bultmann said the quest for the historical Je[illegible] a fruitless endeavour. We're never really going to understand who Jesus was. What is really important for Bultmann instead is that we capture the meaning of his preaching, or **kerygma**.

But is this so bad? Can't we just get closer towards a historical understanding of understanding his life? Well, even this process carries a few problems. A quick su the Gospels reveals that while there is some agreement about the basic circumst also fundamentally disagree profoundly about many key aspects of his ministry a problem with the historical approach. Without good historical sources, we canno beliefs, wishes and desires onto the Gospel texts. In one sense, we will always be natural imposition of modern ideas onto very different historical eras.

But we will also be guilty of favouring particular interpretations of history that w might be the strict Christian favouring a conservative, traditional understanding political, secular individual favouring a radical understanding instead. But the oth is linked to this issue is that even if we do discover the real historical Jesus, how us today, enmeshed in a very different mindset and set of circumstances? As Bul are fundamentally separate from the mythological perspectives of first-century J just may not be able to develop compelling narratives and teachings which inspi and instead may produce an accurate, but bland and irrelevant, account of Jesus

Sociological Approaches

We can now turn to some more intriguing approaches to the Bible. One of these scripture which, although similar to the historical approach in many ways, uses a methodologies to analyse the development of Christian tradition. For the startin to the Bible is to look at the structures, views, and patterns of human activity at and use these to develop a deeper understanding of both the texts themselves a written for. The aim thus is not to uncover who the historical Jesus was but inste were, how they acted as a distinctive group and what their social relationships w

This very much fits the natural remit of sociology, which at heart attempts to be behaviour. Initially, sociological approaches to the Bible proved popular in the ea arguably been since the 1970s that the discipline has matured. What prop that in light of researchers having so few real historical sources about the life of to study what communities were like and how they operated in the first century of how the natural religious impulses within human beings responded to the mes religion was able to spread so fast in particular communities.

Such study is important because much of religious life back in the first centu academic study of texts such as the Bible. There was much more emphasis on pu traditions, where individuals learnt of new ideas and beliefs in communal spaces everyday life of people in the first century through social analysis can give greate the historical approach is often seeking to understand. This means that in some historical approaches can work in tandem. But the sociological approach is often broader picture of the emergence of Christianity and how this emergence confo behaviours and structures.

Problems with the Sociological Approach

For all its virtues, the sociological approach is limited in a number of ways. Altho good explanations for why Christianity grew so quickly in certain communities an behaviours of early Christians, it faces similar epistemic issues to the historical ap know we're not projecting a modern understanding of the human religious impu assume people have a similar world view back then to now, we might well make kinds of structural analysis onto communities they do not belong to. On the othe kind of shared connection between the present and the past, we might well stru religious social behaviours that enabled Christian communities to grow so fast.

But there are also specific problems with sociological analysis. Often the disciplin patterns of behaviour in certain communities to draw conclusions about the influ specific texts or in the growth of religious ideas. Yet, it may well be that it is spec circumstances that better explain the actual growth of Christianity rather than so principle. For instance, scholars debate greatly the extent to which the sacking o had an impact on the growth of Christianity, or its theological direction, as it spl These kinds of historical factors are not easily accommodated within sociological a problem when analysing, say, the composition of the Gospels within early Christ

The other p similar to this is that it can also tend to overlook the importa Christianity. By focusing on communities, we potentially obscure the impact that St Paul had on the early Church and the composition of the Gospels. This is parti analysis begins with a set of principles or ideas that exist outside of scripture itse directly to Christian texts to resolve issues and are potentially stuck with an appr many generalities about what were the most important influences on early Chris noted that most taking a sociological approach to biblical interpretation are awa such rarely claim that sociology can provide complete answers to difficult histori

Literary Approaches

The final approach we shall consider is the literary approach to the Bible. While i
it appears in other kinds of approaches, it has grown significantly since in the 19
heart, it analyses the Gospels and other texts as if they were pieces of literature,
This is interesting first and foremost when we think about the fact that it is likely
intending their books to be just objects of academic study or manuals of ethics. I
news', they were specifically telling a story about Jesus' life, and it is significant t
fundamentally seek to tell the same core narrative in different ways. This implies
only was important material missing from their sources, but they had the ability
way that had not been heard before.

So, what does the literary approach involve? Well, first and foremost, it analyses
composition and writing of the Gospels. This can range from looking at the narra
particular Gospel to looking at specific literary concepts such as drama, irony and
used within all the canonical Gospels. One specific method that has often proved
criticism, which analyses the stories in the Gospels and how different parts are c
of a story. This kind of criticism we shall see proves particularly useful in analysin
conflicts in the Gospel of John later on in this companion.

But for the moment, let's think a little bit more about how literary analysis can g
For one important thing that may well have been on the Gospel writers' minds is
that occurred in Jesus' life but a meaningful portrayal of these events. In other w
just want to tell a story, but a *good story*. For if your intention is to convert peop
educate them on it, then a sure-fire way to keep their attention is by writing som
than boring. In fact, one might say the growth of Christianity and its persistent in
partly due to the story of Jesus being told in such an arresting manner by the Go
ministry, death and rebirth is a motif now found in plenty of stories, not just bec
appeal but because it has such precedent in Christian literary tradition.

Thus, if we use literary analysis to examine different parts of the Gospel, we can
to form a bigger narrative or idea. Moreover, there are specific parts of the Gosp
particularly to this kind of analysis. Most notably, the **parables** are essentially sto
the rhetoric, structure and metaphors employed in parables, we can look for nar
message of the Gospel they are contained within. Moreover, it can help us unde
are so different. For it may not be that the Gospel writers used fundamentally di
each tried to shape the events of Jesus' life to a story which they thought would
their audiences.

Problems with the Literary Approach

The appeal of the literary approach is easy to see. It's flexible and can potentially
the writers composed their works and how their particular lives could impact a reade
much of the Gospels, if not the whole Bible, is being written in a narrative form, it
examine them as pieces of literature. Yet, the literary approach has some drawb
once we dig a bit deeper into how we implement methods such as narrative criti
important, the Gospels are also much more than a story. They are intended to co
to the audience and we have to assess to what degree these truths take precede

Think for a moment about the Gospel of Luke. As we shall see later on, there is s
to which Luke can be thought of as the 'historian' he self-identifies as at the begi
this label to Luke, then the literary approach may only carry us so far. For the his
story but to relay information about historical events to their audience. The spec
information can be debated, but at some level we will have to assess what sourc
assessed these sources and to what extent a particular passage is representative
author's storytelling powers. Of course, we can still cast doubt on Luke's self-ide
himself as a historian may well be a kind of rhetorical flourish used to give legitim

Nonetheless, this example illustrates the complexities in using the literary appro
question the degree to which Christians can find meaning in assessing the Bible a
Christians are interested in discovering both the historical truths behind biblical
understanding of God and the world. If we think about Barth for a moment, then
since Christ is the ultimate mediator of God's revelation, we cannot treat the Bib
rather have to view it as a real witness to revelation itself. In other words, what
interpreting the Bible are the real truths behind it and so establish a relationship
simply may not fully accommodate this desire if we end up treating scripture as

How Should We Interpret the Bible Today?

By now, you should be swimming in interpretative possibi[illegible] when thinking ab
come into play throughout the rest of this compa[illegible] you may even recogni
Year 1 studies. But the primary question[illegible] at the end of this section are 'W
approaches to biblical interpretation?' and 'Should we adhere to just one approa
Both these questions are[illegible] conceptual. They have a deep impact on how
of the schis[illegible] occurred between groups of Christians find their roots i
interpreting[illegible]ble. In fact, one of the greatest differences between the Catho
their level of adherence to variable kinds of biblical interpretation and the impor

Yet, when we looked at the modern approaches to biblical interpretation, we no
and weaknesses to each. While denominations often hold strong beliefs about th
Bible, the same is not always true of biblical scholars. While their work often inv
method to interpret the Bible, recent trends have seen scholars recognising the
methods, thus at least implicitly endorsing a **pluralistic** perspective on biblical in
see this if we analyse historical and literary criticism together. While it may be us
behind figures and events in the Bible, this can obscure the overall literary patte
On the other hand, only looking for literary techniques and concepts can equally
historical investigation into the meaning of particular passages.

Simply put, the strengths of one approach might help solve the weaknesses of an
such as literary and sociological interpretations of the Bible don't often find thei
Christian tradition. While throughout the Christian world, reason and history hav
takes time for academic inquiry to filter down into the lives of everyday Christian
Yet, they may well have insights that ultimately change the dimensions of how C
the world. If, for instance, literary criticism shows that there isn't a harmonious i
which Gospel should be preferred for its overall meaning and message? Should w
importance of religious texts at all?

In any case, our analysis of approaches to biblical interpretation can and should i
Christianity, whether it be the role of tradition or liturgy[illegible] at heart, most Chri
to the Bible as a single text, and more often than not the Gospels and the Paulin
debates about these approaches should ultimately be coherent with whatever Ch
one favours and how these are implemented as spiritual and ethical guidance fo

Discussion Activity
Should we[illegible]ise one approach to biblical interpretation above others? Or is
perspective towards understanding scripture? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

Quick Quiz

1. What is the allegorical approach to biblical interpretation?
2. How does the allegorical approach differ from the moral approach?
3. What does Barth mean by describing the Bible as a 'witness' to revelatio
4. What is demythologisation?
5. What is the most important aspect of the Bible to Bultmann?
6. What is existentialism?
7. Within what approach to biblical interpret[illegible]n [illegible]e followers often enc
8. What approach to biblical inte[illegible]e[illegible] often focuses on analysing tech irony and narrative?

5.1: Texts and Interpretat
The Kingdom of God in J

What you will learn in this section

The theological discussion around eschatology and the Kingdom of God in the Go

- What Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God during his ministry, and the m throughout Luke.
- The different scholarly perspectives on the arrival of the Kingdom of God in on realised and futurist eschatology.
- The meaning and importance of eschatological beliefs to early Christian con influenced the growth of the Christian faith.

Starter Activity:
Revisit your work s[illegible]e world of the first century and the different religiou How do y[illegible] religious groups thought about life after death and the interac world? Ma[illegible]e notes and compare them to early Christian perspectives on e through this section.

Key Thinker	
Name	Ian Howard Marshall
Born	1934
Died	2015
Key text	*Luke: Historian and Theologian* (1970)
Why are they important?	Marshall was a well-regarded theologian whose work in the s century focused extensively on the New Testament. He is know as a historian against excessive redaction criticism, which ofte obsessed with rewriting traditional eschatology and ethics wit

Key Thinker	
Name	A Schweitzer
Born	1875
Died	1965
Key text	*The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906)
Why are they important?	Schweitzer was a prominent figure in early twentieth century b scholars during the first quest for the historical Jesus, arguing th in the context of the eschatology and apocalypticism common t century CE.

Introduction: The Kingdom of God, and the Death and R[illegible]rection of Jesus

Throughout your studies so far, you have stud[illegible] wide array of events in the Bi miracles. But now we turn our attention to focus the big guns and look at matter specifically with an emphasis on the Gospel of Luke. You may well be familiar wit a field of theology th[illegible] concerned with death, judgement and the afterlife, wit things'. An[illegible] least source of information we have about these subjects in teachings, a[illegible]nd resurrection of Jesus himself.

Yet, when we compare the four Gospels and Jesus' teachings on eschatological i problems emerge. For while each Gospel presents a similar overall view on what are marked differences, especially when comparing the earlier written Gospels (believed to have been authored later (Matthew, Luke and especially John). More developed widely different narratives and theories on why these differences hav we can systematise a coherent and complete eschatology from the Gospels then delve into some of these debates and analyse key passages in Luke which are oft and against conflicting theories for different forms of eschatology.

First, though, it is necessary to give some background on the Gospel of Luke, and present throughout all four Gospels: the concept of the **Kingdom of God**. For this against which we measure different theories on eschatology in the Gospels and h harmonisation of these theories into a single coherent narrative about Jesus' his the afterlife.

The Gospel of Luke

The Gospel of Luke can be said to quietly stand apart from the other synoptic Go quite similar to Matthew, both in how it uses Mark as a source and its concordan as the birth narrative. But beneath these similarities, Luke is a quite radically dist starting point when considering eschatological issues.

We can see this immediately at the beginning of the Gospel itself. It starts with t with a statement that affirms how th[illegible] av[illegible]efully compiled source material Jesus' life and death. And wh[illegible]is introduction does not state directly who the intentions towards 'Th[illegible]us', which means 'Lover of God'. In this sense, one i Luke is, ho[illegible]sh[illegible] his readership to understand his role as author and his ai when we ar[illegible] separated in time from the date of authorship, we still have t being honest here. Is he really being the careful historian in compiling his Gospel other motives? **Redaction criticism** is arguably more key than ever when thinkin Gospel and whether his stated aims agree with the tone, style and historical accu

For instance, reading Luke 1:1–4, one can be tempted to infer that Luke is of the are somehow incomplete and that, with his insight, a better and more rounded n formed. We might bolster such an inference by looking at how Luke adapts mate passages and includes others as he sees fit. These kinds of actions certainly fit th even argue that Luke's editing was performed to take out more mythological ele those established by proper eyewitness accounts. But without observing Luke's p and beyond Luke's role as historian, there can be equally observed to be many d present in the other Gospels. Moreover, these ideas fit a much later date of auth are appropriate for a more Gentile audience. Therefore, we should consider whe appear to be the competent historian in order to give weight to his overall theol

Take, for instance, Jesus' ethics in Luke, which we shall study later in this compar many similarities with Matthew and Mark, there is a greater emphasis on Jesus' well as a focus on the extension of his ministry to those traditionally exiled from example, the parable of the good Samaritan, only present in Luke's Gospel, prese outreach to other groups beyond a Jewish audience. Similarly, the parable of the shows a distinct care by God for those who are marginalised or dispossessed. Th as in Luke there are far more female characters, and Luke 7:36–50 in particular e women regarded as unclean by the Pharisaic laws of the day.

Would not such radical ideas be perhaps [illegible]rounded if they were considered The same is true of the main co[illegible]em[illegible]Luke, which is to show Jesus to be the o uses common titles such[illegible]ian, Son of Man and Son of God to demonstrate also weave[illegible]ic[illegible]bout identity into a 'salvation history' divided into thre prehistorica[illegible] of Jesus, described in Luke 1:4–3:1, which extends from Gene and circumstances of the virgin birth. The second is the ministry of Jesus in Luke beginning of the proclamation of John the Baptist and ends with the final ascens period of the Christian Church, of which the beginning is detailed in Acts, which

Therefore, beyond Luke simply being a compiler of historical material, one can id themes and concepts. Consequently, it remains a lively area of discussion among as to whether one should interpret Luke as consistently aiming for historical accu that they embellished their Gospel to present a specific picture of Jesus to a first and Gentiles.

Date and Authorship

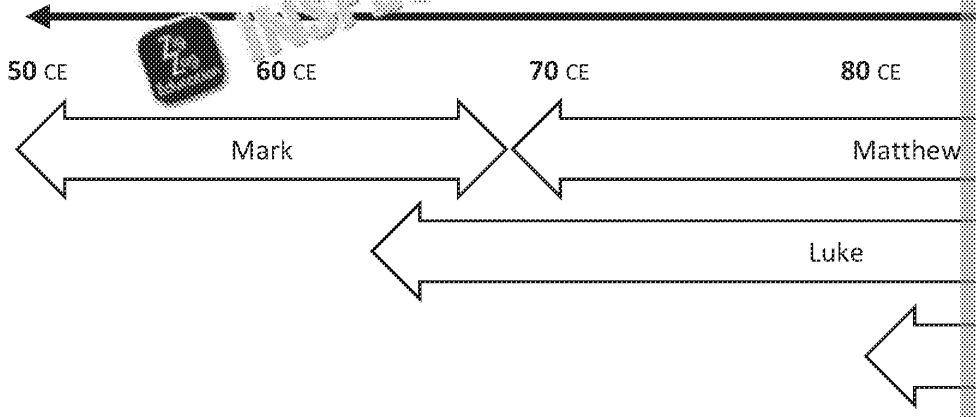
The question of who authored Luke's Gospel has become considerably more wid
It is generally taken for granted that both Luke and Acts in the New Testament w
Not only do they both share similar linguistic characteristics (for example, in the
Theophilus) but the preface of Acts directly references the Gospel of Luke as 'my
many of the theological themes are consistent between the two books, particula
Jesus as part of a 'salvation history', with Acts describing the age of fulfilment aft
ascension of Jesus.

However, one particular issue has been whether the dual authorship of these bo
'the physician' as described in Colossians 4:14 and 2 Timothy 4:11. This was the t
theology, put forward by early church theologians such as Irenaeus and Tertullia
travelling companion of Paul fits the style of what are often called the 'we' passa
plural accounts are given rather than first-person accounts (for example, Acts 1
arguably makes the most sense if the author of Acts was a travelling companion
identified as Luke among this party then it would be a natural fit for him to be reg
'Luke' in the Gospel refers to.

Nevertheless, despite this initial good evidence, there is still reason to question wh
is truly the author. Colossians and 2 Timothy are now regarded to not necessarily b
into question whether the identification of Luke the physician of both is a credible
scholars have argued that the 'we' passages are best understood as another docum
into the narrative of Acts as a whole by the author as a historical effort. Many New
this view in particular make note of the fact that there is little of Pauline theology i
strange if Luke were Paul's companion and was witness to historical events such a
Thus, any attempt to identify the author with Luke the physician should be taken w

There are even more problems, however, in giving the Gospel a date of authorsh
surrounding Luke the physician, the Gospel is often dated according to whether
been a companion of Paul or not. Acts ends fairly abruptly with the imprisonmen
being sometime between 62 and 63 CE. And Luke is generally thought to be writt
scholars disagree) due to the reference in the preface of Acts to 'my former book
an early date of sometime between 60 and 65 CE is given to the date of Luke's au

However, as traditional accounts of the authorship of Luke have been challenged
often given. This is firstly often based on the dating of Mark, which is generally g
and 70 CE. Considering that Luke uses Mark as his primary source, it has to be co
had to be in circulation for some time before Luke composed his Gospel. The sec
is often called into question, with many of its sources unknown. While it can be c
eyewitness testimony, there are notable differences in the way it presents the C
letters, and it has a number of notable omissions, such as Peter, Paul and James's
mark of an incomplete document, it still does not give weight to the view that it w
or testimony. Therefore, Luke is more commonly given a later date of compositio
but some New Testament scholars contend it could even be as late as 100 CE.



Luke as Historian or Theologian?

We will be spending quite a lot of time with Luke throughout your A Level studies, so before we move on to examining the Kingdom of God it is useful to quickly take a look at some of the key concerns with his Gospel and how they are reflected in modern biblical criticism.

One early problem to note is that there is still an extensive debate on how to analyse and comprehend Luke's (the author's) purposes in writing the Gospel. **Albert Schweitzer** in his well-known work *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* (1906) argued that Jesus' views reflected common Jewish expectations in the first century CE, namely that the talk of the coming Kingdom of God reflected an **imminent** eschatological event. Thus, Jesus' death was meant to inaugurate an immediate intervention by God in our world, and the lack of such an intervention represented the failure of Jesus' mission. Altogether, what Schweitzer argued was that the real Jesus espoused a **futurist eschatology**, which emphasises the coming Kingdom of God to be a specific event that is yet to occur at some (often to come) future time. The opposing view to this is that Jesus presented a **realised eschatology**, the idea that his ministry was itself the inauguration of the Kingdom of God and it is not some definite future event yet to come.

Schweitzer's claims here ran counter to trends in biblical research at the time, w reconstruction of Jesus' life based on an analysis of the Gospels and how they su here is the idea that each Gospel author was in some way thinking of himself as already about Luke as historian, but it is a controversial notion when the concept very different from our conception now. Whereas we commonly think of history we aim to uncover historical truths, ancient historians often compiled accounts f theological reasons which are hard to discern from our modern perspective.

Schweitzer leaned into these problems in his research, arguing that the later writte reflect Jesus' actual eschatological views. Instead, the problems with **Parousia**, the meant Christian writers had to adjust their stances on Jesus' teachings and re-eval intervention by God had occurred after Jesus' death. This led to a confusion of esc which began to diverge more and more from the Jewish futurist eschatology that J Thus, in the Gospel of Mark we encounter more passages that represented a futur Gospels, more passages that represent other forms of eschatology. The central im actual writing as a 'historian' in the conventional sense. He was documenting inste supported his communities' views on the death of Jesus after the Second Coming

In the following years, there was much less of a focus on the historical Jesus and Schweitzer's example and looked at how the theologies of Luke might have represe along with the community he might have been writing for. However, by the seco many were beginning to fight back against the criticisms of Luke as historian. No 1970 work *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, claimed that previous analysis of Luke historical elements of his Gospel and that it was necessary to re-evaluate how sc the compos Luke/Acts. As he writes:

> *Luke … was a historian who wished to give a faithful portrayal of the minis the early church. He did not, therefore, write a work of creative imaginatio controlled by his sources.* (Luke: Historian and Theologian p. 9)

Within this broad claim are three important aspects. The first is that Luke's theolo some theologian aim, but in an important sense matches the historical sources he theology arises out of history, not the other way around. Second is that the focus matters but instead what Marshall identifies as 'salvation', the opportunities for d

by the good news of Jesus Christ. The third aspect, though, is perhaps the most ke
something had gone wrong in biblical analysis of Luke throughout history. As we n
scholars was that Luke's claims to be a historian were a kind of lie intended to pro

But why should we not take the author's claims seriously when there often appe
use of sources? In order to evaluate this difficult question, we need to first have
God is represented in Luke's Gospel.

Discussion Activity:
Do you believe that Luke could have been trying to accurately record historical e
you think the Gospel writers inevitably prioritised theological motives? Discuss in

Analysing the Kingdom of God in Scrip...

Now we've considered some l... de...te around the composition and purpose
more in-depth into it t...g around **eschatology**. It was noted that Luke pres
salvation h... thr...ghout his Gospel and this larger arc is important to consid
Jesus' teach...out death, judgement and the afterlife within. For a clear imp
ministry (one often stated explicitly) is that his time on Earth is part of a wider pl
wrapped in due to their **covenant** with God. In fact, Luke can be seen as the Gos
with such conceptions of salvation. The theologian Joel Green, for example, clain
salvation more than any other New Testament writer' (*The Theology of the Gosp*
even turn to Marshall once again for a fuller explication of this idea:

> *We have seen that the ultimate source of salvation is God the Saviour, tha*
> *born into the world as Saviour to bring men peace and to lead them to glo*
> *is for God's people but also reaches to the Gentiles, that salvation is in acc*
> *promises of the Old Testament... It is our claim that these are the ideas tha*
> *Luke as a whole and constitute its main theme.*
> (I H Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, p. 102)

But what does salvation mean here exactly? Well, one key aspect is that Jesus' m
the arrival of the Kingdom of God. It is this arrival which guarantees in some sens
follow Jesus, so understanding exactly what this term means can help reveal wha
endorsing. We've recognised already that there are a variety of views on the esc
analyse key passages, we necessarily have to look out for parts that stress wheth
represents a future event yet to come, something that has been inaugurated, or
been realised by the arrival of Jesus.

Yet, what is also important to recognise is that the meaning of passages may not
endorse differing interpretations depending on what pre-exi...ng beliefs we have
analyse the passage. We may even have to keep in m...at the author, if a hist
coherent theology, but just a direct recordi...f w...Jesus said. If this is the cas
right interpretation at all!

For example, we noted ...o...e scholars have argued that there are strong ind
as Mark) th...e ...s a strong expectation that Jesus would return within peo
reads throu...r Gospels, such expectations are potentially more muted, with
the **Second Coming** being a personal or different kind of reality. These alternativ
more detail after our analysis of key scriptural passages, but as you work through
interpretations that conflict with each other.

Such conflicts deeply affect our reading of concepts such as the Kingdom of God
the birth of Jesus and has never left? Or is it something that is still yet to come in
even something in a constant process of development, building or changing as w
will. As we shall see, different readings are possible, and even our basic understa
God can radically change depending on what reading we believe to be the most

The Teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God

The previous sections outlined how the **Kingdom of God** can be seen to be an el
interpretation we endorse, it is not an idea that is given a direct translation or de
conceptually developed by Jesus through his ministry through parables. Yet, we
elements that it is worth thinking about before we get stuck into some importan

First, the term Kingdom of God naturally supports the metaphor of God as **King**,
This is an important distinction when we think about the nature and justification
God is in effect our ruler, then he does hold the sovereign right to judge us and a
So, when Jesus uses the Kingdom of God, he is in some way designating this sepa
and God to be key in understanding his eschatological teaching.

Second, it is key to note that Kingdom of God is not a term that would have nece
among Jewish communities. The notion of God as king is present throughout the
through the Hebrew word *malkuth* which refers primarily to the reign or rule of
context. What's interesting though, is that throughout the Gospels, Jesus somet
conception of the Kingdom of God differs from that of his Jewish audiences. For
associate such an idea with pre-existing messianic expectations, and as you will
often seeks to distance himself from the traditional notions of a Jewish messiah

Third, the term Kingdom of God has potentially been loaded by the variety of mo
In an important sense, it is difficult to interpret the concept without a certain de
especially if Jesus was seeking to develop the concept in light of Jewish expectat
this, it is clear that throughout the Gospels, the arrival of Jesus is held to be conc
Kingdom of God.

> *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good*
> *come,' he said. 'The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe th*
> 15 NRSV)
>
> *At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds w*
> *when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. Bu*
> *proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also; for*
> *purpose.'* (Luke 4:42–43 NRSV)

This is where the crux of the issue often lies for theologians. For even if we aren'
Kingdom of God exactly means, we can infer that it is the inauguration in some s
Earth, one that reflects the renewed **covenant** between God and human beings
of Jesus Christ. But what form does this arrival or inauguration take? Has it been
yet to come? At heart, it is unclear at first glance whether the Kingdom of God is
future, and similarly whether it refers to this world or another world to come.

The Kingdom of God in Parables

So, let's turn now to some key scriptural passages in the Gospel of Luke. Followin three key parables as given below:

- **The parable of the sower (8:1–15)**
- **The parable of the great banquet (14:15–24)**
- **The parable of the ten minas (Luke 19:11–27)**

As you may well be aware, most parables present a simple situation or circumsta deeper message or understanding about an aspect of ethics that cannot be imm teaching. However, many biblical scholars have contended that parables are per considering eschatological issues, especially the notion of the Kingdom of God.

It is easy to see why when we think about the basic properties of the concept. If an idea that is to some degree far beyond the realms of human reason and imag be a more complex method developed in order to transmit a deeper understand definition may just risk it actually misinterpreting it! Moreover, parables can clo the ethical [illegible] expressed within them. In this way, the realities of people's directly tied to a deeper understanding of what these choices mean in light of th

Accordingly, the three parables in the anthology primarily deal with Jesus' expec these relate to the Kingdom of God in his preaching. Before we delve into them, taken from the first parable, **the parable of the sower**:

> *He said, 'The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of God has been giv speak in parables, so that, 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearin understand.'* (Luke 8:10 NRSV)

This passage has parallels in both Mark and Matthew, but in all the Synoptic Gos parables to reveal truth to some, but equally hide it from others. This theme of s present particularly within the Synoptics but is key when thinking about the way revealed throughout scripture. For it means that conflicting interpretations may problem but a very feature of parables themselves and the way Jesus intended t and arrival of the Kingdom of God.

The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:1–15)

The parable of the sower is perhaps one of the more straightforward parables w of the parable is immediately followed by a direct explanation of its meaning. At teachings have to be met with an open, honest and good perspective, for only th fully understood.

> *'But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear th honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.'* (Luke 8:15

But this straightforward explanation also [illegible] some underlying ambiguities an analogy of a seed mean that human spiritual progress can be charted as if it wer would imply that the Kingdom of God is not another kind of world, but something human beings reach [illegible] as they spiritually mature. Yet, we could also advocate which stresses the importance of human beings maintaining the correct receptio importantly, the arrival of a future Kingdom of God which has yet to be inaugura

Both interpretations are possible, but if we look at the parallel descriptions of th we might well lean towards the second reading. Both emphasise the conclusion Jesus' teachings is essential. Furthermore, consider once again Luke 8:10. This pa be outlining the right kind of method for understanding not just the parable of th parables. And, like the second reading, it seems to imply that there is a correct st from which to understand Jesus' teaching and, more importantly, the Kingdom o passages thus could be weighed up when considering the explanation given by Je

The Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15–24)

This parable focuses on a similar theme to that of the sower. Yet it has its own nuances that are worth exploring. The central message of the parable focuses on the importance of the audience being ready to accept or receptive to the 'invitation' of the Kingdom of God, regardless of their own affairs. However, even Jesus stresses that there are many who will not accept this invitation, notably stressing that those who are wealthy and preoccupied with their own material affairs are likely culprits. And, more notably, the invitation is extended to *'the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame'* (NRSV), the same people who Jesus had urged the leader of the Pharisees to invite to the dinner they are sitting at (see Luke 14:13).

This parable fits Luke's general emphasis on Jesus' ministry being for the poor and marginalised, a theme that is throughout the Gospel but is most pointedly made during the mission statement at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see Luke 4:16–30). However, another key idea expressed here, and which forms an important part of Luke's eschatology, is **reversal**. This is the idea that the coming Kingdom of God will see the earthly fortunes of people's lives reversed. So, those who were poor and suffering during their time afterlife, whereas those who were obsessed with wealth and material goods will There is great debate as to the extent of the theme of reversal in Luke and how e but in the context of this parable it is important to consider.

> *And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still ro to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in filled. For I tell you none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'* (Luk

For reversal implies that there will be some point in the future when the changin this at some future general judgement of all humankind? Or does it occur to eac And it is important to consider the relationship of Jesus to the person in the para what point should we consider Jesus to have sent out the metaphorical 'invitatio think that the arrival of the Kingdom of God will occur at some point in the futur other interpretations.

The Parable of the Ten Minas (Luke 19:11–27)

Finally, we can turn to the third parable of the ten minas. This one is slightly hars primarily because it occurs just before the **passion** narrative, where Jesus is tried still upon receiving Jesus' message the right way, but a key inclusion is verse 11, speaking to people who were of the view that the Kingdom of God was to be arr from the parallel parable of the bags of gold in Matthew, and it might well hint t audience who are disillusioned about the lack of a second coming. Equally, it ma importance of repentance now, rather than at some future point in time!

> *'I tell you, to all those who have more will be given; but from those who ha they have will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine who did no them bring them here and slaughter them in my presence'* (Luke 19:26 N

The ending of the parable is also important to consider. For the parable as a who needed to follow Jesus' teachings and **repent** is difficult and arduous. However, has to be noted that in the end the king does return, even when many suspected justifies a strong eschatological reading of this passage for it perhaps reinforces, audience, that Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God carry weight and its arriv those who did not have faith. Thus, we may well be tempted to read this parable Kingdom of God is at least partially a future event yet to come.

Other Key Eschatological Passages in Luke

The parables are the most mysterious passages to study when thinking about es
times Jesus' teaching on death and the afterlife appears to be much more direct
key verses included in the Edexcel anthology.

Jesus and Evil Spirits / Beelzebub / The Sign of Jonah (Luke 11:14–32)

Throughout his ministry in Luke, Jesus regularly interacts with the crowds, and th
exorcism of a mute person. Thus, the focus of the passage is on the nature of evi
coming Kingdom of God. However, it is the final section, 'The Sign of Jonah', that
discussing the eschatological issues in Luke. Pay attention in particular to the pas

> *'The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and*
> *repented at the preaching of Jonah; and now something greater than Jona*

The teachings within this passage refers to Jonah of the Old Testament, who was
three days before e[illegible] became a sign to the Ninevites, who sought the
seemed to [illegible] that length of time. But here it appears that Jesus reconte
about the m[illegible] of his own arrival. What it seems to suggest is that Jesus' min
Kingdom of God revealing itself to the crowds, although they have failed to reco
exorcism and teaching in the previous passages.

But is this the only way of interpreting this passage? The theme of Jesus' discour
reference to Jonah might just be a way of explaining how Jesus' teaching should
Ninevites were receptive to the Sign of Jonah and Jesus may well just be drawing
crowds should be equally receptive. Equally, the fact Jonah was in the whale for
allusion to the three days between the crucifixion and the resurrection. If this is
events are the real inauguration of the Kingdom of God. Either way, while there
highlights an imminent eschatology in Luke, there are other possible interpretati

Luke 13:22–30 – The Narrow Door

The bulk of this passage, similarly to the last, occurs in the context of Jesus intera
on his journey to Jerusalem. Here, the discourse is in response to a member of th
few people going to be saved?' Thus, one might be initially surprised to find out
more focused on the timing of a future eschatological event. Read through the e

> *'Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell*
> *will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the doo*
> *knocking and pleading, "Sir, open the door for us."'* (Luke 13:24–25 NIV)

The whole passage does seem to imply at first glance an imminent eschatology,
eschatological event at that. The symbol of the narrow door is not expanded on
discourse but is instead used as a basic metaphor to highlight the difficulty of ge
initial reading seeming to favour an [illegible] eschatological perspective, it is no
outline specifics when it comes to salvation. There is no direct mention of a time
saved other than the [illegible] repent.

Moreover, if we look at the final section, Jesus talks of people coming from the '
south' to take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God. But who exactly ar
Luke here appears to be appealing to both Gentile and Jewish audiences, but this
a specific commitment to any kind of imminent or futurist eschatology. Instead,
that a future Parousia is something that will have to be presented to all humanki
hearing Jesus' words, and may as such be evidence of a realised eschatology inst

Luke 17:20–37 – The Coming Kingdom of God

This passage is perhaps one of the most discussed when it comes to analysing es
are two major parts it is necessary to analyse, but out of all the excerpts in this s
worth focusing on the most. Jesus' teachings here are not set against a blank can
of Jewish history, and it is the appeal to this history which arguably reveals the c
Pharisees and the disciples about the timing of the Parousia. Consider the openi

> *Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would co*
> *coming of the Kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor*
> *or "There it is," because the Kingdom of God is in your midst.'* (Luke 17:20–

The key phrase here is of course *'in your midst'*, for the original Greek 'entos hymo
different ways. Some scholars translate it as 'among you' or 'within your reach', b
on the Kingdom of God already existing in some fashion in the world, whether it be
occurs with Jesus' arrival or perhaps in the minds of those who can comprehe
words in many ways seem to suggest this latter possibility with the idea that the Ki
that can be observed. The idea that the Kingdom of God could be something w
psychological is quite difficult to reconcile with the other passages which seem to d

Instead, we might be tempted to read Jesus' words here as suggesting that the K
event. This means we can't point to a particular time or date and say, 'this is whe
Rather, we could say that the Kingdom of God is a process that perhaps began w
one important event in a broader **salvation history**. This concept is something th
and so could well be the focus of this passage, considering Luke is often very pre
connection to personal repentance.

We can analyse this suggestion in the context of the next part, where Jesus expli
signs of such a specific event. Look at the excerpt below for a moment:

> *Then he said to his disciples, 'The time is coming when you will long to see*
> *of Man, but you will not see it. People will tell you, "There he is!" or "Here*
> *off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, whic*
> *sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be*
> *generation.'* (Luke 17:22–25 NRSV)

There are two ways to read this passage. One is as a straightforward foreshadow
of the resurrection. Luke is perhaps suggesting that the resurrection appearance
disciples and that the resurrection itself will be the true sign of the coming Kingd
is unusual, and this passage can be potentially read as Luke appealing to audienc
his Gospel. For as we noted when discussing the idea of Luke as historian, the an
Christian audiences was likely to be posing a problem for followers by the time L
Second Coming hadn't perhaps arrived as promised and it is possible that pas
included to ease the worries of early Christian followers.

Luke in this sense may represent the midpoint between the more futurist eschat
realised eschatology of John. The ambiguities as such might well represent the te
audiences who were unsure how to evaluate their eschatological expectations. L
is worth reading closely because while it potentially coheres with such a view, or
both a realised and futurist eschatology depending on what words are given the

Luke 18:18–30 – The Rich and the Kingdom of God

The final passage we will take a brief look at contains one of the most famous pa responds to a wealthy audience member that *'it is easier for a camel to go throu someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.'* Harsh words indeed, and we s look at Jesus' ethical teaching in Luke later on in this companion. However, what with this section of Luke are the final verses, featured below:

> *'Truly I tell you,' Jesus said to them, 'no one who has left home or wife or b parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God will fail to receive m age, and in the age to come eternal life.'* (Luke 18:29–30 NIV)

What's interesting here is that throughout Luke there is a ... ng focus on **revers** Kingdom of God will see an overturning of wealth ... neediest being most condemned. Yet, what Jesus seems to sugg... that this process has alrea following Jesus are not promised ... essarily at some future event but in t afterwards. This might b... Jesus is presenting here a **realised eschatol** ambiguous ... er to the near future and an imminent future Parous explore the ...iguities though (and much more) in the next section as we tur interpretati... eschatology in Luke.

Activity:
Read through each of the parables given throughout this section and create a sc or futurist you read the eschatology to be. At the end add up your score and ex the eschatological landscape of Luke as a whole. Does your mark reflect your ge and if not, why?

The Different Views Surrounding the 'Arrival' of the Kingdom

From our investigation of Luke so far, it should be clear that there is a bit of a my Jesus' eschatological teachings in its passages. In many cases, Jesus does not pre account of when the Kingdom of God will arrive, whether it has already arrived a future Parousia. This may be partly due to the teachings around the Kingdom of various parables, which may have complex allusions and meanings. Yet, many sc the author of Luke (who we shall call Luke for ease) made specific edits to his sou about Jesus' teachings on eschatology, perhaps in response to the delayed Parou community's disappointment at its delayed instantiation after the death of Jesus

We talked about this a bit at the beginning of this section, where we detailed Alb historical Jesus presented a strongly futurist eschatology throughout his ministry Coming naturally led later accounts of his life to downplay the futurist elements perhaps not being the true Messiah or even just misg... in his proclamations seem like speculation, but there are good reas... for ...esenting such a position Christian history and theology, espec... w... one compares the content of Luk and Matthew.

Take, for e... t... parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25:31–46. He claim that a ... judgement will be undertaken by Jesus sometime in the future for some and eternal punishment for others. Similarly, Mark 1:15 seems to sugg because the Kingdom of God is 'near' while Mark 13 spells out a rather detailed Second Coming, finishing with Jesus stating in Mark 13:30 that *'Truly I tell you, th pass away until all these things have happened.'* (NIV) How else should one inter as a futurist eschatology?

Yet if Luke was written between 70 and 90 CE, this is around two generations aft
eyewitnesses to his ministry would remain and so these words would surely ring
if employing Mark as a source, would potentially make changes to better reflect
visions of his community. Moreover, when one looks at John, the latest Gospel t
definite change in eschatology compared to the Synoptics, where salvation is a n
any references to a Second Coming are very muted. However, despite the neatn
raged over the last century about whether it is too simplistic and the degree to w
other interpretations of Luke's eschatology. Thus, we shall turn to analysing a nu
according strengths and weaknesses.

Consistent Eschatology

Schweitzer was not the last theologian to propose wh[illegible] term the **consistent** or **classical** eschatological account of L[illegible]. In 1960, Hans Conzelmann published his famous w[illegible] *heology of St Luke*, where he argued that the delay of the Parousia meant by the time Luke was composed, the [illegible] had abandoned hope of it ever occurring. Instead a futurist e[illegible]og[illegible] was replaced by the concept of **salvation history**, which we w[illegible]y in greater detail when we turn to look at the crucifixion and resurrection. What this meant in practice, though, was that when it came to detailing Jesus' eschatological teaching, Luke purposely made any mention of timing ambiguous and instead focused Jesus' teaching on matters of redemption, forgiveness and salvation. Thus, an evasiveness pervades any talk of eschatology throughout the Gospel, and questions about the Parousia are answered by talking of any Second Coming occurring a long time in the future.

As such, eschatological teaching is also focused more on who will receive salvation rather than when it will come. Conzelmann, just like Schweitzer before him, identifies Luke's response as not necessarily individual but rather a response to the Lukan community, who may have been preoccupied with the lack of arrival of the Kingdom of God. By refashioning Jesus' ministry to focus more on ethics and salvation, Luke avoids the pitfalls of discussing the Parousia in a time of disappointment and recontextualises Jesus' teaching to focus on a broader theological discussion of Jesus' role as part of a wider divine plan for humanity. Thus, the author of Luke also has an important concern with the future of the Church and details this in great detail also within Acts.

However, Conzelmann develops Schweitzer's view in a much more interesting w
exactly what we could call the classical view, it does echo his work in understand
response to Parousia in the Christian community. Sch[illegible]er held that Jesus put
eschatology, where a Parousia was imminent[illegible] due after his death. However, Co
endorsing this picture, does not say that Luke is being evasive but, as mentioned
eschatology that recognises the importance of Jesus' inaugurating a new Kingdo
to a future Par[illegible]sia. [illegible]vation history in Luke proceeds in three stages.

1. The Ol[illegible]ment age of Israel – the Kingdom of God here was given to a c
2. The arrival of Jesus inaugurates a new age of the Kingdom of God, where it
   the Jews.
3. The ascension of Jesus marks the beginning of the third age, where Christia
   to anticipate the eventual Parousia.

We've seen some evidence for the classical view already in comparisons of Luke
what can we draw upon in terms of textual evidence from Luke itself? Well, we'v
parables and teachings on eschatology, more than one interpretation is possible
that this ambiguity is not a product of Luke being just a historian of Jesus' words
So, for example, when Jesus in Luke 18:29–30 talks of the Kingdom of God comin
come, it is intentionally evasive so that any realised or futurist interpretation is c
parables of the narrow door and the great banquet, most of Jesus' teaching is pr
salvation, not when it will come. As a final piece of evidence, we can also point t
says, '*It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own au*

The Issues

This all looks like quite strong support for the classical view and a lot of scholars
change between Mark and Luke. But is this so clear-cut in favour of an evasive stan
Think for a moment about our discussion of Luke as the historian. Could it not po
more diligent in recording the actual eschatological teaching of Jesus, while early
for a futurist eschatology in Jesus' ministry shortly after his death? It's a possibili
remember that the plausibility of an account only carries so much evidential wei
Lukan comm[illegible] and so can never be sure what their priorities were.

Which is where a lot of criticism comes into the classical view. Many New Testame
was far from clear that early Christian thinking was completely dominated by esch
about the return of Jesus. In fact, much of the surviving discourse of the Bible can
and teachings beyond anything else. This point was made by W C van Unnik, who c
did not seem to set particular dates or intervals for Jesus' return and that there we
cease if this return did not occur. Certainly, it may have been a present issue, parti
facing criticism by Jewish communities, but the delay of the Parousia was not nece

Similarly, Marshall, who defends the role of Luke as historian, points out that ass
outlook to Jesus' teachings isn't something that can be assumed. It requires a dif
analysis of each Gospel and certain interpretative decisions to frame the intentio
way. In any case it is difficult to ever know exactly whether the passages simply t
inventions of the early Church. But our views on Luke should be slightly different
historian in good faith. Compared to the other Gospels, he is the only author to b
intentions, yet if we take Conzelmann's view, we are automatically supposed to
despite having some potential insight into Luke's editing process.

Finally, should we view Luke's intentions as so simplistic? Perhaps the ambiguitie
teachings are not representative of some basic editorial decision by Luke but rat
maybe Jesus') theological vision. This has often been the claim from more recent
forward new accounts of Luke's eschatology that try to outline a more detailed a
'evasiveness'. First, though, let's take a look at a diffe[illegible]k from the classical

Discussion Activity:
Do you think that Schwe[illegible]ose favouring the consistent eschatology pers
of Parousia [illegible]st-century communities? Or is it a projection of scholar
small grou[illegible]

Realised Eschatology

Realised eschatology, at heart, is the idea that Jesus' arrival represents the prese
aspects. Thus, after Jesus' death, there is essentially no future event left to come
the present moment by having faith in Jesus and repenting. Within Luke, we've s
played up throughout the Gospel. Whether it be throughout his ministry or even
crucifixion, he is trying to persuade people to repent in the here and now, not at
least potentially suggests that Luke was framing Jesus as claiming that the Kingdo
present reality.

What's notable, though, is that this depiction doesn't sound too different from t
perspective. Yet, those in favour of an interpretation of realised eschatology clai
evidence suggesting otherwise, wasn't being evasive or equivocating over escha
should favour a direct reading of the text and, ra[illegible] the clearest interpretatio
popularised by the well-known biblical scholar CH Dodd in the 1930s. What Dod
this kind of eschatology was a [illegible]ist factor of Luke and John altering their view
Rather, realised esch[illegible] was present throughout the Synoptics, but most cle
especially J[illegible]

Dodd offered a number of arguments in favour of this view, but overall he conte
Church, contrary to Schweitzer, were not overly preoccupied with the Parousia a
Jesus' arrival had realised the Kingdom of God. Thus, when we observe what see
the Gospel writers making small mistakes and not properly contextualising Jesus
Throughout his ministry, Jesus differentiated himself from Jewish tradition and p
eschatology to that which his audience expected. In this sense, for Dodd, it is uns
eschatology in the Gospels because ultimately that partially defined Jesus' uniqu

So, we can see that the classical view is not a given, and it is possible to give a ve
eschatology in Luke depending on how we contextualise Jesus' teachings within
parable of the sower, where Jesus states 'to you it has been given to know the se
(NIV) or the story of Luke 17:20–21 where Jesus states 'the Kingdom of God is in
direct statements about the presence of the Kingdom of God in the here and no
allusions in parts of Luke we haven't covered, such as the story of Zacchaeus in L
the protagonist has already been saved by his actions, or when Jesus is casting o
'the Kingdom of God has come among you' (NIV). Altogether there is a case to be
words seriously and do not have to assume his teachings were coherent with a s
tradition prevalent in first-century Judea.

The Issues

Dodd's work was very influential and, in many ways, dominated the first half of t
many were more moderate in their analysis of realised e[illegible]ology in the Gospe
square the preoccupation with this form of escha[illegible]ic v[illegible]h the actual content
As such, although many still recognise th[illegible]ised eschatology perhaps formed
might not be the be all and end a[illegible], especially when we analyse the more futurist

For examp[illegible]id [illegible]ke 18:29–30 once more. Here Jesus explicitly says that t
just in the h[illegible]d now but also in the 'age to come'. While this might not expli
eschatology, it does suggest that at the minimum there is some future to the Kin
realised in the present. The same is true of Luke 17:22–25, which seems to sugge
come after Jesus' death which bring about the realisation of the Kingdom of God
For if the Kingdom of God was essentially fully brought about by the life of Jesus,
broader theological understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the futu

This is an important question that Dodd could never quite address. The mixture o
eschatology in Jesus' teachings might not be some clever rhetoric composed by t
shortcomings and problems in the early Church, but do we equally have to prete
kinds of mistakes made by that same author? If we are taking Jesus' words in a s
be that Jesus himself endorsed a kind of mixture of futurist and realised eschato
appealed to early Christians, who could have accepted Jesus' call to repentance
looking forward to the Kingdom of God being realised in new ways. Moreover, it
early Church, which in preaching and evangelising could help bring about the Kin
fully anticipated by the resurrection. Unsurprisingly, this view has been endorsed
and we shall explore it further in the next section.

Inaugurated Eschatology

The final main view we have to consider is often termed **inaugurated eschatolog**
mixture of realised and futurist esch[illegible]gy in Luke (and, to differing extents, in
this was a distinct possibility in the last section, but we can investigate this claim
quite a popular view among modern scholars who want to give credence to the e
thought in Luke while avoiding many of the pitfalls of the classical and reali

For instance, to some extent we can see Conzelmann as exemplifying a kind of in
But Conzelmann's view still places the Parousia front and centre of Luke's eschat
kind of salvation history is built off the lack of a Second Coming, while the textua
open the possibility of a Parousia in the near future. The trouble with this is not j
very calculating, but we can question whether it really harmonises the two contr
Luke. Do we have to accept that the Parousia is a central issue when talking abo
there room for a view closer to Dodd's?

This is a big question, but we've seen that there are numerous passages that not
futurist elements but can be interpreted to fit a number of contextual backgroun
may well be trying to refine a pre-existing early Christian belief in realised eschat
responding to issues about the Parousia in the early Church. For example, the th
others have often pointed to Luke's belief in the importance of the foundation o
throughout and at the end of his Gospel leading into Acts. In this sense, Cullman
Schweitzer that the Gospel writers were obsessed with the Parousia.

Instead, across the Gospels we see a variety of eschatological views that present
consistent eschatology, but it is perhaps most easily observed in Luke. Here, it is
of Luke recognised the importance of the views of the early Church, which likely
developing after the decisive victory of Jesus' resurrection. Yet, at the same time
not the final victory. This would occur with the evangelism and foundation of the
forth Jesus' message into the future age and trigger a new realisation of the King
can note an interesting nuance. The author of Luke [illegible]y could not necessari
realisation would look like. So, Jesus' words are perhaps kept vague out of a wish
boundaries.

But what Cullmann is trying to ultimately carve is a path through consistent and
claimed, w[illegible]or[illegible]sided, a view backed up also by Ian Marshall. Like Cullma
inaugurated [illegible]of eschatology and a rejection of Schweitzer's claims about the
from careful examination of many of the eschatological passages in Luke, especia
that teachings such as the parables are some of the most accurate and represent
(which many scholars hold them to be) then it is clear we shouldn't oversimplify
read in context, it becomes apparent that Jesus isn't advancing a simplistic escha
deep and nuanced and allows for an understanding of the Kingdom of God which
a future eschatological event.

The Issues

The issues with the inaugurated view are a little more complex than the other po
with the wide variety of possible interpretations of this position and whether, in
around the message of Luke. For one advantage that both the consistent and the
they identify a clear theme around eschatology in Luke, linked to the beliefs and
These hold intuitive appeal because it is easy to conceive of the author writing th
not simply as a vague, semi-theological account of Jesus' life. While Marshall ma
recognising Luke as a historian, this also means that we are forced to view difficu
struggling to compile different sources and words of Jesus in complex ways. Such
extent, but we noted previously that this process of historical analysis was not ex
century, compared to the composition of works specifically intended for religiou

Moreover, the inaugurated view is still often unclear about what parts it adopts of
instance, Robert Maddox favours a more **imminent** view of Luke's eschatolo
view that Luke has shunted expectation of the Parousia or realisation of the Kingdom
unjustified. Talk of the end to come means for Luke the here and now, such that th
about a future realisation but genuinely believes that it is coming soon. As such, Lu
present reality of salvation, and he is not trying to impart to his audience that
or experience will be delayed. In fact, it is quite the opposite, with Jesus regularly e
eschatological issues. For instance, a key example might be in the parable of the w
Jesus states 'the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour, be dressed for actio

Moreover, this kind of view fits the way Jesus focuses on repentance through Lu
'Why is Jesus stressing that individuals should repent now?' and the simple answ
wants to stress that the realisation of the Kingdom of God is imminent, not in so
can also go further than asking 'When?' and instead ask 'To who'? Case in point,
C K Barrett, who perhaps more than any other scholar focused on the individual
argued that in many ways Luke favours a kind of **individual eschatology**, exempl
man and Lazarus, where it is stated that each person receives their reward or pu
the life they have led.

If this is true, then we can question equally whether the Kingdom of God is prop
an event at all. Perhaps it is something linked to each person that is inaugurated
intended to be stressed, though, by these examples is that there are so many po
'inaugurated banner', it can potentially be crushed under the weight of its own c
should ultimately try to find a unifying meaning or narrative in Luke, even if not
exactly cohere, because the difficulties in both recording Jesus' words and prese
eschatology may just make a completely harmonised view of Luke impossible.

Simply put, we might be expecting too much of the author in a wholly coherent
recognise that a firmly consistent or realised eschatology has a stronger position t
evaluation of Luke's work is a thorny and difficult issue with no clear answer. Yet
strengths and weaknesses of each can help seeing how they tie to the individual par
the anthology. Beyond possessing a conceptual understanding of the debate, it i
these passages and making for yourself what you believe to be the strongest in
God in Luke

Discussion Activity:
Does the inaugurated eschatology perspective on Luke solve many of the interpr
other approaches? Or does it fail to give a clear perspective on eschatology in t
small groups.

Quick Quiz

1. What form of eschatology presents the Kingdom of God as an event in th
2. What form of eschatology presents the Kingdom of God as something so and death of Jesus?
3. What personal and ethical act is often emphasised in the eschatological t of Luke?
4. What form of eschatology did Albert Schweitzer argue was dominant in e
5. Who argued that realised eschatology was more ...non in early Christi
6. What is meant by the term Parousia?
7. What does it mean to talk ... ...inent eschatology?
8. What form of ...ology acknowledges elements of both traditional pe of ...u...?

5.2: Texts and Interpretat
Why Did Jesus Have to

What you will learn in this section:

The different kinds of religious and political conflict in the Fourth Gospel, includi

- The various religious and political authorities opposed to Jesus and the arre presented against him during his ministry.
- The reasons why these authorities were concerned with Jesus' teaching and practice, and Sabbath controversies in first-century Judea.
- The narrative and historical context to conflict in Jesus' ministry and the ro condemning Jesus to death.

Starter Activity:

Revisit you[illegible] of John, particularly the 'I am' sayings. How did these John and [illegible]gious authorities, and how does this illustrate the function of conf Make some [illegible]s and refer back to them as you progress through this section.

Key Thinker	
Name	Ellis Rivkin
Born	1918
Died	N/A
Key text	*What Crucified Jesus* (1984)
Why are they important?	Rivkin is a renowned scholar of Jewish life and history, particu reconstructing the life and thought of the Pharisees, who he ar misunderstood by biblical scholars.

Key Thinker	
Name	R Alan Culpepper
Born	1946
Died	N/A
Key text	*Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (1983)
Why are they important?	Culpepper is a well-known biblical scholar whose work has ofte analysing in particular their narrative and literary elements, an contemporary historical research.

Introduction – The Death of Jesus in the Gospels

It is sometimes easy to forget that beyond the teachings and theology surroundi overarching narrative about his life and ministry. From th[illegible]h narratives in Ma drama present in all four Gospels, each author pr[illegible]s a unique version of the e Jesus' ministry and how they reflect and [illegible]upon his teachings. Although the a key preoccupation for authors, it is important to also consider other angles to t political, social or historical. In one sense, how we choose to interpret the ev understandi[illegible]th[illegible]ent, affects the conclusions we draw about the purpo However, in another sense we might simply be interested in the Gospel as a liter story worthy of critical evaluation.

We saw this approach detailed in the first section of this course companion. But different ways, we can ask questions which don't always easily present themselv theology. One of these key questions will be the focus of this chapter as we ask t complex) question, 'Why did Jesus have to die?' For example, if we take a histori we might ask what important political and social forces contributed to Jesus bei we take a theological perspective, we might claim that Jesus' death was a neces key act of atonement. Finally, if we take a literary perspective, we might questio psychology of figures such as Pontius Pilate or Caiaphas led to Jesus being conde

Depending on how we answer these questions and what importance we give the
fundamentally different conclusions about why Jesus had to die. We can also exa
the religious and political conflicts that led to Jesus' death. Was it in a sense inev
Jesus would have died in the conflict-prone first-century Judea, or are there spec
had to die? These are deep and expansive questions, so for the purposes of our i
looking at the Gospel of John for answers. However, the next section will look at
Luke, and by the end of the Texts and Interpretation section you should have a g
narratives across both texts. To start, though, let us take another quick look at so
information on the Fourth Gospel.

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John (Fourth Gospel) has been one of th[illegible]fficult to decipher
due to its markedly different tone from the Synoptic Gospels. Scholars have long fa
grasping the theological reasons why [illegible] set apart from the Synoptics, but
author may be, what comm[illegible]was written for and when it was composed. Tra
John's Gospel [illegible] the apostle John as identified within the Gospel narra
century this [illegible] been widely challenged, due to new critical analysis of both

One of the most distinctive parts of John's Gospel is its highly developed Christolog
There is a strong emphasis on the divine identity of Jesus (as you will have studied
the symbolism and significance surrounding this identity. This focus proves particu
the reasons for Jesus' death. The Christological claims within the Gospel strongly in
characters treat Jesus throughout his ministry and the reasons given for his arrest,

You may recall also that the Gospel is broadly divided into two main sections, wi
epilogue John 21, surrounding these. The first book is titled the 'Book of Signs' a
or miracles of Jesus in John 1:19–12:50. The second is the 'Book of Glory', coveri
as Jesus' death and resurrection. This structure has often been the subject of mu
with some New Testament scholars believing that the Gospel was arranged in th
aspects of John's theology.

Similarly, the content and style of John's Gospel is also radically different from th
material and tradition of John is written in Greek (although a few scholars have s
from an older Aramaic document) but the style and vocabulary of the Greek in Jo
much of the Synoptic tradition. It has been noted that it has, in proportion to its
the New Testament, and throughout the Gospel there are a number of favoured
often repeated. Particularly significant are verbs of revelation, commonly beginn
example of this is John's use of 'I know', which occurs 141 times in the Gospel, w
bear witness' occurring 33 times and 'I speak' 30 times. These are strongly conne
surrounding Jesus' self-revelation and his relationship as Son to God, the Father.

This difference in language can also be linked to the [illegible]nces in content. John
events common to the Synoptic Gospels [illegible] prominently, the exorcisms and p
as importance narrative mome[illegible]such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Tra
are other small deviati[illegible]from the Synoptic tradition. For example, Mary is neve
Jesus' moth[illegible]d J[illegible]does list all of the 12 disciples of Jesus, even including o
to in the Sy[illegible]Gospels.

However, these omissions do not impact the overall flow of John's Gospel. Rathe
composition, and the heavy use of symbolism and narrative techniques such as d
and conceived Gospel intended to convey a distinct and developed theology. Int
this chapter, John also contains one of the most complete and detailed accounts
elaborating on many key events only summarised in the Synoptics. This is where
other Gospels and there is significant debate on how to interpret the passion na
should be treated as another important historical source on the death of Jesus, w
narrative is the result of artistic embellishment by the author.

To a great extent, answers to these debates are affected by how we judge the hi
New Testament scholars have routinely pointed out the errors and alterations in
length of Jesus' ministry in John. For example, the cleansing of the Temple in Joh
Jesus' ministry whereas in the Synoptic Gospels it occurs just before the passion.
Chapter 5, Jesus is pictured as being in Jerusalem, but by 6:1 it is said he went to
Galilee, which makes little geographical sense considering Jerusalem is located q

These errors could be due to unreliable historical sources the author was using o
authorial editing or inventing. It has been argued that John is a 'spiritual Gospel',
and that it should be read as a theological presentation more than a specific acc
the case, then John may well have been written in response to problems specific
facing or as a theological elaboration upon the more historical and dry passages
be given further evidential support if, as many scholars argue, John was written a
other Gospels.

Evaluating the Date of Authorship

It is notably difficult to lay down a date at which the Fourth Gospel was compose
from 65 CE to 100 CE, depending often on how one interprets the narrative and t
Unlike Matthew, where there can arguably be seen to be more overt references
John remains startlingly silent on what may have been the political, religious and
surrounding the composition of the Gospel. However, those favouring an early d
position that the silence on the destruction of Jerusalem is an indication that the
the time of writing. Supporting this view are potential allusions to Jerusalem pre
which states details about Jerusalem that could only be reliable if the city was st

However, these arguments are far from conclusive. John often uses the present
so the details from John 5:2 aren't necessarily representative of a pre-destructio
silence on an issue is not necessarily indicative that it has not happened. Rather
of Jerusalem was not immediately relevant to the Johannine community at the t
(typically the more common view) often take this position and point out the high
Christology of John which display common characteristics with the theology of th
century CE. Simply put, unless the author or community surrounding John had su
ideas, the safer bet is to assume that the Gospel was written during times when

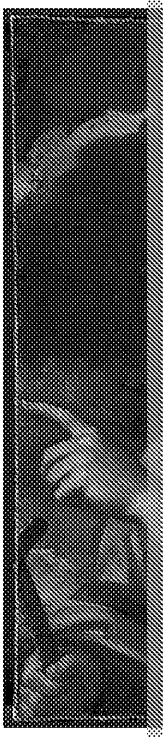
Thus, more conservative estimates tend to place the date of composition around 1
also remains that different parts of John might have been written or composed at
John, such as the prologue, seem to contain more advanced theological concepts,
itself has parallels in the 'Christ-hymns' (for example, Col 1:15–20), which are likel
could be that John was written and assembled over a long period of time, with so
This may indicate that some parts of John (e.g. the passion narrative) may be more

The Authorship and Community of John

While the orthodox tradition of ascribing John's Gospel to the apostle John has g
century, it has not disappeared completely, with some scholars noting that John
very old age during the time of Trajan (98–117 CE). This means that a late date of
with John the apostle being the potential author. Furthermore, various orthodox
Irenaeus and Theophilus, support the belief that it was the apostle John, the son
21:24, who composed the Fourth Gospel. This was a key reason why by the end
belief that John the apostle was the author of the Fourth Gospel was a relatively

However, despite this external evidence for the traditional view, this stance is o
theologians. Many instead hold that the internal features of the Gospel paint a d
states that the Gospel was composed by the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' (NIV), a
throughout John. However, there is still no explicit connection within the Gospel
son of Zebedee. It is only inferred through John's place at the Last Supper, where

an eyewitness to certain events. Yet the biggest criticism emerges from this assu
John the apostle, how could his Gospel be so radically different from the Synopti
eyewitness to so many events? This is especially considering important chronolo
of the Temple being moved, or even the very different accounts of the Last Supp



The question of authorship might seem unimportant, but it affects deeply how we think about the historicity of John. If the Gospel was composed over half a century after the death of Jesus by an individual (or individuals) removed from the events of Jesus' life, what trust can we reasonably put in its historical accuracy? One is often forced to take sides, with those favouring the Synoptic tradition often denouncing the historicity of John, with those favouring John having to make elabora[illegible]gy[illegible]ents to justify the inaccuracies, errors and chang[illegible]e Fourth Gospel.

These arguments often d[illegible]ndary claims about the community [illegible]wa[illegible]g for, which may be the reason why such chang[illegible] made from the Synoptic tradition. For example, on[illegible] the most popular suggestions for a Johannine community is in Ephesus, as tradition states that this is where John the apostle lived and taught during the first century CE. Thus, it may be that it was students of the apostle across Asia Minor who were responsible for writing and editing the Fourth Gospel, using the apostle as a source. However, other locations have been proposed, such as Antioch, and some New Testament scholars who place the date of authorship earlier than 70 CE even argue it may have been written somewhere in Palestine.

Similarly, one newer problem with the authorship and setting of John is whether standalone text, or whether it forms one part of the Johannine works, which incl Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation. Older Christian tradition states that wrote all of these; however, this has been increasingly challenged throughout hi that Revelation was more likely to have been written by John Patmos and that th product of a number of authors within the general Johannine community.

The Historical Sources of John

Finally, let's have a quick look again at John's relationship to the Synoptics. For one our studies is whether John was aware of the Synoptic Gospels while composing h number of common events and episodes with the other Gospels such as the feedi water miracles, which display elements, structure and motifs similar to Mark 6:30– narrative of the passion. Yet, this does not necessarily [illegible] that John directly use

For example, based on form criticism, [illegible]do[illegible]ultmann in 1941 suggested that 'Signs Gospel', a separate w[illegible]om the Synoptic Gospels that contained accoun and the passion. Simil[illegible]els of independent sourcing have been proposed th with theolo[illegible]uc[illegible]as Raymond Brown also suggesting that John does not hav Luke. Nonet[illegible], many theologians now do not argue that John was completel of the Synoptics, rather the author may simply have had an awareness of or part

The other question we should consider is what other sources might have influen thought that John was Hellenistic in origin, due to the perceived animosity to the being indicative of a community separated from Jewish tradition and culture. Ho from the Old Testament, and the narratives in the Gospel often echo elements o Furthermore, the discovery of the Qumran suggests that John may have drawn o century Jewish tradition. For instance, the prologue may have as much in comm

wisdom (Sophia) as Greek philosophy, and the possible influence of later Gnostic
overstated. As such, there is still great debate as to how much the Gospel of Joh
various elements of Jewish and Greek tradition.

Discussion Activity:
Do you think that John was writing his Gospel for a particular Johannine commun
reductive and misleading? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

The Religious and Political Conflicts during Jesus' Ministry

With that overview of some of the key scholarly debates surrounding John, we c
the background to the trial and death of Jesus. For it is clear from both the histor
that Jesus did not simply preach to a blank canvas of religion. In all the Gospels, t
between Jesus and the religious and political authorities of his time. In other Gos
typically portrayed as being the Pharisees, members of a Jewish social movemen
Temple Judaism. This group is typically portrayed in the Synoptics as being c
tradition and willing to wear out Jesus' calls for social, moral and religious chan
portrayal is historically fair. From the historical records we have, it is clear that th
adherence to Mosaic Law and the rites and services of the Temple (although the
in many other ways).

The other prominent group in the Synoptics is the **Sadducees**. These differed in m
in the way they interpreted the Law but, in the Gospels, they are usually portray
opposing Jesus' teachings. By the end of the Synoptics, the opposition of these g
Jewish authorities, with the **chief priests**, **elders of the people**, **the Sanhedrin** an
plotting to arrest Jesus and kill him. Of course, these plots eventually come to fru
handing Jesus over to Pilate and pressuring him to execute him. Thus, the crucifi
and agrees to the demands of the Jewish authorities.

This is a brief summary of course, but what is clear throughout the Synoptics is t
ministry are often confined to the Jewish authorities. Occasionally, there are inst
respond to his teachings, but certainly these crowds do not appear to exert a sig
arrest, even if they seem to remain silent about his eventual execution. Similarly
in the Gospel of Luke about the political and social radicalism of Jesus' message,
political conflicts associated with his ministry. Where scholars such as Dominic C
conflict in the Gospels is either in the implications of Jesus' teachings within the
century Judea or through extrapolations of certain passages that seem to hint at
figure than previously thought.

For example, in his 1991 book *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean J*
that Jesus' radical free teachings and healings directly conflicted with the hierarc
religion and Roman authoritarianism. When Jesus' life is read against this backgr
that his ministry would not have come under suspicion of the Roman authorities
were looking to crush any Jewish movement or any Jewish rebellion that might occ
work *God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now*, Crossan argues that t
throughout the Gospels effectively treasonous against the Roman emperor.
of God' by the crowds, then it was inevitable that Roman backlash would en

However, just because we can draw associations between the political climate of t
radical elements of Jesus' teaching doesn't mean that there was necessarily a polit
It may well be that Jesus accidentally fell foul of the political authorities despite be
religious authorities. Yet, there is something to suggest that Crossan might be on t
was sentenced to death by a Roman authority, Pontius Pilate. While in the Synopti
reluctant to sentence Jesus to death, arguing that he has committed no real crime
complicated. There is a potential case to be made that Pilate himself was ultimate
this possibility we shall explore in more detail as we progress throughout this secti

Conflicts in the Gospel of John

For the moment, however, it is first important to talk a bit about conflicts in the
particular, the religious and political conflict is particularly pronounced. For a sta
the trial of Jesus, both by the high priest and later Pontius Pilate, and the narrati
condemn Jesus to death is much more personal than the Synoptics. At the same
between Jesus throughout John with a group simply referred to as the 'Jews'. W
crowds to varying degrees often respond to Jesus' message (though not always i
greater mix of conflicts in John between Jesus, the crowds, the Jews, the religiou
political authorities. Yet, it is the figure of the Jews that has often drawn the mos
suggesting anti-Semitic overtones in John as a whole.

But the term 'Jews' cannot be taken too literally here as it is theologically not a
regularly employing Old Testament and Jewish references throughout his Gospel
teachings and sermons that are clearly intended for both a Jewish and Gentile au
reflects is the changing identity of early Christians at the time of John's writing, w
much later date than the Synoptics. This at least partially explains why the term
often differentiated from other religious authorities such as the Pharisees.

So, we have three different questions emerging from this initial summary. The first
political conflict serves as a way to bring out different teachings by Jesus througho
second asks how narratively the conflict is portrayed in John and who is given blam
how the religious and political conflicts in John potentially represent historical con
within the Johannine community at the time of John's composition. The first quest
Jesus' teachings, such as the 'I am' sayings or the Signs, and won't be covered as e
look at the second and third questions in considerably more detail, analysing who
Jesus' death and the reasons why he both historically and narratively had to die w

Jesus and His Enemies

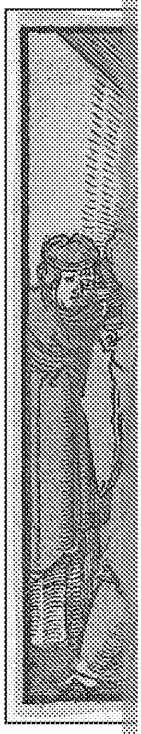
The theologian Alan Culpepper extensively studied conflicts in the Gospel of John
theology of the Gospel. But one initial and important observation he made, whic
that for much of John the conflict is primarily fuelled by the Jews and the Pharise
and identity of Jesus Christ. The moments in which Jesus self-discloses his identi
groups questioning the nature and authority of Jesus, such as in John 5:16–47 af
what is important also is that his opponents here (as compared to the Synoptics)
Jesus' words. They recognised he was identifying himself as being divine and hav
God. As such their unbelief is contrasted with the belief of the reader and forms
continues throughout the Gospel.

In essence, therefore, one basic narrative function of the conflict in John is very sim
discussion around Jesus' identity, allows John to develop his Christology and realis
characters, both supportive and antagonistic, the truth of the claim that the 'Word
other basic narrative function of the conflict in John is its ability to progress the p
Throughout John, there is a fairly linear escalation of tension between Jesus and h
Jesus makes more and more explicit proclamations about his identity and perfor

For example, in Chapter 5 it is simply stated that the Jews are beginning to
they are trying to stone him and by Chapter 11, shortly before the beginning of t
starting to plot to kill Jesus. But the plot in John also takes a number of interestin
For instance, in John 11:45–57, it is stated that the Sanhedrin believed Jesus had
between the Jewish people and Roman authorities. For if Jesus had continued to
a political revolution may have occurred among the Jewish people, leading the R
them and cause unnecessary deaths. The fact that this very event happened with
Jerusalem in 70 CE suggests that this plot point is potentially not far from reality.

Therefore, it is important to consider these plot points not just as authorial editi
historical facts embedded into the Gospel narrative. This argument is reinforced
the passion in John to be one of the more historically reliable parts of his Gospel
Synoptics. The extra detail in the trial and execution of Jesus thus may well be th
unavailable to the other Gospel writers. Yet, if we accept this to be the case, the
seems to place most of the blame for Jesus' death at the hands of the religious a
almost sympathetic figure who is forced into ordering the crucifixion against his
face value here, or are there other reasons to suspect Pilate is not so innocent in

The Pharisees and Conflict in John



Ellis Rivkin is a New Testament scholar well known for arguing that despite appearances in John, it is not actually the Jewish authorities who are truly responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. Why is this the case? Well, first we have to take a look at the depiction of the religious authorities in John. If we take the Pharisees as an example, they are often portrayed as being rigid, inflexible figures wholly concerned with ritual and not real theological matters. Moreover, this picture is similar to the one in the Synoptics. But what Rivkin argues is that this picture hasn't been readily challenged enough by New Testament scholars who have accepted the Gospel accounts of the Pharisees at face value.

In contrast to this picture, Rivkin contends that the historical evidence suggests that the Pharisees were not grossly concerned with strict maintenance of priestly aspects of the Law. Rather they stressed the correct religious life to be one which sought salvation in personal commitment to the general aspects of Law within a synagogue environment. This does not mean that they were completely beholden to the rules and regulations of this environment, though. Instead, they often sought reform to the Law, but through proper legislation and organisation. Rivkin thus identifies the real conflict in John as lying in Jesus' claim to utmost authority, the and could change it as he saw fit. The Pharisees, being committed to a more stru naturally reluctant to accept this claim coming from what they perceived to be a

If we accept Rivkin's claims, then the conflicts in John become a bit more historica anticipated. For it suggests that the Pharisees were not idle opponents of Jesus bu Jesus claiming authority over the Law. For example, the conflict over the adulterou Chapter 8 in John perhaps exposes these kinds of divisions, and the Pharisees' pro not seem to want to engage them in serious discussion about reform of the Law. R Pharisees are portrayed as using questions about the Law as philosophical traps fo

Thus, in John 8:5, the Pharisees use a literal understanding of Lev 20:10 in an att fraud. However, if we understand Rivkin correctly, then it may be the case that J effectively glorify the authority of Jesus. If this pattern also holds true through Jo identify a consistent problem in the author heightening aspects of religious confl depiction of the Jews. But how does this relate to the other figures of religious confl been misrepresented, how should we analyse the Jews, or even the Sanhedrin?

The Jews and Conflict in John

We've noted that the term 'Jews' is already a bit problematic in John, but we hav
detail. The Jews first and foremost can be contrasted with the Pharisees. Typicall
quite a bit more authority than the Jews, and as Culpepper notes, often emerge
Jews. As such, the Jews typically don't invite the same level of hostility as the Ph
most pronounced appearances earlier in the Gospels. They are sent to question
while in other passages, such as John 7:32 or 7:48, they are connected but distin
However, Culpepper contends that from John 9 onwards, they largely cease to b
with the other religious authorities as the plot progresses.

Regardless, more than any other source of opposition, it is the Jews who most con
term is used 70 times throughout the Gospel! Yet, mod[illegible]ch[illegible]lars don't typically
group. In fact, the scholar Urban von Wahlde a[illegible]u[illegible]s th[illegible]ohn's use of Jews doesn
racial connotations, instead just being [illegible]d[illegible] catch-all term for groups hostile t
noting that apart from twice in [illegible]n's [illegible]John 6:41 and 6:52), the Jews typically ap
another kind of crow[illegible] be that 'Jews' then is a term used to denote religiou
while speci[illegible]s s[illegible]h as Pharisees are used when hostile forces require identif

Altogether, it becomes possible to trace growing levels of authority, hostility and u
groups John identifies throughout his Gospel, beginning with the crowds, followed
finally the high priests. It is also notable that as the plot progresses the focus turns
who are plotting to kill Jesus and there becomes less focus on the Jews. In some se
theological, allowing John to explore the different ways individuals responded to J
important narratively. The development of Jesus' ministry attracts hostility from h
and these levels are the ones who at least partially orchestrate the trial and crucifi

Discussion Activity:
Which group do you believe persecutes Jesus the most throughout the Fourth Gos
small groups.

The Role of the High Priests and the Sanhedrin in John

We've talked a bit about how the conflicts in John escalate throughout the Gosp
greater religious authorities as the plot progresses. The culmination of this confli
the high priests who conduct Jesus' trial, and the latter begins plotting to kill Jesu
However, the Sanhedrin are only introduced once by name at the same time Cai
the Synoptics, they do not reappear to conduct Jesus' trial. Rather, in John 18:24
brought to Caiaphas, and then in John 18:28, it is stated he was brought from Ca
exactly why this is missing, but some have speculated that John may have regard
unreliable considering the trial primarily derived from M[illegible]k[illegible]es not conform hi
trials the Sanhedrin carried out at the time. Inste[illegible]d, [illegible]John, Jesus simply has a b
dialogue with Annas.

This is flipped in compa[illegible]ison w[illegible]h the Synoptics, where the theologically intensiv
conducted [illegible]e [illegible]nhedrin or high priests, not with Pilate. Naturally, this can
isn't it these [illegible]us authorities who have been persecuting Jesus throughout t
responsible for bringing him in front of Pilate? In fact, throughout John, Caiapha
death in order to bring political favour and peace for them. Despite taking issue
the reasons presented for Jesus' death often seem more political than theologica
Pilate, the religious authorities seem to ignore their commitments to the Jewish
reason possible Pilate should have to crucify Jesus.

In an important sense, John wants to show the resolve and dignity of Jesus in co
Jewish leaders who are willing to abandon all their principles to ensure Jesus' de
there is a climax of the belief/unbelief theme that Culpepper identifies as being
aspects of the conflict throughout John. If we take Culpepper's side, we are, ther
religious authorities are the ones primarily responsible for Jesus' death. It is thei
any political avenue to secure his death and is they who bring Jesus before Pilate
the Gospel how this conflict has evolved and the increasing frustration the religi
preaches his divinity and authority in the face of their failing attempts to discred

As part of this, though, we have to explore the more detailed dimensions of this
matures across John's Gospel. For as we noted, although the same conflict is pre
more pronounced in John, and we are left with a dilemma about how much of it
theological discourse and just how much it may have contributed towards Jesus'
quick look at what is known as the **two-level drama** before analysing in more de
conflict which drive the plot in John.

Two-level Drama

We've noted above how Culpepper looks primarily towards the religious author
But Culpepper's interpretative approach needs to be outlined a bit more when t
Culpepper favours what can be called a **narrative-critical** approach to John, whic
approach we analysed in 4.1. This means looking at John as if it were a piece of l
conflict, examining how it is structured in order to reveal the overall theological
Gospel. In this sense, Culpepper is not wholly concerned with the historicity of Jo
John's Gospel isn't to convey specific historical events but to trace the outline of
give context to his divine nature.

This summary of course doesn't fully capture the nuances of Culpepper's approa
recognise when looking at his claims. The late authorship of John means that it is
traditions and documents already circulated among Christian communities. The
well have had to be personal to a particular community or event within the early
purpose of John may be understandably very different from the Synoptics. At the
gives us reason to question the historicity of John, as Rivkin does, and think abou
Gospel really reflects the conflicts that existed in Jesus' life.

These issues particularly arise when we consider John to be what has been called
that John was not only written for a broad narrative and theological purpose, bu
where the drama in the Gospel reflects the drama that existed in the Johannine
have been a strong focus of modern Johannine studies, popularised in particular
Martyn, and there are key pieces of textual evidence to support such a view on J
where the blind man's parents are scared of being 'put out of the synagogue' (N
acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah, a fate that later befalls the blind man hi
odd in a Gospel preoccupied with Jesus, and it has been speculated that it is aim
Christians who have been themselves thrown out of the Synagogue.

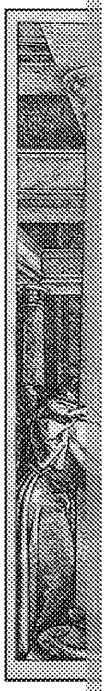
For it is important to note that early Christians are most likely not to have labelled
would have seen themselves as Jewish followers of Jesus, and it is likely that only b
were the Christians properly forming a breakaway religion. Thus, later Gospels suc
kinds of conflict that would have emerged from such a split through narrative pas
identified with. Of course, being in the present era, we don't have full access to th
potential passages so we can only guess by looking at their form, style and place in

But should we be a bit more cautious when examining the Gospel in this way? It
project meaning where there is none, and scholars such as Gail O'Day have critic
too heavily on the perceived two-level drama throughout the Gospel. Jesus ends
different religious groups, not just one, and it may be that the overall arc of Jesu
its secondary meaning to the Johannine community. Moreover, how do we unde
where John does appear more historical, such as the passion narrative?

Despite such problems, it is useful to consider these broader issues when analys
and the religious authorities in John. While they exist in the same manner across
different approaches to considering the unique elements of John. We might ado
focusing on John as a broad narrative, or Rivkin's more historical approach. We n
conflict is heightened because of potential tensions in early Christian communiti
these approaches might have some merit, and the question of why Jesus dies in
conclusive answer!

The First Battle – The Clearing of the Temple

With that in mind, let's think about the first major piece of conflict in John. This o
John 2:15–25, compared to the Synoptics, in which these events occur much late
it seems to suggest that John wants to fire forward with the drama between Jesu
quickly as possible, or at least give an initial spark to start the train in motion. But
quite ahistorical, not the least because this suggests that Jesus visited Jerusalem
returning later after his tour of Galilee and Judea.



Yet at heart the argument remains the same as in the Synoptics. The temple clearing is likely to have occurred in the outer Court of the Gentiles in the Temple where people would have been able to exchange currency, purchase animals for sacrifice and perhaps perform a variety of other mercantile endeavours. So, when Jesus shouts 'Stop turning my Father's house into a market' (NIV), his anger matches what could have been a real historical problem in the Temple. Yet, the clearest reason for the clearing in John appears in the next set of passages where the Temple authorities confront Jesus and question his own authority for throwing the money changers out of the court.

Moreover, we encounter the routine ignorance and confusion of these authorities that we will come to see again and again throughout John. When Jesus speaks of the Temple being raised in three days, they do not realise Jesus is talking about the resurrection, not the physical Temple itself. Thus, in this short passage, we see the two sides emerge in the conflict. Jesus is the voice of God and revelation, who recognises the path of his life and what is to come. On the other side, we have the religious authorities, who are ignorant about Jesus' divinity and the demands of their own faith. It has often been claimed by scholars that John's inc
historical revisionism but something closer to what Culpepper argues, that it sets
themes of his Gospel from the outset and charts the reasons for the religious au
charges of **blasphemy** to the **threat to their power**.

The Second Battle – Conflicts over Jesus' Identity

After this initial conflict, Culpepper point[illegible] the rest of the conflicts in the
uniform structure. Typically, this form [illegible]es as follows:

1. Jesus teaches or [illegible] a miracle.
2. The Jewish authorities criticise Jesus' claims, authority or power.
3. Jesus elaborates on his actions, nature and purpose.
4. The Jews/Pharisees respond with disbelief and hostility.

We've seen this formula in action already in the clearing of the Temple, although
teaching or miracle. Yet it shows that in some important sense the drama in John
literary structure is unlikely to be mirrored in actual historical events. Instead, w
upon basic conflicts in Jesus' ministry to develop a broader theology and narrativ
we don't have to discard John for being completely ahistorical but rather have to
reflects the broader arc of Jesus' life and the beliefs of the author.

This means that the conflicts in John may well have existed historically, but we ju
how they occurred, either because the author did not have good sources or mor
theological concern. But in this section we will take a look at this latter idea by e
often revolve around Jesus' authority and his relationship to the **Law** and other i
as the **Sabbath**. As always, we will be drawing on anthology passages at times, a
them with a close eye to get a deeper sense of how this drama works in practice

John 5 and the Sabbath

But for the moment let's consider John 5, particularly John 5:16–47. Here, the re
Jews begins, with Jesus healing an invalid during the Sabbath at the beginning of
stated that the Jewish leaders 'began to persecute him' (NIV) due to them perce
Sabbath. Jesus' response, which refers to God as his F[illegible] doesn't do much to
instead they try to attack and kill him for 'making himself equal with God'. This f
the key plot points and themes that persist throughout the rest of the conflicts i
unbelief of the Jewish crowds, Jesus' proposed authority over the Law.

However, t[illegible]al[illegible] a specific emphasis on Jesus' power being part of a contin
trying to su[illegible]esus surpasses God or the prophets, since at the end of the pa
do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?' (NIV). Si
opponents cannot understand his teachings and nature is not because he is goin
instead because they do not truly understand the dimensions of their own faith.
amongst the Synoptics, particularly Matthew, where you see Jesus express simil
Sermon on the Mount. There Jesus, like in John, is expressing continuity with Jew
It is only in the minds of his opponents that he is contravening the Law.

The Hour Has Not Yet Come

These themes continue into John 7, 8 and 9 in different guises as the hostility be
authorities ramps up. Yet, what emerges is not the strength of Jesus' opponents
foretelling the time of his death. In John 7:30 it is said 'they tried to seize him, bu
because his hour had not yet come'. It is hard not to see the strangeness of this p
or attack Jesus could they not just physically do it? Later on in the chapter, Nicod
reason, talking the Pharisees out of arresting Jesus since it would be breaking th
time for Jesus to die continues in John 8 where the Pharisees try to stone Jesus,
death again.

But throughout these passages the conflict also develops, with the reasons for th
clearer. Nicodemus in Chapter 7 highlights what the reader is perhaps feeling as
opposition of the religious authorities to Jesus is not really predicated on his tran
are also willing to transgress the Law to attack him! What it reveals is that perso
motivate Jesus' opponents most of all. At the same time, Jesus stands in tension w
necessary salvation history. Jesus is destined to die at a particular time, but why
comical in their attempts to arrest him at [illegible] because the narrative dictates th

The Plot to Kill Jesus

We have to [illegible]nt John 11 for real progress to begin on this front. There are p
Jesus might [illegible]ve been randomly killed by his religious enemies until this poi
does not talk about them. This in one sense can lend ammo to Rivkin's argument
authorities are ultimately very misrepresented. They perhaps only exist for John
picture of Jesus' life and death, and in real life their opposition to his ministry ca
dimensional as his Gospel suggests. Yet by Chapter 11, we begin to real find real
death was demanded by the religious authorities.

The key passage, John 11:45–57, occurs after the seventh and final sign in the Boo between this book and the first part of the Book of Glory, which deals with Jesus' j eventual trial, crucifixion and resurrection. Here we see a meeting of the Sanhedri In real life, this would have consisted of 70 men along with the high priest (Caiapha Moses (see Numbers 11:16–30). John's depiction is partly realistic in the sense tha been responsible for rule in Judea and actively looked for particular breaches in M be the Messiah). They did possess wide-ranging powers but at the same time they the Imperial Roman rulers, who ultimately were responsible for political law acros

Thus, the Sanhedrin were taken seriously in Judea but were limited in their power chief priests in seeking the arrest of Jesus make sense. They wish to avoid an unne Roman violence and oppression. The fact that they believe Jesus is anything but th to seek some sort of punishment. Yet it is Caiaphas specifically who steps in and pr be punished but ultimately should die, a sentence that could only have been mean authorities. It is within this intervention that the religious authorities become unite purpose against Jesus. From this point on they accept no second measure and wil

Evaluating the religious opposition to Jesus

In some sen can see that the opposition to Jesus is manufactured as part o first half of the Gospel. As we shall see later, once Jesus' arrest has been perform religious authorities only properly emerge once Pilate talks to Jesus and question as we shall see, they end up claiming that they unequivocally support Caesar and crime against Caesar himself. In a sense this matches the kind of hypocrisy the re throughout John, but it also marks the greatest low for their characters as they b own religion and country just to see Jesus die.

But the big question is whether it is the religious authorities who are ultimately r Throughout the Book of Signs they present a laundry list of crimes that Jesus has revolve around his contravention of the **Law of Moses**. Yet, there are plenty of o On the religious side, Jesus is also accused of **blasphemy**, of claiming **false autho** These issues certainly exist to some extent in the other Gospels, but often there either Jesus claiming he is the Messiah or, like John, teachings that are misunder

But the other key conflicts that emerge centre around the threat to power Jesus Essentially, Jesus is claiming authority over the Sanhedrin, and as the Sanhedrin Judea, this results in a number of political and social issues. If people listen to Jes then they can no longer effectively rule. At the same time, if Jesus provokes a re also likely to be the religious authorities that are most punished. So, the Sanhedr their worldly survival. Trying to see Jesus killed is a matter of **political expedienc** their myriad of personal problems disappear!

Overall, there is a strong narrative case to be made within John that the religious caused Jesus' death. Yet we have also seen at times that the antagonism betwee Jesus is a bit one-dimensional and even cartoonish. Jesus faces hostility from the never faces any real repercussions because he is not supposed to die at those po sense, this can be read as prophecy, but in another sense, it can be seen to unde religious authorities in John. Were they really so opposed to Jesus or does John j controversy? Even when we think about the possibility also of a two-level dra religious au s to be the true villains to appeal to his community during a t Christian Church?

These are all possibilities, but we have missed out one key element so far: Pontiu authorities. If it wasn't entirely the religious authorities, then what role do these might they have had to kill Jesus? This will be the focus of our section.

Discussion Activity:
How much do you think the religious authorities contributed to the death of Jesus?

The Role of the Political Authorities

In John, the presence of the Roman authorities is primarily represented by Ponti
of Judea during the ministry and crucifixion of Jesus. What is generally odd thou
and especially in John, Pilate is presented as somewhat of a sympathetic figure, w
Jesus to death. We see this in John 18:28–40 where Jesus is questioned by Pilate
him by the religious authorities. During this dialogue Pilate seems measured and
bit of a surprise when you look at the history of Roman occupation of Judea, whi
and violence.

But could Pilate have been an oasis of calm among these rising tensions? If the G
yes, but we don't know much about Pilates' life or rule, and the few historians w
Tacitus and Josephus, generally present him as being [illegible]as with a lot of the Jew
recorded by Josephus that Pilate did much to [illegible]ir[illegible]s between the Roman a
of the region, often acting in ways that [illegible]offended their religious beliefs. T
when the religious authorities [illegible]m[illegible]sperate to collaborate with Pilate and the
Jesus' death.

The basic po[illegible]consider, though, is that even if throughout John the religious
pushing for the death, does this effectively exonerate Pontius Pilate? If we accep
then maybe so. But if we evaluate other historical evidence then our response m
First, though, we should take a look at the account of Jesus' trial and sentencing

The Trial of Jesus in John

We've noted before that a curious element of John is the absence of a trial by the
questioned by the high priest, who asks what he had been teaching his followers. J
flippantly, noting that the question is pointless when the high priest already knows
here is that this questioning is just for show, since the high priest has no real autho
Jesus, and the trial (led by Annas at this point) is somewhat flawed. There are no o
presentation of evidence against Jesus, the accused. They are effectively asking hi

After this point at John 18:24, Jesus is sent to Caiaphas the high priest, but no de
Instead, John focuses on the second and third denials of Peter and simply says at
before Caiaphas 'ended in the early hours of the morning'. Yet, in the Synoptics t
passion narrative. This is the biggest deviation for John, who instead turns towar
which the religious authorities are notably absent because going inside 'would d
obsession with the Law trumps any personal integrity they might have during the

But here we see the issue the religious authorities face in full swing. They claim t
but they can't list any particular crime he has committed that contravenes Roma
they wish to uphold. As such, they try to claim that Jesus [illegible]ing himself the 'Ki
a very obvious political connotation in threatening [illegible]n[illegible]rule. But Pilate perha
and when questioning Jesus gets no firm [illegible]r from him about the truth of thi
he is not laying claim to the kingship [illegible]f anything earthly, but instead his authorit
world' (NIV). So, Pilate is [illegible]o[illegible]a bind. He even asks the religious authorities
him as per [illegible]di[illegible]Passover, where one prisoner is released each year. B
authorities [illegible]te to release Barabbas, who John explicitly notes is a revolutio

This is of course a bit ironic when the religious leaders are accusing Jesus effecti
However, Pilate eventually relents and sentences Jesus to be crucified at the beg
there are numerous times where Pilate stresses that he has found Jesus not guilt
bloodthirsty religious authorities who are demanding his death (see John 19:4 a
seems to get frightened by the situation, asking Jesus at John 19:10 why he is no
at 19:12 trying to release him personally. It is not until John 19:15, when the pri
acting on behalf of Caesar, that Pilate relents and hands Jesus over to be crucifie

The Role of Pilate in the Death of Jesus

It is difficult to historically assess Pilate's role in the death of Jesus when all we have as sources are the Gospels. Yet, if we take John at face value, then Pilate almost seems like the voice of reason against the religious authorities. He doesn't want to kill an innocent man, yet his hand is forced by the priests, who are hell-bent on seeing Jesus crucified. However, this picture is a bit more complex in John than we might initially think. Pilate might be guilty of the same kind of politically expedient thinking that the religious authorities show throughout John. In a nutshell, Pilate might not have wanted to kill Jesus simply because this would have meant he was deferring to the authority of the priests, rather than acting of his own volition. As ruler, he sim[illegible]dn't want to kill anyone the priests brought before him!

As Leon Morris and other sch[illegible] have pointed out, such a decision still implicates Pilate. Ultimately, Pilate can be seen to just be politically reluctant t[illegible]te Christ on political grounds. If he defers to the priests, then [illegible]becoming subordinate to the Jewish authorities. On the other hand, if he chooses not to execute Jesus, he is potentially letting a religious and political radical free with no repercussions. This could invoke further violence and rebellion from a crowd that clearly still has revolutionary sympathies with their request to release Barabbas instead of Jesus. Thus, Pilate is not truly innocent, just preoccupied with political affairs and ignorant to the wider truth Jesus is trying to bring to the world. If we take this view, then Pilate and the religious authorities are equally responsible for the death of Jesus. Pilate could have easily saved Jesus' life, but in effect was too self-serving or cow

Assessing the Real Guilt of Pilate

This might seem to be a good conclusion to take, but let's think a little more abo have. We've noted that the Roman authorities weren't exactly peaceful rulers ar have been aware of this, writing his Gospel after the siege and sacking of Jerusal not hundreds of thousands of people died as a result of war, famine and enslave figure at a very unrealistic 1.1 million deaths). The tensions and violence which le grew throughout the first century CE. Would it really be the case that Pilate woul death of someone accused of revolutionary activity?

Rivkin argues not. He holds that the trial of Jesus does not involve Pilate trying t but rather just seeking a quick end to a process which he cares little for. Thus, th the 'King of the Jews' upon Jesus is just an easy way to ac[illegible] Jesus of treason. I that prevents this easy charge from sticking. But t[illegible]a[illegible]plenty of other reason figure. His seeming popularity among m[illegible]ish people would have been eno sentence, and this would have only b[illegible]acerbated by his triumphant entry in rides a donkey through t[illegible] during the Passover celebrations, with the cr the King of [illegible] Ev[illegible]he wasn't preaching violence, this would have been see by the Rom[illegible]orities.

Moreover, think back a moment to the hierarchy of power in Judea. We noted th have the power to execute Jesus. Only the Roman authorities did, and it's their d results in Jesus' trial. Yet, if Pilate didn't want to lose face in front of the priests, view Pilate's questioning of Jesus in the same manner as the show trial conducte It's just an excuse to try to execute Jesus as quickly as possible for whatever reas Pilate asks Jesus why he does not want to be saved, he may just be hurt since Jes Thus, Pilate's pride is on show during John 19, not any sort of compassion.

But altogether, the historical circumstances of the Roman occupation of Judea s
There are plenty of reasons to think Jesus would have been seen as a threat by t
they were the only ones with the power to sentence Jesus to death, we might w
claim Pilate was wholly responsible for the death. In the final section, we shall co
theological angle than John.

Discussion Activity:
Do you think Pilate should be held responsible for the death of Jesus? Or are the
be innocent? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

Who was Responsible for the Death of Jesus?

We've gone quite in-depth into a lot of the different conflicts within John, but th
remaining: who actually was responsible for Jesus' death? We've broadly analyse
this matter. The first draws on the work of Culpepper, who analyses the conflicts
looks at their narrative function. From this work, we can note that across all the
agreement that the religious authorities had a significant role in securing the dea
conflict as a literary tool to give context to Jesus' ethical and Christological teach
John's detailed discussion of Pilate gives reason to partially recuse him of respon
may be that he was between a rock and a hard place in having to grant the religi

Beyond narrative criticism, there may also be a basic historical case for this view
Christianity eventually split from Judaism, and the textual evidence to support so
and the religious authorities of the time as suggesting that they did play some ro
and pressing for his crucifixion. Moreover, we can note that the Sanhedrin, thou
to condemn someone to death, would have had the means and ability to bring Je
try him for transgressions of the Law. Simply put, it is far from inconceivable tha
persecuted by his own community for his more radical teachings.

The trouble is, though, we can't really verify any of this historically. All we've got
presented in the Gospels and our historical knowledge of religious authorities at
former, we might note that by the time the Gospels were being written, Christia
themselves as a new sect or religion, and they may have even been persecuted b
means there might have been authorial reasons for Mark and the other Gospel w
between Jesus and the religious authorities over Jesus and the political authoriti
imagine the Gospel authors to be politically or religiously motivated, but this ma
of broader conflicts between early Christians and Jews.

Moreover, we can think of Rivkin's more nuanced analysis of the Pharisees and r
depiction in the Gospels is clearly one-sided and one-dimensional, especially in J
have some evidence that the Gospel authors might not have been entirely impar
conflicts in Jesus' ministry. This isn't to say there was no religious conflict, but it
the Gospel authors. Moreover, the depiction of Pilate in the Gospels doesn't exa
knowledge of the figure. The crucifixion of Jesus would have potentially been an
decision for a Roman governor looking to stop Jewish rebellion, so his indecision
accurate. Even Josephus, the first reference given to Jesus by a non-Christian a
was killed by Pilate, without referencing any religious conflict.

Thus, it seems wrong to fully exculpate Pilate of responsibility for Jesus' death. In
the religious authorities wanted to condemn Jesus to death, they would have sin
in the first half of John. So, why, if they had him already captured and had found
him over to the Romans, knowing there's a chance Pilate might not agree to his
of issues with the Gospel narratives which mean we might lend a sceptical eye to
death of Jesus on the religious authorities alone. At the same time, we can be eq
views which lay the blame squarely at the feet of Pilate. There is evidence for bo
perspectives appears to be conclusive. Yet, the reality may also be that Jesus' de
social and political forces we might never be quite fully aware of.

Quick Quiz

1. What is the name of the high priest who plots to kill Jesus in John?
2. What is the catch-all term John gives to religious opponents of Jesus?
3. Who reluctantly condemns Jesus to death by crucifixion in John?
4. What title is Jesus given blame for during his arrest and trial?
5. During what event in John does Jesus show his opposition to Jewish trad
6. What scholar uses narrative criticism to analyse religious conflict in John
7. What scholar uses historical criticism to examine the scholarly prejudices other first-century Jewish groups?
8. What is the name for the Jewish Council of high priests and elders?

5.3: Texts and Interpretation – T and Resurrection Narratives in L

What you will learn in this section:

The different crucifixion and resurrection narratives throughout the Gospel of Lu

- Important crucifixion themes of Old Testament symbolism, prophecy fulfilm forgiveness, salvation history, and the religious significance of these for first
- The continuation of these themes in the resurrection narratives, and analys discipleship and ecclesiology during the resurrection appearances.
- The nuances of the crucifixion and resurrection narratives in Luke, with a fo divergence from the other Synoptic Gospels.

Starter Activity:

Revisit yo[illegible] prophecy and the Messiah. What were the expectat for a mess[illegible] would they have expected one who would have died? Make s inform you[illegible]dies as you progress throughout this section.

Key Thinker	
Name	Ian Howard Marshall
Born	1934
Died	2015
Key text	*Luke: Historian and Theologian* (1970)
Why are they important?	Marshall was a well-regarded theologian whose work in the century focused extensively on the New Testament. He is know as a historian against excessive redaction criticism, which ofte obsessed with rewriting traditional eschatology and ethics wit

Key Thinker	
Name	Frank Matera
Born	1942
Died	N/A
Key text	*Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting the Syn Stories* (1986)
Why are they important?	A well-known biblical scholar who has written extensively on th Luke focuses on his use and reinterpretation of Matthew agains and Gentiles.

Introduction – The Crucifixion and Resurrection in the New Testament

So far in section 5 we've looked both at [illegible]logy in the New Testament and t death. It is thus only fitting that we close this section by looking at two of the mo Gospels, the crucifixion and resurrection. Both play a different role in Christian th both are also [illegible]ly linked. In Christian tradition, Jesus' death was not accide for God's sa[illegible] of humankind. The crucifixion of Jesus is necessary in order to and the resurrection represents at its most abstract a victory over death and the individuals who might have previously been condemned.

But how exactly are these events represented in the Gospels? Is there a straightf of each text to this tradition or are there subtleties and complexities lying benea these questions by looking at the crucifixion and resurrection in Luke, a Gospel w meaning of Luke's crucifixion and its connection to the resurrection. For what m **atonement** is practically a non-existent theme in Luke. This lack of focus on the a has led New Testament scholars to argue that the death of Jesus, although bring

redemption, lacks a particular soteriological emphasis present in the other three simply held to be part of the divine plan before the resurrection; a particular for innocent martyr; a demonstration of discipleship; or a mix of all these various re

It is worth keeping these themes in your mind as you read through the crucifixio glib, it is not even unfair to argue that Luke doesn't really care about the theolog It is a valid case to argue that Luke might have seen it merely as a necessary step event of the resurrection. Whatever your beliefs, though, it is key to analyse the within Luke's focus on repentance and redemption, and these concepts in the co history outlined through his Gospel. We will briefly look at these ideas before go what meanings we might draw from it.

Luke, Atonement and Salvation

Hans Conzelmann was one of the fir[illegible]ic theologians to not only identify the salvation history in Luke, bu[illegible] to give it a specific structure and interpretation interpreted to be a [illegible] salvation history in Luke, starting with creation, pr the middle [illegible] Church and Parousia at the end. Naturally, it is this latter par are element[illegible] salvation history you will have already studied, from the birt the Gospel to the eschatological teachings of Jesus during his ministry. In each, y focus on the importance of repentance, but the meaning of this repentance in a arrival marks the coming Kingdom of God and a transformation in spiritual affair God's act of creation.

However, rather interestingly, Conzelmann regards Luke to be quite down to earth history. He argues there is none of the passion 'mysticism' present in the other Go nor of the atoning importance of Jesus' death that is given by Paul in his letters. Ra detailed as a necessity in accordance with a divine plan and as written in scripture consider that Luke was written relatively late as a Gospel compared to say Mark. W as Christian history progresses into the later part of the first century, but we might against the perception of the author of Luke as a 'historian'. Simply put, we should professed historian prioritises salvation history as a major theme of his Gospel ove

But Conzelmann's argument is more than just conceptual. He makes a number o omissions and additions Luke makes within his Gospel that show Luke's focus on matters. For instance, he notes the following:

1. Luke omits Mark 10:45, which states 'For even the Son of Man did not come to give his life as a ransom for many.' (NIV). This passage is included in Matt death, but also the importance of it. By redacting this passage, scholars hav the atoning aspects of Jesus' death.
2. The death throughout the final two chapters of Luke is referred to in genera resurrection appearances, Jesus describes it as necessary, but does not acco is the resurrection that is the demonstration of Jesus' divinity, authority, an his death truly significant should be expected to be dwelt upon more.
3. Luke is [illegible] to identify Jesus as similar to the suffering servant in I descrip[illegible] Jesus in 22:37, which echoes Isaiah 53:12. However, Conzelm referenced as a part of the fulfilment narrative in Luke and leaves out the at particularly the latter part of Isaiah 53:12, which states 'For he bore the sin included in Luke's account.

All these are instances where atonement theology is not only not considered, bu narratives. But if Jesus' death is not for the purpose of atonement, then what pu one option is to consider Jesus' death as a kind of sad necessity. For example, th Dibelius argues that Luke simply presents Jesus to be an innocent, suffering mart

pop up during the actual crucifixion where Jesus is repeatedly stated to be innoc
Jesus still focusing on the importance of repentance and forgiveness. For examp

1. Throughout the passion narrative, Pilate proclaims Jesus to be innocent thre
eventual crucifixion.
2. At Luke 23:34, Jesus calls for forgiveness for those persecuting and crucifyin
influences a criminal next to him to repent, who in turn also proclaims Jesus
3. After Jesus dies, a centurion observing his death also proclaims his righteou
once more (see Luke 23:47).

All these characteristics can be said to fit a picture of Jesus as an **innocent marty**
this portrayal fits with Old Testament **prophecy**, another theme that has been ar
the crucifixion and resurrection in Luke. But first it is examine the relevant cha
analyse some key scriptural compon in more detail.

Discussion Activity
Can you s form of atonement mythology in Luke? Or is this absent from his
narratives? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection in the Gospel of Luke

One interesting aspect to note initially is that, of all the Gospels, Luke has the lon
Compared to the Synoptics in particular, Luke really delves into each of the appe
return is a fulfilment of both Old Testament scripture and his own prophesising o
the only Gospel to provide a direct account of the ascension, which although ver
is surprisingly featured little within the actual Gospels themselves. There are a n
the case (one example being the author himself running out of papyrus at the en
it is worth remembering that the author of Luke also wrote Acts, which picks up
after Jesus' death.

Yet this length only reinforces the slight strangeness of the treatment given to the
Luke, does not carry a strict theological significance, then why is so much detail giv
complex, but in short, we might initially speculate on three possible factors. The fi
Luke acting as the good historian, recording as many details as possible about the
second is that there is some deeper theological significance to Jesus' death which
event itself, but the broader salvation history set out within the Gospel. The third i
may carry details that were important to the community Luke was writing for. For
significant debate about the moral character of Jesus within first-century Jewish ar
Portraying Jesus as an innocent martyr may have been a defence of Jesus in light o

Keep in mind all of these possibilities as we work through some key aspects of ea
resurrection narratives in Luke. All may have importance in different ways to the aut
might well be prioritised over another.

Luke 23:2F The Crucifixion

The death o in Luke is portrayed as a rather protracted and cruel affair. Al
clamouring for his execution, with Luke 23:27 indicating there was a significant n
death, there are plenty of people, such as the rulers (Luke 23:35) and the soldier
sneering at him. Yet despite this focus, the actual event does not dwell on the ag
Compared to Mark, for example, there is very little sign of the human Jesus, and
often seems to be quite a passive figure. What we do get instead is an emphasis
martyrdom, plenty of final moral and eschatological teaching and a reaffirmation

Yet, there is some mystery to Jesus' teaching here. For example, think for a mom

> *'For the time will come when you will say, "Blessed are the childless wome*
> *bore and the breasts that never nursed!" Then*
>
> *they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!"*
>
> *and to the hills, "Cover us!"*
>
> *For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen whe*
> (Luke 23:29–31 NRSV)

Here, Jesus seems to be imagining where women will be glad to be childless in li
particular meaning of the passage is a bit of a mystery. Overall, it is likely that Jes
what the fate of the guilty will be once he is gone, especially those who have tre
the saying is deeply eschatological in tone, but the context of it is a bit puzzling a
how to interpret it.

However, the rest of the crucifixion narrative is clearer in its meaning. The first p
and insults [redacted] Jesus while he is being crucified. Above all, the emphasis is
While those mocking him are trying to claim that Jesus cannot be the Messiah (o
himself), the reader by this point is well aware of Jesus' nature and recognises th
explicitly spelled out in Luke 23:34, where Jesus directly states about his persecu
they do not know what they are doing'. (NIV)

> *The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said,*
> *save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One.'*
>
> *The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar*
> *king of the Jews, save yourself.'*
>
> *There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the King of the Je*
>
> *One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the*
> *us!'* (Luke 23:35–39 NIV)

This sets out a powerful contrast between Jesus and his persecutors, for it implie
preordained, but precisely because it was preordained, those persecuting him ar
This ties in with the latter part of the crucifixion narrative, which is largely focuse
forgiveness and repentance as the criminal next to Jesus asserts not only Jesus' i
for his crimes. Jesus' response here is telling, as he indicates that the criminal's r
own salvation.

> *But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since yo*
> *sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deser*
> *nothing wrong.'*
>
> *Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'*
>
> *Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise*

Thus, the most significant part of the crucifixion can be seen initially to assert thr
Jesus' death:

1. The necessity of Jesus' death in order to prove his status as the Messiah.
2. His innocence and martyrdom during the crucifixion.
3. The importance of forgiveness and repentance, even during times of great s

These aspects will prove important when we turn to the resurrection narrative n
author largely spells out narrative details necessary to understand the resurrecti
Jesus' body taken down from the cross by Joseph and lain in a tomb before the b
this process is also witnessed by the women who came with Jesus from Galilee a
witness the empty tomb.

Luke 24:1–52 – The Resurrection and Ascension

The account of the resurrection given in Luke is the longest of any of the Synopti
are not present in Mark or Matthew. Yet, this doesn't necessarily mean that Luke
historically accurate depiction of the resurrection, and there are a number of pa
reconcile Luke's additions with the other Gospels.

Let's start at the beginning. We will revisit the first section when we discuss the
Luke begins with the women discovering that Jesus is no longer in the tomb whe
crucifixion. Moreover, on finding the tomb empty, they are suddenly greeted by
like lightning' (NIV). These can be understood to be angels when one looks at the
Matthew, but in addition the figures stress that Jesus foretold of this event durin
inclusion of a prophecy fulfilment passage is not pres[illegible] other Gospels an
concerned with this theme from the moment Jesus' resurrection becomes appar

> *'He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still
> Son of Man must be given over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and
> again'* (Luke [illegible] NRSV)

Various nam[illegible] and non-named women ('Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mo
with them' (NIV)) then relay this information to the apostles, who search the tom
major appearance of Jesus then occurs during Luke 24:13–35 where he appears
Cleopas, who are downcast about the death of Jesus and, despite the rumours o
faith in this event. As a result, Jesus berates them for not recognising his return
only when Jesus breaks bread with them in the evening that they comprehend w

> *He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the
> not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And
> all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures c*
> 24:25–27 NRSV)

This appearance is wholly unique to Luke and its historicity has been doubted, es
appears to be an elaborate allegory for the problems of unbelief among Jesus' fo
understood the necessity of Jesus' death in order that prophecy might be fulfille
kind of revelation that is stressed throughout Luke, both as part of his salvation
for repentance.

The final appearance doesn't stray far from these themes either. The closest par
Luke are still very different. Jesus shows himself to the eleven disciples after they
appearance, and he proves himself to be truly resurrected by getting them to to
bears the marks of his crucifixion. Once more again, Jesus stresses that all this is
prophesising and that their minds should be open and understanding of what th

> *He said to them, 'This is what I told you whi[illegible] I was still with you: Everythin
> written about me in the Law of Mose[illegible] the Prophets and the Psalms.'*
>
> *Then he opened their mi[illegible] so they could understand the Scriptures. He to
> written: The Mes[illegible] will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, an
> forgi[illegible] of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at*
> (Luke [illegible]-47 NRSV)

So, the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy is used as a way to wrap up the ov
Jesus' ministry. But Luke 24:47 also reveals another key aspect of the resurrectio
This is unsurprising since the author of Luke is also the author of Acts, but it mea
into the beginning of Acts, which deals with the beginning of the Christian Churc
during Luke 24:50–52 and is very truncated, saying that Jesus was simply 'taken
behaviour of the disciples is also worth mentioning, as they return to Jerusalem
commitment after the resurrection.

This chapter in many ways can be seen as an encapsulation of the disciples' experi
They begin with unbelief, only hearing the words of Jesus before realising his true
committing themselves to repentance in the process. It may also reflect the exper
community, who would have heard of Jesus but not truly appreciated his divinity o
recognised his miraculous works, including the resurrection. In this sense, the final
an encapsulation of Jesus' life throughout the Gospel but also of the meaning of th
early believers in Christ at the time of Luke's composition. It is these issues to whic

The Meaning of the Crucifixion Narrative in Luke

Now we've performed a brief overview of major themes in Luke and examined some of the key passages, we can now turn and do a dee ive on the meaning of the different narratives surrounding t ucifixion and resurrection. A lot hinges not just on wh es we might identify, but what themes we believe the author of Luke most interested in stressing throughout his Gospel. S ted at the beginning of this section that there was a us logical problem in Luke. The crucifixion passages do not seem to at all on the atoning power of Jesus' death. If this is not a major theme, then what exactly is Luke trying to stress instead, and more importantly, why?

One idea is that the passion in Luke was partly written as an **apologetic**, a defence of the Christian faith in the face of critics. This is an intuitive idea to hold because so many of the initial themes we've identified, such as the innocent martyr picture of Jesus on the cross, his place in salvation history and the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, could arise as a kind of rebuttal to non-Christians questioning the nature and importance of Jesus' life. Yet, these could also just be Luke's way of giving Jesus' life a different vision and meaning, where we zoom out of particular theological problems to focus on Jesu humankind. If Luke is the historian he claims to be then this could also be perfec

At the same time, what Luke could also be doing is ensuring that his Gospel narr audiences as possible. We can say for certain that Jewish audiences would be ve life relates to Old Testament prophecy, but we can't necessarily say the same for other hand, might be much more interested in hearing how Jesus fits into a broa whole, or how he can offer universal salvation for all human beings, not just thos Luke might be trying to establish Jesus' credibility for as wide an audience as pos anyone from any background could connect to.

It is worth keeping these ideas in mind as we progress through a number of key t resurrection narratives, for there are plenty of nuances a tails that can feed and really bring out the overall vision Luke had fo Gospel.

The Fulfilment of Old Testam Prophecy

We've analys lo ous sections how Luke is almost overly keen to stres resurrectio se a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. But what prophe Well, there een significant scholarly debate over this question, but there ar Luke is likely to be drawing attention to. At the same time, it is clear that Luke is prophecy. Whereas Matthew is often very specific with references (which is cons most 'Jewish' of all the Gospels), Luke instead makes a lot more general referenc and the Prophets'. This is interesting, as it could well be Luke making sure this th audiences as well. If the Old Testament references were too nuanced, they may people's heads!

The Suffering Servant

But let's dig into some of the key passages that Luke might be drawing connectio
reference Luke seems to be making with the crucifixion narrative is with Isaiah 5
the '**suffering servant**' of God. These passages in the Old Testament represent th
which is the last of four 'songs', or prophecies, Isaiah makes. Now, in Judaism, th
identified with the entire nation of Israel, but partly thanks to Luke, Christian tra
prophecy about Jesus and the trials he faces at the crucifixion. For instance, let's
verse that occurs just before the crucifixion narrative:

> *'It is written: "And he was numbered with the transgressors"; and I tell you
> in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.* (Luke 22:37

> *Therefore I will give him a portion among the gr
> and he will divide the spoils with the strong
> because he poured out his life unto death,
> and was numbered with the transgressors.
> For he bore the sin of many,
> and made intercession for the transgressors.'* (Isaiah 53:21 NIV)

As you can see, Luke is drawing a direct allusion between the events about to un
of the suffering servant in Isaiah. However, it's an interesting allusion because in
emphasis on the servant bearing the sins of many, as you can see in the final two
there aren't many atonement themes in Luke. So, what exactly is Luke trying to c
the two?

This is a difficult question, but it may be that Luke is just focusing on the image o
prophecy. The other alternative is that Luke was aware of the atonement theme
instead chose to include it as allusion rather than directly focusing on it as a majo
this reference come full circle during the crucifixion. Jesus is criticised for being a
bearing this abuse with a fortitude only a true martyr can possess. So, at Luke 23
crucified him there, along with the criminals', Jewish audiences are certainly very
fulfilling and potentially the kind of theology Luke is developing with his crucifixi

The fulfilment of this passage also is echoed at other points throughout the cruci
when Jesus intercedes and assures the repenting criminal that he will enter para
intercession for the transgressors next to him, fulfilling the final part of Isaiah's p
reference occurs when Luke talks about how they bury Jesus in a rich man's tom
another part of Isaiah 53, detailed below.

> *He was oppressed and afflicted,
> yet he did not open his mouth;
> he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
> and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
> so he did not open his mouth.
> By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
> Yet who of his generation protested?
> For he was cut off from the land of the living;
> for the transgression of my people he was punished.
> He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
> and with the rich in his death,
> though he had done no violence,
> nor was any deceit in his mouth.* (Isaiah 53:7–9 NIV)

It is worth reading that passage in full a few times because, while we can draw sp
key to note the overall narrative and tone of Isaiah here. The crucifixion of Jesus
through and through. He is an innocent figure punished and oppressed and effec
supporters. Yet, he suffers all this in silence, recognising it is his fate and is part o

themes echo so strongly that Luke's references would have been very effective, s
of Old Testament prophecy cannot be viewed as an isolated theme but linked to
will examine in this section. For the moment, though, let us consider a few other
crucifixion narrative.

The Crucifixion and Psalms

If we focus only on the major theme of the suffering servant we can miss some o
Luke makes throughout the passion narrative. For instance, when lots are cast fo
writes 'They divided up his clothes by casting lots'. This form is particularly impo
Psalms 22 below:

> *Dogs surround me,*
> *a pack of villains encircles me;*
> *they pierce my hands and my feet.*
> *All my bones are on display;*
> *people stare and gloat over me.*
> *They divide my clothes among them*
> *and cast lots for my garment.* (Psalms 22:16–18 NIV)

This is pretty weighty and relevant stuff as you can see, and it is unsurprising tha
reference. Yet, unlike Isaiah, there is no strict narrative to the Psalms. They are li
writings, hymns that are still chanted or sermonised on today in Christianity and
praise of God, but Psalm 22 in particular is an appeal to a righteous God who app
protagonist. In this sense, it would have held a specific importance at the time of
similar aim and set of themes at times.

Similarly, when Jesus is offered wine vinegar to drink on the cross, Luke is makin

> *You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed;*
> *all my enemies are before you.*
> *Scorn has broken my heart*
> *and has left me helpless;*
> *looked for sympathy, but there was none,*
> *for comforters, but I found none.*
> *They put gall in my food*
> *and gave me vinegar for my thirst.* (Psalms 69:19–22 NIV)

Again, Psalm 69 addresses similar themes to 22, the importance of maintaining c
Thus, although we noted that Luke is often perhaps talking of prophecy in a gene
Gentile audiences, this does not mean that at times he is also not drawing on de
to lend meaning and gravitas to the crucifixion. The fulfilment of prophecy is not
that runs deeply though each verse.

Activity:
Read through the entirety of Isaiah 52–53 (don't worry, it's not very long!). How
depiction of Jesus matches the suffering servant? Are there any major discrepanc
have noted?

God and Salvation

Let's move on, though, for a moment and consider another important concept in numerous ways: **salvation history**. Throughout the crucifixion narrative, various Jesus and either help him or declare his innocence. At times, this all seems might ahistorical. For instance, after Jesus' trial in Luke 22, it is declared that Pilate and Jesus' trial and eventual innocence. There are historical grounds to suggest these yet it is possibly stretching it to hold that this is due to Jesus. What is more likely and resurrection narratives, Luke is drawing together numerous narrative thread darkest hour, is most concerned with peace and forgiveness, stressing that genu any hour is the path to salvation.

This is seen in numerous other ways. In Luke 23, Simon of Cyrene, a Jewish man Africa, is chosen to carry the cross, and it is a criminal on the cross who finally re guaranteed salvation by Jesus. The long list of characters, all from different bac innocence and at times repentance is an indicator that, for Luke, Jesus was offering s just a specific group such as the Jews. This notion of **universalism**, that salvation prominent throughout Luke's culmination in the passion narrative as these disparate in recognise Jesus' innocence and importance.

Moreover, we see indications already that Jesus' death marks an important point in we see that upon Jesus' death, 'the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the tem marks the decisive point at which Jesus' death has fulfilled the prophecies and a ne and humanity, one in which the possibility of salvation becomes open and available response from the crowds watching, who 'beat their breasts', is telling here; it show over his critics and anticipates the glory of the resurrection. Moreover, we see the had come with Jesus and the Council member Joseph of Arimathea, who retrieves is clear in the context of the chapter ahead: they will soon be rewarded for their go

Jesus as the Innocent Martyr

We've seen this theme play out in numerous ways already but it is important to other two themes we've analysed. Jesus is stated to be innocent by almost every and this innocence is stressed for a number of potential reasons. One is likely to prophecies referenced by Luke. The suffering servant and allusions to Psalms all suffering or darkness through which faith in God is more important than ever. W as he never doubts God or the necessity of his death, as unfair as it may seem to

The same is true when we think of salvation history. It is part of Jesus' destiny to of salvation history can begin, one in which salvation becomes a possibility for al the divinely ordained martyr. It is unclear here to what extent this requires a par theology, but Jesus' innocence is perhaps stressed here by Luke as a necessary p same, we can see how the notion of martyrdom can be engaged in light of Jesus' a salvation history of humankind.

However, the final part of this theme might be emphasising Jesus' behaviour as a may have been that the Lukan community was facing persecution from various po emphasising Jesus' innocence it might have been a reflection on how the commun oppression. Similarly, it might be a call to be stoical or blameless under such perse this theme, as we noted before, is that it may be that Luke is defending Jesus again Christian community that Jesus was in fact a criminal or fraud. By emphasising his the passion narrative, one is undeniably clear by the end that Jesus was faultless a

Matera in particular highlights this theme, noting that the author of Luke was likel with how Jesus reflected the experiences of early Christian communities, consider innocence motif, for example, may have been influenced Luke's knowledge of the Acts, and as such, Luke may well be trying to draw connections and parallels betw apostles who were martyred in the early Church. But Matera also recognises that t

other important themes, such as Jesus' ethics. The martyrdom of Jesus may well h
Christians perceived Jesus as a model for discipleship, for when one looks at the ch
Luke 23:2, one can easily find both the religious and political dimensions to his tria
oppression of early Christians.

Let's dig into this a bit further. One dimension we can highlight is how Jesus' tria
Matera of the Jewish people's rejection of Jesus and Israel's royal Messiah. Anot
Jesus as prophet and teacher, where the innocence motif frames Jesus' later res
prophecies associated with it. In this sense, the innocence motif grounds lots of
crucifixion, allowing readers to see what they want to see in his death depending
backgrounds. But the key thing for Matera is that the innocence motif also helps
with his Gospel and gives early Christians a model of how they should behave in
more to be said here, but we will revisit these themes as Matera identifies late
come to look at Luke's ethics.

Discussion Activity:
What do you believe is the most important theme in the crucifixion narratives? Di

The Meaning of the Resurrection Narrative in Luke

In many ways the resurrection narrative doesn't present anything substantially n
themes in Luke. Instead, we see the resolution of themes and narratives brought
be the fulfilment of prophecy or the importance of salvation, we see their finality
victory over death establishes the truth and validity of his teaching throughout h
further ado, let's see how these important themes manifest themselves in Luke's

The Fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecy

In a previous section, we analysed Luke's detailing of the resurrection, noting ho
passages was linked explicitly to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Now
layered into the crucifixion narrative, we can analyse the attention given to it in
deeply. For what is strange about the fulfilment theme in Luke 24 is how differen
During the crucifixion, Luke takes pains to identify Jesus with the suffering serva
parallels with Psalms. Yet, in the resurrection narrative, such details disappear. In
stroke approach to fulfilment. The emphasis is not on what prophecies have bee
failure to understand that they have been fulfilled.

> *He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everythin
> written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'* (Luke

This is made explicitly clear in Luke 24:44. At this point Jesus has appeared nume
have failed to understand the meaning of his appearance. In essence, for the aud
kind of conclusion for this theme. The only exception might be the general refere
day. Here, Luke might be looking back to Hosea, who prophesised this timefram

> *'Come, let us return to the Lo
> He has torn us to pie
> but he will he
> he has struck us
> but he will bind up our wounds.
> After two days he will revive us;
> on the third day he will restore us,
> that we may live in his presence.'* (Hosea 6:2 NIV)

But the continuity and completion of this theme is what Luke ultimately aims to
chapter of salvation history has begun, as prophesised by important Old Testame
importantly, Jesus himself. We can explore the continuity of this other theme of
this section.

Salvation and the Resurrection

Just as with fulfilment, the theme of salvation and salvation history is built upon an resurrection narrative. Yet, it is often expressed in interesting and subtle ways. For who discover the empty tomb first and, given Luke often focuses on the spiritual li other Gospel, this element perhaps emphasises the belief that salvation is universa faith. Similarly, we can note that it is the inner disciples who are last to see Jesus, w witnessing and understanding the significance of his resurrection first. Overall, wh access to salvation is available to anyone, not just those who have been typically p

But even in the appearance to the full group of disciples, this message is spelled result of his victory over death a new chapter is beginning for humanity, one wh forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nat[illegible] beginning with Jer the Jewish people are privileged perhaps by location or proximity only. They ar message of salvation, but they are far fr[illegible]ast. It is the project of a new cha spread Jesus' teachings to all who might wish to receive them, whether they be J Jesus' victory and fulfil[illegible]ophecy is for the benefit of all, even if Jesus is b

The Physic[illegible]rrection

One important aspect it is key not to overlook is how Jesus emphasises the physicality of the resurrection in Luke's resurrection narrative. In the major meetings with the disciples, Jesus breaks bread with them, shows them the wounds in his hands and feet and directly states that he is not a spirit. This is interesting, for in Jewish traditions at the time, belief in bodily resurrection was becoming more prominent, so Luke stressing that Jesus was physically resurrected is quite revealing. Neither Mark nor Matthew contains such passages, so scholars have speculated why Luke included these details, ones which later found their way also into John.

For instance, the biblical scholar Charles Talbert has suggested that Luke wrote his Gospel to combat heretical ideas such as Gnosticism and Docetism, which often viewed the resurrection spiritually rather than physically. But it also might be the case that Luke is defending the resurrection against early critics of Christianity. If you look at Matthew, the author there offers a lot of detail about the empty tomb prior to the resurrection, in what seems to be an attempt to fend off critics who held Jesus' body might have been stolen away. In the same fashion, Luke might well b against critics who claimed that the disciples merely saw a spirit or hallucinated

The Future of the Church

As a final note, we should mention that there is a strong [illegible]siological focus to narrative in Luke. We've seen this in part in Jesus' [illegible]l call to preach his tea this a little further in the context of the [illegible]ti[illegible] of Luke and Acts. Both book written by the same author and Acts [illegible]cally deals with the history of the ear the end of Luke nicely fo[illegible] the beginning of Acts, as Jesus commands his and they ac[illegible]gl[illegible] great piety, staying in the Temple and praying contin

What this p[illegible]s highlights is that Luke sees the Church as essential in the next resurrection is not the final victory, but rather the most significant one as follow that will serve to spread Jesus' teaching across the world. Thus, when thinking ab resurrection narrative in Luke, it is worth remembering the context and authorsh and Acts are connected in structure and theme.

Discussion Activity:
Are any major new motifs introduced in the resurrection account in Luke? Or does summarising and wrapping up the themes presented in the crucifixion narrative?

What Theme is the Most Important?

Throughout this section, we've explored the crucifixion and resurrection in quite
that Luke doesn't have just one aim in writing his Gospel but aims to tie togethe
into a complete picture about the importance of Jesus' death and resurrection. Y
some themes simply are more important than others. For instance, the number o
death and resurrection directly fulfil prophecy perhaps indicates that above all, t
Luke wished readers and listeners to understand most. In fact, the final resurrect
heavy-handed in the amount of times Jesus has to stress to his disciples (the figu
most) how his actions are prophesised and in accordance with the Law and Scrip

But beneath this heavy-handedness, we see other complexities emerge as Luke's
salvation history is woven into this fulfilment theme. Perhaps above all, Luke wis
in the world had occurred at Jesus' resurrection, but that his audience might only
of prophecy. Considering his focus on theology throughout the Gospel, this is
prophecy primarily serving a descriptive function in emphasising the importance o
focus on the resurrection being physical might also be another example of the ch
God and humankind.

Similarly, it would be amiss not to note Jesus' stressed innocence on the cross. T
of fulfilment and salvation, but as we shall see in later sections, Luke also has a ri
here might serve as moral guidance for the suffering and oppressed that his Gos
way, if you are unsure of your own position, the best solution is to read once aga
focusing on each verse and how it ties into Luke's broader narrative. It is there th
complex text can be developed and reflected on as you progress through your st

Quick Quiz

1. What theological concept is there an absence of in Luke's crucifixion and
2. What theological idea does Conzelmann argue replaces this concept?
3. What aspect of the crucifixion narrative does Matera argue is key to und
4. What two Old Testament books are primarily referenced during the cruc
5. What concept is present throughout Luke's interpretation of salvation?
6. What Old Testament concept is referenced through Luke's description of the crucifixion?
7. What is Luke potentially attempting to de[illegible] with his extensive descrip during the resurrection narrative?

6.1: Scientific and Historical-critic – The Death and Resurrection Modern Scholarship

What you will learn in this section:

The various historical and scientific challenges to the Gospel narratives around th Jesus, including:

- The different ways the resurrection has been interpreted throughout histor challenge to the traditional Christian interpretation of the resurrection.
- An analysis of alternative explanations for the empty tomb in the Gospel na evidence for the resurrection.
- The strengths and weaknesses of historical and scientific critique, and how t impact other areas of Christian belief.

Starter Activity:
Read through the 'original ending' of Mark (Mark 16:1–8). Does this account by interpretation of the resurrection in Christianity? And if it is the earliest account of affect the way we think about the resurrection? Make some notes and compare th throughout the rest of this section.

Key Thinker	
Name	Ian Wilson
Born	1941
Died	N/A
Key text	*Jesus: The Evidence* (1984)
Why are they important?	Wilson is a prolific author who has written books on a wide va historical topics. His book *Jesus: The Evidence* assesses the histo the existence and life of Jesus, analysing what we can know fr

Key Thinker	
Name	Frank Morison
Born	1881
Died	1950
Key text	*Who Moved the Stone?* (1930)
Why are they important?	Frank Morison was the authorial pseudonym for Albert Henry R books but is best known for his Christian apologetics. *Who Mov* problem of the empty tomb, offering a defence of the resurrec alternative historical explanations for the events surrounding it.

Introduction – The Symbol of the Empty Tomb

The empty tomb is one of the most enduring symbols of Christian tradition. It ap Gospels and is the major signifier of Jesus' victory over death through the re the resurrection appearances in each of the Gospels, it is easy to note the major from a basic outline of some disciples of Jesus finding an empty tomb after his de agreement about what happens next. This does not necessarily mean that the ac false. In fact, biblical scholars have often attempted to try to reconstruct the ear that the Gospel authors might have used, with the aim of giving an explanation a

The Empty Tomb in the Synoptics

Yet, despite the differences between the Gospels in their detailing of the resurre
interesting that each does have at its centre the symbol of the empty tomb after
by a series of figures after the Sabbath ends. So why is there controversy over th
these accounts? Well, one issue arises from the fact that in each Gospel, differen
tomb. For example, in Mark, it is Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James an
tomb occupied by a stranger in a white robe who tells them '*You are looking for
crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.*' (NIV) W
that after this discovery the women flee the tomb, and this small account forms
The later part of Mark 16 is now recognised to be a later addition, perhaps adde

This is of course surprising because it seems that the earliest Gospel contains no
appearances at all! This discovery in particular has troubled modern biblical scho
seems to indicate that the empty tomb can accommodate a series of very differe
to the latter Synoptics, Matthew and Luke. For example, in Matthew, it is 'Mary
who discover the empty tomb, where they are greeted by an angel who delivers
Mark. How[illegible]e women then flee in joy and are suddenly met by Jesus hims
author of M[illegible] found the Markan ending too ambiguous and maybe desired
importance of the resurrection appearances by Jesus.

Alternatively, in Luke it is 'the women' (those who followed Jesus) who discover
by two men in gleaming white clothes. Like in the other Synoptics, they tell the w
reinforce this event in light of prophecy, including '*The Son of Man must be deliv
be crucified and on the third day be raised again.*' (NIV) After this occurrence, Lu
disciples, with 'Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James' giving the
apostles. However, they do not believe the women, and Peter himself goes back
strips of linen still lying there.

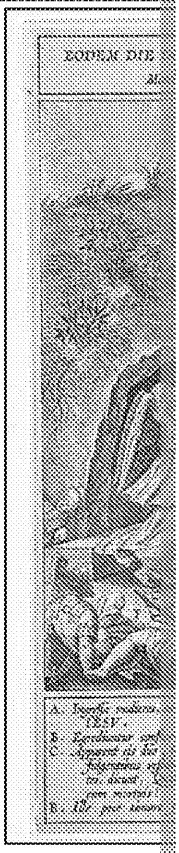
So, Luke here appears to give more details of the actual discussion about the em
the appearance of Jesus! How do we make sense of this? Well, one option is to u
each author's motives in editing their accounts of the empty tomb. Perhaps Luke
elements he could verify about the encounters at the empty tomb, while stressin
resurrection in terms of fulfilling prophecy. Matthew, on the other hand, in inclu
Jesus to the Marys may well have just wanted to build upon the ambiguous endi
connection between the empty tomb and the direct resurrection of Jesus. For th
the final canonical Gospel and see how its account of the empty tomb differs fro

The Empty Tomb in the Gospel of John

Compared to the Synoptics, John has little to say about any initial encounter bet
and the empty tomb. It begins with Mary Magdalene ret[illegible]g to the tomb and
the entrance. She then runs back to 'Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one
someone had removed Jesus' body. They [illegible]o to the tomb and discover the b
strips of linen and the cloth that was [illegible]ped around Jesus' head. However, it is
that Mary witnesses two [illegible] then Jesus, who tells her that he will be asce

This is of co[illegible]runcated summary, but in comparison to the Synoptics the ti
different, and it is still uncertain what sources the author of John used to compo
tomb. Yet, the lateness of John's composition implies that by this point the symb
was well established in Christian communities. Yet, at the same time, it is unusua
anywhere in the Pauline epistles, which were written fairly soon after the death
is evidence that Mark invented the story of the empty tomb, knowing that pre-e
concept of bodily resurrection meant that audiences would understand the lack
himself had been resurrected. It's an intriguing idea that we will investigate thro

Where Did the Empty Tomb Come from?



Here, it is necessary to think about two questions. Did the authors of the Gospel invent the symbol of the empty tomb and, if not, how did this story come about? Let's think about the first question to start with. We noted that it's a possibility that Mark invented the story of the empty tomb. Yet, it is much more likely considering its inclusion throughout of all the Gospels that this story arose from previous oral or written tradition; for example, a primary source such as 'Q'. The lack of feature in the Pauline epistles may just suggest that the resurrection was an accepted part of Christian tradition, with the empty tomb simply being a narrative reinforcement of this event. In other words, the empty tomb is used as evidence to show the resurrection occurred, not as a theological foundation for the resurrection.

But this begs yet another question. Could there not be another explanation for the empty tomb? Leaving the veracity of the resurrection appearances aside for a moment, could Jesus' body not have been taken by somebody else? This is potentially a much more rational explanation for why the tomb was empty to the disciples, and there is potentially a variety of suspects we could conceive of performing such an act. For instance, perhaps the Roman authorities took it to prevent any further religious or political conflict forming around Jesus' remains. Maybe even one of the disciples took it to another resting place and a misunderstanding occurred, meaning the others believed Jesus had been resurre approach to interpretation of the tomb, we can imagine any number of possibilit coherent with a scientific world view than the view that Jesus magically rose fro

The same is true of the resurrection appearances. If there was a misunderstandi perhaps easy to imagine that in the grief and fervour after Jesus' death, the disci about the resurrection appearances. It could be that mass hysteria and the stron an escalating series of 'visions' that only reinforced the theological importance o have occurred throughout history; is it too far-fetched to imagine that the rise of predicated on a similar set of misunderstandings?

Modern Scholarship on the Empty Tomb

Most biblical scholars aren't too preoccupied with the veracity of the empty tom they are predominantly interested in understanding how the Gospel authors wro they used and how this reflects the demands of their communities at the time. H number of rational examinations of the historicity of the empty tomb in and of it response to atheistic or secular critics point out the possible alternatives to th whether the empty tomb accounts do support belief in the resurrection.

In the Anth you're studying two of these defences, which we will refer first is a cha Frank Morison's book *Who Moved the Stone?*, which was writ attempts an intellectual examination of the historical events surrounding the res interesting to note, however, is that Morison originally did not intend to defend critique it. Yet as his research progressed, he began to find himself more and mo the resurrection and eventually began to believe it was a real historical event. Al tone, Morison's writings still have a lot of interesting arguments to consider, esp empty tomb in relation to the attitudes and religious atmosphere within first-cen

The second text in the anthology is a chapter taken from Ian Wilson's book *Jesus* critical took at the historical events of Jesus' life. In comparison to Morison's wo Wilson is a bit more balanced in his analysis of the empty tomb. Although he dire genuine miracle could not have occurred with the resurrection (adopting instead to the Bible), he still attempts to impartially consider the evidence for different e While it can be argued that ultimately Wilson is biased towards non-supernatura a useful counterpoint to Morison, and we will refer to both when considering dif empty tomb.

The Different Views on the Resurrection

Finally, before we turn towards a deeper analysis of the empty tomb, it is worth stances we might take towards the resurrection. The traditional Christian view o that it is a **miracle**, where the empty tomb and the post-appearances signify that the dead, something that transgresses the laws of nature as we know them. Whi also the most controversial in many ways. It requires believing in something that instinct. As you may have studied already in Philosophy of Religion, David Hume ultimately against the reliability of testimony, especially from past cultures and societ more rational to believe the laws of nature haven't been broken than hold that t

Hume's argument came on the back of the Enlightenment period, during which what they viewed as reason above religious dogma. Thus, while it was taken for had simply just resurrected, Enlightenment thinkers started to question this basi Gospels and other religious texts with fresh eyes. The conclusions they often eve later periods of the Enlightenment, was that historically and scientifically, the re verified. The simple existence of an empty tomb and some testimonials from wh nations' was not enough to suggest that the laws of nature had been broken and fact, many began to adopt **deism**, believing that although there was an omnipote routinely intervene to maintain the order of the world or break the laws that the

It's worth thinking about this as we progress through this chapter. For if we acce is no real rational argument for the empty tomb being genuine evidence for the have to accept that belief in such an extraordinary event is going to be a matter Morison is fighting back against. His work attempts to show that there is a ration it being the best possible explanation for the empty tomb when one looks at the

On the other hand, if we do adopt a generally sceptical position, then Morison h doubt that there are no good alternative explanations. Note, this does not mean the resurrection occurred, just that it may be the best possible explanation given But there are certain explanations it is very difficult to rule out, particularly when testimony and experiences of other human beings. As such, there have been a w resurrection that spring from a general doubt about what could have occurred w look at various explanations, we should consider these broad views on the resur held throughout history.

The Resurrection Debate

We've had look at the requirements for the resurrection to be considere recorded accurately in the Gospels. Yet, the idea that the resurrection is just a fi requirements. Simply put, we have to consider what events might have reasonab somewhere along the way, the disciples and others mistook the empty tomb to when Jesus' body might simply have ended up somewhere else. In this sense, th the sense that there were a series of errors that led to the disciples falsely attrib events that had another perfectly reasonable explanation.

What stands in the way of such views is that in accounts of the empty tomb, the
to eliminate other explanations. They were naïve in this sense; they understood,
at the time, that just finding an empty tomb is not concrete evidence of someon
example, in Matthew the author includes a line about the Jewish authorities pay
body being stolen. This suggests that the belief that the resurrection was a fictio
among early Christian and Jewish circles, with followers of Jesus having to spell o
could not have been moved.

For such explanations are commonplace when thinking about the resurrection a
common ideas, as we shall see, usually revolve around Jesus' body being taken s
was in the tomb. This could have been by the Roman authorities, the Jewish auth
There are plenty of reasons why each might desire to see Jesus' body disappear,
have to wonder why no one later discovered the body or found out where it mig
the Gospel accounts, such as Luke, we see this issues being sceptical about the
Jesus' body might have been. As such, there is not a straight line from the empty
removed. We have to think a little bit deeper about whether such explanations m

The same is true when we consider another explanation for the resurrection as f
that the disciples and others simply lied about the resurrection appearances and
of thinking, the resurrection becomes a kind of conspiracy, where followers of Je
been resurrected after the humiliation of his death on the cross. Yet, such a cons
people would have had to be clued in and someone would have still had to have
possibility, but a lot of individuals looking at the resurrection as a fictional event
caused the disciples to mistake the empty tomb to be a sign of resurrection, rath
conspiratorial thinking. Nevertheless, such arguments are still popular to a degre
taken seriously academically.

The Resurrection as Myth

We can, though, follow the conspiratorial line a bit further, by looking at the idea
myth. This is a view that is sometimes professed by critics who see similarities be
Jesus' resurrection and earlier pagan myths about God and his children. Now, be
forward by *The Da Vinci Code* or another popular twenty-first-century work, it is
stretches back much further than you might expect. The idea of the resurrection
Greek critic Celsus, who often reserved a great deal of ire for early Christian com

The basic idea that Celsus had was that the resurrection was a mythological story
who couldn't face the fact that their spiritual leader was guilty of mere sorcery a
in developing this story, they made the mistake of drawing too heavily on Jewish
particular the suffering servant in Isaiah. Thus, it makes complete sense that auth
couch their depiction of Jesus in terms of Old Testament prophecy, because the
effect, ripped off these prophecies in constructing the accounts of Jesus' resurr

It's difficult to evaluate such accounts because they rely on a kind of joined-up th
from one perspective but ridiculous from another. Jesus naturally would have ta
traditions during his ministry simply because he was, in fact, Jewish. Similarly, his
understood teachings in the context of Jewish prophecies circulating at the ti
growing belief in physical resurrection among Jewish communities. But these fac
believe that the resurrection account was a pale imitation of Jewish myth. They
such a proposition.

At the same time, it is difficult to imagine how such a myth would occur when th
eyewitnesses and so many testimonies about the resurrection appearances. It w
disciples were constructing a kind of elaborate lie. Yet, there is potentially anoth
if, in the hysteria after Jesus' death, the disciples effectively hallucinated his app
we shall consider before we move on to looking at explanations for the empty to

The Resurrection as Experience

The final possibility we can consider was that after the body had been moved or s
effectively in their fervour hallucinated the resurrection appearances. In fact, we
say that even finding the tomb itself and seeing figures within it was a kind of hy
spread among other disciples and followers. This might seem a bit strange a first
resurrection relies on us believing that there was not one sceptical or even ration
who might question their unreliable senses. In the narratives around the empty t
there are attempts to show that the disciples were not initially convinced by the
pains during the resurrection appearances to demonstrate his reincarnated phys

Yet, these instances of **mass hysteria** do occur, and it is potentially the case that
from a particularly acute instance of **wish fulfilment**, with the disciples seeking a
Jesus and projecting this onto a series of experiences which confirm this wish. In
occurrences of such hysteria from genuine religious experiences, or even experie
often claimed that modern miracle events are better explained as due to some p
hallucination or wish fulfilment than God intervening in the world. If this is true,
tomb and resurrection appearances in the same manner.

Further evidence for this kind of approach might come from considerations abou
view of the disciples. Back in the first century, there were no good naturalistic ex
phenomena. For instance, we know now that mirages are caused by displacemen
But it is likely that individuals in the past would not have viewed such phenomen
workers were more commonplace, and the kind of explanations people would ha
experiences would have been much more religious or mythological as a result. T
resurrection as an event purely in the experience of the disciples is perhaps bols

At the same time, if such occurrences were commonplace, it is fair to ask what m
appearances so special or particularly convincing to the disciples. There is still a r
unique in a number of ways which other miraculous events at the time were not
why Christianity had the impact that it did. Still, with this possibility in mind, we
examination of the different possibilities around the empty tomb and whether a
against the resurrection based on an alternative explanation of the accounts give

Discussion Activity:
What position on the resurrection do you hold, and why? Discuss in pairs or small

Historical Explanations for the Empty Tomb

So far in our discussion of the resurrection we've broadly been covering what mi
challenges to Christian belief. In other words, we're not looking at the specific hi
Gospels but instead looking at broad philosophical reasons to doubt the possibili
have occurred. These are convincing for many, but they do effectively rely on dis
we have about the resurrection. Whether we regard these sources to be unreliab
or just hallucinatory evidence, we're not actually grappling with the Gospel na
the resurrection appearances.

This is important to note because a proper rebuttal of the empty tomb arguments
able to give another explanation for the events leading up to the resurrection. Sim
mount a **scientific challenge**, but a **historical challenge** as well. If we can provide a
explanation for Jesus' missing body, then we can arguably meet biblical scholars o
that Jesus' resurrection is likely to be more fiction than fact. If this is not possible,
irrational for Christians to have faith in the Gospel accounts, even if they contradic

Evaluating the Gospel Narratives

However, one major issue greets us when we try to mount a historical challenge t
paucity of historical sources about the events. We've noted some of these alread
problems we should quickly cover again.

1. There are few historical sources about the resurrection and no witnesses to
put, we don't have much to work with. What happened in the three days be
laid to rest and the disciples discovered the empty tomb is unknown. As suc
good alternative explanations we could posit about the lack of a body and th
disappeared. Rather, what we have is a series of somewhat conflicting acco
empty tomb and reported this event to the disciples. For instance, see the t
description of these differences.

	Matthew	Mark	
Jesus' body is removed and placed in the tomb	Joseph of Arimathea	Joseph of Arimathea	Joseph Arima
Women observe burial	Mary Magdalene and Mary	Mary Magdalene	Wom Galile
Pilate secures tomb	Secured with a seal and guard		
The women find the tomb empty and have a vision of angels/figures and/or Jesus.	Mary Magdalene and Mary	Mary Magdalene, Mary and Salome	Wom Galile Mary Mary
Bribing of the guards by the religious authorities	Guards bribed to circulate false story of empty tomb		

Let's look at key agreements first. What we can perhaps establish is that Jos
body of Jesus (perhaps with help) in an empty tomb and this tomb was subs
body by Mary Magdalene (and most likely others) three days later, accompa
However, if we take the Synoptics as our primary source, then we might co
observed the burial and that other figures accompanied her at this moment
the empty tombs and the appearances of an angel or angel-like figure. Wha
who is largely responsible for adding embellishments that are intended to p
narrative, such as the securing of the tomb and the bribing of the guards. As
are likely to be in response to early critics of Christianity at the time of Matt

2. So, what's the next issue? Well, what we mig[illegible] n[illegible]vely note is that the G
tomb might not exactly be what yo[illegible]eliable. For one, they are all writ
of the truth of the resurrecti[illegible] in this sense are biased towards pres
supports this conc[illegible] might also well be leaving out information th
meani[illegible] he [illegible] tomb.

But even when we consider the witnesses given in the Gospel accounts ther
only person to be agreed upon to witness the empty tomb and the first resu
Magdalene, a woman who was said to have been cured of 'seven demons' (
himself. If we interpret this to mean Mary possessed some sort of mental d
the reliability of her testimony. She might not have examined the empty to
mistaken the figures who appeared to her shortly after to be angels or divin
that in the Synoptics there were other potential witnesses, none of whose n
evidentially supported conclusions about.

Finally, we can consider the fact that the earliest manuscripts of Mark do no
were most likely to have been a later addition. This means the earliest Gosp
abrupt ending in verse 8, where the women flee and do not tell anyone of w
somewhat contradicts the longer accounts of Matthew and Luke, who are li
source. So, is this evidence that these authors embellished the original acco
perhaps just unfinished, and completed by later Gospel writers? It's perfect
resurrection appearances were more robustly analysed by Matthew and Lu
written sources on the empty tomb to construct their narratives.

If we consider this possibility, it is worth briefly talking about the other New
resurrection. The Pauline epistles, which often date earlier than the Gospels
a hugely vague number of resurrection appearances without stating the orc
relative significance. Even Jesus appearing to Saul on the road to Damascus
Christianity may count as a resurrection appearance! So, the early years of t
have not seen figures codify the resurrection appearances to disciples and i
appearances meant a more broader religious significance.

How do We Evaluate the Historicity of the Empty Tomb?

Considering the two major issues we just outlined, it is difficult to give an exact a
imagine for a moment that we are treating this issue like a court case. What is pe
effectively prove that the empty tomb leads to the resurrection without any dou
conventional historical standards, the resurrection is either a possible explanatio
for Jesus' body missing from the tomb. This does not mean that one necessarily
resurrection was a real event. One can accept gaps and biases in the records tha
that Christians can inherently trust the resurrection accounts in the Gospels as a
mystery about the empty tomb to which naturalistic explanations cannot give an

However, it is important to also question whether this question is meaningful. W
possible to treat the empty tomb as a kind of court case for Christianity, when th
evidence, and the resurrection is such a weighty, important event in the context
it still seems as if human beings have a strong religious impulse in the twenty-firs
sceptical one. It may just be impossible to meaningfully judge such a momentous
real access to the details and so much rests on it being true or false. However, th
will do our best to scope out some alternative explanations for the empty tomb a

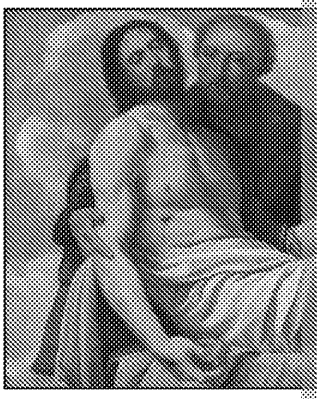
Joseph of Arimathea Moved the Body

The first alternative explanation we shall consider is the possibility that Joseph o
between the time it was buried and when the empty tomb was discovered. We n
are unanimous in agreeing it was this figure who saw to Jesus' burial, and so bot
that the possibility of him moving the body is conceptually a strong possibility. Si
body had been laid to rest, he potentially had access even if it was secured, and
might well have had good reasons for wanting to ensure its safety (or even destr

But how do we judge the likelihood of this occurrence? Well, we can take a num
himself focuses on when evaluating these alternative explanations.

1. Examining an individual's actions in the context of cultural and religious pract
2. Examine an individual's actions based upon their character and dispositions
   Testament and other historical sources.
3. Examine an individual's actions based on the logistics, planning and time re

So, let's think about these three methods when analysing the possibility that it w
It is important to note, though, that each of these methods may well clash at tim
adjudicate as to what we should prioritise when considering a person's actions in
difficult and dramatic time. We will see this throughout all of the alternative exp



But let's turn to method one. From the start, we can say that Joseph as a high-ranking religious authority is likely to have been a devout Jew. This is perhaps bolstered by the Gospel accounts (e.g. Luke) often affirming his goodness. If this is the case, though, then it is in principle unlikely that Joseph would have wanted to perform actions that would contravene the Sabbath and the Law, least of all moving a dead body. In fact, it might be suggested it was rather hastily interred in a tomb to avoid having to perform this action over the Sabbath. So, in the context of religious practice, we might instantly say that Joseph would have been very disinclined to move the bod

Morison agrees with this proposal but also claims that method two leads us to t described by Matthew as a secret member of the Council who goes boldly to Luke even suggests the Council had not agreed to this action and Joseph wa outlier here mentioning the detail of the Council, simply saying that Joseph it appears Joseph did believe in Jesus, and Morison argues if this was the case th Jesus and so would not have wanted to move the body.

But this is perhaps stretching credulity here. Joseph may well have sought a tempo accordance with Torah Law (see Deuteronomy 21:22–23) but could have also desi the Talmud. Furthermore, the sceptic Richard Carrier suggests that Joseph could h be moved to a secondary graveyard reserved for serious criminals, due to the regu Council. Moreover, although the women went to the tomb early after the ending o strict times to work off. Maybe Joseph went earlier and had the body removed bef

Thus, it's not clear from Joseph's character that he would have desired the body still the third method that might sway this verdict. For what kind of resources mi body? It is true that he organised the burial, but Matthew states that the tomb J own tomb. Would he have had access to another tomb, and if he did how would body? Simply put, if Joseph was acting alone, then moving a body might have be he had help, one would wonder why it was not more public knowledge that the member of the Council, Joseph might have had such resources, but he also did n condemning Jesus.

However, this reveals a more general problem that critical examinations of the e Jesus' body had been moved, then how did the perpetrators hide this fact so effe require the collusion of a wide variety of people, none of which could have let it Jesus that his body had been taken. Moreover, we can ask why this secret was th resurrection growing among early Christian communities. Wouldn't someone ha such rumours? One possibility of course is that they did but they were not believ explain why Matthew details the bribing of the guards, but it doesn't explain the complications of the body being moved.

Now, in the case of Joseph, we might question whether such a conspiracy would someone who seemingly was sympathetic towards Jesus. Unless Joseph was det religion so much that he persisted with a lie throughout all his life, it seems unlik character in the Gospels would have moved the body. Thus, we can perhaps thin the culprit might be among the communities who were antagonistic towards Jes

The Jewish or Roman Authorities Moved the Body

In contrast to Joseph, we can perhaps imagine a variety of reasons why other gro remove Jesus' body. Let's think about the Jewish authorities first. While we once with the Sabbath, many of the Gospel narratives tell of the hypocrisy of the relig persecuting Jesus. While they pretend to uphold the Law in public, they are willi Jesus, and the same situation might have occurred with his body. For instance, th argued that the Jewish authorities potentially wished to avoid Jesus' tomb becon body in an attempt to further disperse his followers.

However, we then have to contend with the problem that if the Jewish authorities the resurrection started to develop, then why didn't the Jewish authorities just rev would arguably be proof against the physical resurrection and prevent the growth seemingly be their professed aim in moving the body in the first place. Morison in noting that while there obviously seems to be a link about the resurrection in ea doesn't actively seem to focus on the location or place of Jesus' body, just the emp Matthew talking about the spreading rumours or lies about the body, not th they had moved it. At the same time, perhaps this is Matthew being evasive about valid points about Jesus' real grave. Once again, there isn't enough evidence to de the narrative sources we have don't firmly support this alternative explanation.

Pilate and the Empty Tomb

But what about the Roman authorities? Well, if Jesus' body was going to be rem on the orders of Pilate. He is likely to have known where it was interred, since ac narrative, he gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to move it. Moreover, the laws and rules of the Sabbath so they could have potentially quietly retrieved it three days. Finally, we should remember that Jesus was executed under the char Jews'. We've noted the political overtones to this title and perhaps Pilate becam revolutionary fervour around Jesus' death. By moving the body, he not only rem and crucifixion but also prevents it being visited by his followers, where they mig Jesus was potentially a difficulty for Pilate, especially if he was seen to be martyr

But the Romans were quite fastidious about keeping records of those sentenced Jesus' body had been moved, it is likely there was a Roman record of this taking secret. Moreover, with belief growing in Jesus' resurrection, we might ask why s in order to quell the very religious fervour that Pilate did not wish to stoke in the time, historians of the time such as Josephus and Tacitus have noted that Pilate offended the religious sensibilities of Jewish people in the area. Perhaps Pilate in cunning about his actions and made a mistake?

But here we might well just be speculating. The death of Jesus really was a Jewis death of one more criminal was probably not a major issue for them. Consider, f supposedly at the entrance of the tomb, as detailed in Matthew. These are supp biblical scholars have questioned the historicity of Matthew here, noting it woul Romans to guard a Jewish person's tomb. Either Matthew here is emb the case for the empty tomb or there were different kinds of guards posted, per scholar William Lane Craig has noted. Morison here also just notes there is littl involvement in Jesus' burial. Simply claiming Pilate might have wanted the body historical understanding of his character.

Thus, in both cases we can see that there is no overwhelmingly strong case for e the body, even if it is possible that they did. For the moment, we can move on to among critics, that Jesus did not really die on the cross.

Discussion Activity:
Do you think there is sufficient reason to believe some interested party might hav death? Or is this argument just complete speculation? Discuss in pairs or small gro

Jesus Did Not Die on the Cross

This might seem quite a radical suggestion at first, for surely it was clear to every crucified, and this was a punishment intended to kill him at the very least. Resea Roman method of crucifixion also generally supports this conclusion. It was a tru that often resulted in death, even if a person was removed from the cross while occur, and some scholars have speculated about what is sometimes called the 's removed from the cross before death and then subsequently fled his tomb, with

In the anthology, it is Wilson who deals with this hypothesis the most, primarily explanation is not readily apparent in the Gospel narratives. For the explanations are parts of our historical sources which potentially rebut or shed light on their l true for the swoon hypothesis, so Wilson argues it is an explanation which needs therefore, draw on contemporary scientific knowledge as well as explore the log Jesus not only escaped death on the cross but did not return to his former life.

So, how could Jesus have survived? The scholar Hugh Schonfield gives the suggestion that the sponge Jesus was given in the Gospel narratives wasn't soaked in vinegar but a drug to make it look as if he had died. However, Schonfield doesn't suggest that Jesus lived but instead was accidentally killed by the lance thrust into him. The person Mary Magdalene subsequently encounters later at the empty tomb is thus not an angel or divine messenger but the person who had been sent to revive him. Other explanations often invoke similar formulas – there is some mechanism by which Jesus survives the crucifixion and then is able to escape the tomb sometime between his burial and the end of the Sabbath.

There are two major issues with these kinds of explanations. The first is simply that faking death isn't exactly an easy endeavour to pull off, especially in societies less knowledgeable about drugs or human physiology. Some have suggested that natural sources of the drugs tetrodotoxin or reserpine could have been used. Both of these substances can induce states of paralysis or very slow breathing, but it is unlikely they could have been located by followers of Jesus or correctly applied. die from crucifixion can vary wildly, so it would have been a very fraught plan. Vi hasten death, and if Jesus was speared with a lance (as John 19:34 states) this ce

Wilson notes also that even if Jesus did survive, he could have hardly recovered medical treatment, let alone broken out. Accordingly, it is possible that Jesus ma say from Joseph of Arimathea, who could have discovered Jesus still alive and tre then face the problems of previous accounts in detailing why individuals would h help him relocate. This isn't to suggest there isn't a faint chance Jesus survived, b typically have to invoke the collaboration of others to be more plausible.

The second issue is that even if Jesus did survive, why did no one hear about this survive for a bit but died soon thereafter. But it is perhaps more implausible to s continued living. Unless he believed that showing himself would result in his dea the purpose of his ministry, then it seems likely that someone would recognise h subsequent actions. Moreover, if we believe the former then we have to accept character, that he was prepared to reject entirely his previous mission and did n ethical change. Needless to say, it would be highly strange to hold that Jesus him duplicitous from the accounts in the Gospel narratives.

Activity:
Using the information you've learnt so far about the empty tomb, note down wha of the resurrection would be. What problems can you observe with your timeline the Gospel narratives?

The Women Misunderstood the Events at the Tomb

So, what other options can we consider? Well, there are a number of alternative
under the title above, all of which merit some consideration and some of which
First, let's think about a key scene which occurs in all the Gospels, the visitation
and other women and their vision or witnessing of a mysterious person or angel,
Here, we might ask a number of sceptical questions:

1. What if the women visited the wrong tomb, which was or was not occupied
2. What if the women mistook a gardener or worker for a mysterious person o
could explain the situation with the tomb and the body?
3. What if Jesus' body was taken by grave robbers or another party, hence the
problem of the empty tomb?

Taking the first question under consideration first we might be inclined to disco
record Mary and the other women [illegible] witnessed where Jesus was being bur
unordinary considering that they were present at the crucifixion and had a ves
buried properly.

So, let's con[illegible]uestion number two in a bit more detail. It's a tricky one to as
feasible that gardeners or other workers might be present at the tomb, we run i
strain the credulity of these figures somehow being mistaken for angels or divine
that the women went to the tomb on the morning after the Sabbath. It could rea
they arrived, but then why would anyone be working in the dark? Alternatively,
women have mistaken the gardener for someone else? Similarly, in many of the
then come and access the tomb. Would they not have encountered the same ga

We can also ask, as Morison points out, why the chief priests, the Council, and a
discrediting Jesus would not just produce the gardener as evidence against the r
there is quite specific wording that the gardener is supposed to have said, wordi
utter if he were in fact just working around the tomb. Simply put, there does app
encounter which would be odd even if the women just mistook the gardener or

Markan Primacy and the Problem with Mary

But let's take the other side for a moment. We've noted already that the origina
than the current canonical end and finishes with the women fleeing the tomb. Ye
the Gospels, it is clear that they have at least partially based their accounts of th
Mark. The same structure in particular pervades the Synoptics, from the discove
meeting of the figures outside. Yet, this perhaps means we could question the ge
a whole. What if Mark got it wrong, and the rest of the Gospels simply copied his
the case, then the Gospels don't mutually support each other but instead just re

There are a few ways of seeing this in action. One might be [illegible]ng that in Mark the
basic. He is just a man clad in a white robe sitting in[illegible]tomb. Similarly, his wo
telling the women that he is not here and go[illegible]to Galilee. The parts which
just be the women mistaking the co[illegible]f his words! So, the empty tomb accoun
may well be indicative of a di[illegible]tuation around the empty tomb. We could e
often wore white, a[illegible]had moved his body, they might have spoken quite c
potentially [illegible]m. Altogether, what this indicates is that if we take Markan
questions ar[illegible]he figure who the women saw at the tomb become more diffic

The same is true when we consider that Mary Magdalene appears to be the core
tomb. Yet, we have noted that Mary might have been afflicted with a mental con
perform an exorcism on here. Yet, if this is the case, then in the fervour after Jes
been the most reliable witness to the empty tomb, a problem exacerbated by th
Markan priority. When one takes a very sceptical eye, all we have is one meanin
potentially hallucinatory witness mistaking a figure in white's words for somethi
up the dots, the case for a mistaken identity grows stronger by the second.

Grave Robbers and the Empty Tomb

We might add one additional element to this scenario. What if the empty tomb w
being moved by authorities but rather grave robbers? If this was the case, we mi
tomb was perhaps intentionally frightening or mysterious to scare the women aw
wouldn't want to reveal the truth about Jesus' body to the authorities for fear of
beliefs in the resurrection to grow unabated. We might also imagine that Joseph
beside Jesus which might be considered a good target for a robbery.

The difficulties with this additional element, though, are that we have no direct e
interested in someone who didn't exactly cultivate wealth throughout his minist
robbers would have to potentially either have advance knowledge of where Jesu
guess in deciding that his tomb was valuable to rob. Even all this is just specu
know whether grave robbers would take an interest in Jesus' tomb, let alone par
Thus, it might just be a bit of a stretch to start bringing unknown parties into the
is a possibility that Jesus' grave was robbed.

Discussion Activity:
Is their dependency on Mark a good reason to distrust the other Gospels' accoun
there reasons to believe all are based on historically accurate sources? Discuss in

Should We Believe the Gospel Accounts of the Empty Tomb?

So far, we've looked at some different positions on the resurrection accounts an
explanations for the empty tomb. But should we really be believing any of this? I
on their own historical merits, we are taking their accounts of the empty tomb in
should be a little more cynical and sceptical. These are writers with their own ag
the resurrection of Jesus being true. Without an objective or antagonistic witnes
what is a good explanation and what is a bad one. For there are plenty of extrao
incredibly strange causes. What are the chances that the empty tomb was just o

Ignoring a sort of mass conspiracy for a moment on behalf of the disciples, let's j
haven't looked at, that there was no specific event where the women visited Jes
one visited, nor that the disciples and women did not visit it altogether, but that
are just plainly erroneous. For as proclamations of faith, perhaps they were not c
might have just fashioned lots of hearsay, rumour and tradition into a narrative t
of the resurrection. In other words, perhaps the resurrection appearances did ha
they be real or hallucinatory), but the empty tomb event did not. In this case, the
the resurrection, but instead the empty tomb was a narrative crafted out of an a
set of experiences in the immediate aftermath of Jesus' death.

It is key to consider this because it is fair to imagine that any Gospel account of t
been influenced by the resurrection appearances. Moreover, memory is unreliab
our mind where there were none and create other sequences of events that we
also that Mark is generally thought to have been written at least 20 years after J
natural that the writers create a easy narrative where there was none, a shorth
physical resurrection of Jesus without simply talking about the experiences of th

Such an argument is hard to evaluate but it rings true with what we know of hun
remember them. It is a problem that arises in criminal trials all the time, and if w
court case, perhaps we should be just as sceptical. Moreover, when we look at s
Wilson, it is one of the possibilities that they take most seriously, because ultima
into a set of accounts that, at least from our basic instinct and reason, we should
reliable as many in the Christian faith take them to be.

One way we can approach this problem is to look at sources other than the Gosp
This is a path taken by Wilson, who discusses in particular how the narratives in A
should influence how we think of the empty tomb and the resurrection. For exan
that over 500 people witnessed resurrection appearances (though Paul curiously
we assume that some of these were not real, we're left with an incredible amou
after the death of Jesus. Wilson notes this in particular in the characters of the a
conversion of Saul to St Paul and the actions of Peter lead them to speak with in
resurrection appearances.

What is perhaps interesting is that the empty tomb, although a convenient narra
Jesus' body by all accounts was missing. This in some [illegible] must have led people
had occurred even if they could not account for how the body went missing and
explanations for its disappearance. For instance, in Acts 13:29, Paul claims that 't
cross and laid him in a tomb' (v.29). Even without the frivolities of the Gospels, th
problem that emerges during the burial of Jesus.

Now Acts is not necessarily very historically reliable at times, especially due to its
(~90 CE). But if we take its narrative seriously, it appears that the disciples were n
resurrection appearances meant, rather than dwelling on the problem of the em
given that the resurrection is the miraculous act, not the disappearance of the bo
mean much. However, conservative scholars such as N T Wright have claimed th
tomb, with Jesus' disappearance after death and the resurrection appearances b
critical look at the actions and words of early Christian communities.

Ultimately, there is potentially something to the zeal of the early Church when c
reveals that even if it were focused on the meaning of the resurrection appearan
events that triggered an outpouring of faith in Jesus despite his death. Thus, we
tomb, even if we might question the historicity of the Gospel narratives. Whethe
set of alternative events, or a kind of mass hysteria among the disciples, there is
naturalistic explanations for the empty tomb narratives in the Gospels. Yet, we a
seriously the possibility that beneath this fervour, something extraordinary migh
always struggle to explain either scientifically or historically.

Quick Quiz

1. What philosophical and scientific movement began to offer challenges to
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?
2. Which philosopher criticised belief in miracles based on conceptual and
testimony?
3. What Greek philosopher claimed the resurrection was simply a refashion
4. Who do the Gospel narratives agree moved Jesus' body to a tomb after h
5. Which Gospel narratives agree was the main figure to discover the
6. What writer defends the empty tomb narratives, holding there are no ot
explanations for Jesus' missing body?
7. What writer remains sceptical of the resurrection, while recognising the
good alternative explanation for the empty tomb?
8. Give three potential figures or groups who might have moved Jesus' bod

6.2: Ethical Living: How Should

What you will learn in this section:

The different interpretations and beliefs around ethics in the Gospel of Luke, inc

- An analysis of key ethical passages and parables, including the Sermon on th Samaritan, the parables of the lost and the parable of the rich man and Laza
- The key ethical themes present within these parables and how Luke may ha through editing and selection of historical sources.
- The relationship between Jesus and Judaism in the first century and how th teaching in Luke.
- The impact and influence ethics in the Gospe[illegible]n Christian ethics toc

Starter Activity:

Read through the par[illegible] good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). It is likely to before, b[illegible]ding of this passage match your memory or expectatio compare t[illegible]tes to your studies as you progress through this section.

Key Thinker	
Name	Ian Howard Marshall
Born	1934
Died	2015
Key text	*Luke: Historian and Theologian* (1970)
Why are they important?	Marshall was a well-regarded theologian whose work in the century focused extensively on the New Testament. He is knov as a historian against excessive redaction criticism, which ofte obsessed with rewriting traditional eschatology and ethics wit

Key Thinker	
Name	Frank Matera
Born	1942
Died	N/A
Key text	*Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting the Syn Stories* (1986)
Why are they important?	A well-known biblical scholar who has written extensively on th Luke focuses on his use and reinterpretation of Matthew agains Gentiles.

Introduction – Ethics in the Gospels

While the Gospels contain a great focus on the figure of Jesus and how his action most part our everyday concern with the Bible is this: we use the Gospels and guidance on how to live our lives. In fact, theological doctrines aside, it is often t have proved most memorable. Either it is the Golden Rule or particular parabl multiple reinterpretations in the Gospel narratives. It is fitting thus that the final with Christ's teaching and how the Gospels impart ethical advice.

However, this is a more complex issue than you might imagine. Although on one understand the ethical teaching of the Gospels than the theological teaching, the to Jesus' ethics which is easy to overlook. The way in which Jesus presents moral throughout each of the Gospels and the subtext, or context even, of his ethical t how we understand it. We will see this issue particularly when we come to look in the Gospel of Luke.

But more broadly, there is the question of how Jesus frames his ethical teaching, appear to be quite radical moral laws or propositions, is he attempting to subver seeking something closer to a renewal of Jewish Law, a reinterpretation that cha Testament and the ethical guidance contained within it? These questions we sha we sometimes forget that the ethics of Christian tradition didn't come to us fully assumptions about the uniqueness of the Christian faith and the way theologian distanced themselves from Jesus' Jewish roots.

Of course, trying to deal with biblical ethics in its entirety would be a task beyond For the purposes of this course, we will be focusing on the Gospel of Luke, which, themes and issues, you may have gathered to be a Gospel also quite rich in ethics. us perform a quick overview of Luke and how its passages reflect a rather unique

The Gospel of Luke and Christian Ethics

Luke has often been regarded by many New Testament scholars to have a partic contains large portions of moral teaching that are not present in the other Gospe to be some of the most memorable ethics in Christian tradition. The Anthology a focuses on three particularly interesting passages as listed below.

- **Luke 10:25–37 – The parable of the good Samaritan**
  Luke 15:1–32 – The three parables of the lost
- **Luke 16:19–31 – The parable of the rich man and Lazarus**

These passages all occur during what is sometimes called the 'travel narrative' in unique Lukan material from 9:51–19:47 that connects Jesus' travel to Jerus soteriological teaching along the way. Some of Luke's most distinctive ethics are Testament scholars noting how Jesus' moral teachings in Luke display a **univers** Synoptic Gospels, which tend to present Jesus' teachings as being focused on people. We will also examine this theme in the context of the **Sermon on the** compares to its counterparts in the Synoptics.

For example, in Matthew there is seen to be a strong focus on how ethics relates community as a whole. In the Sermon on the Mount (the longer equivalent to th Jesus states how he has not come to abolish the Law but to fulfil it, positioning h continuation of that in the Old Testament (see Matthew 5:17–20). Luke doesn't but in the Sermon on the Plain the connection between Jewish Law and Christian Luke often seems preoccupied with the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy th and faith in Christ as a continuation of faith in Israel.

Salvation, Repentance, and the Mission Statement

So, what does Luke stress with his ethics then? Well, throughout the Gospel, Jesus' universal and inclusive atmosphere to it. The start to Jesus' ministry in Luke sees the mission statement, with the most key portion quoted below:

> *'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,*
> *because he has anointed me*
> *to preach good news to the poor.*
> *He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners*
> *and recovery of sight for the blind,*
> *to set the oppressed free,*
> *to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'* (Luke 4:18–19 NIV)

You can see here that the initial focus of Jesus' ministry seems to be on those wi This focus continues throughout Luke and many scholars have detected certain p prevalent in the other Gospels. But this focus not on a particular group such as th deserving betrays Luke's universalism, with the message ultimately being that sa

repent. We will see the complexities of this idea emerge as we progress through particular emphasises this theme, pointing out that Jesus in Luke primarily calls p new, dawning age of salvation. This is in contrast with John and to some extent M new age of salvation as springing from the coming of a new messiah, rather than repentance. For Matera, Luke's eschatology emerges out of him using and reinte source, while injecting his own focus on repentance. In other words, Luke's unde intimately constructed around his ethics.

Thus, Jesus' interaction with the Old Testament Law is less important than how his detailing of creation and salvation history. Yet, it is also still a factor in Luke and we in more detail at the end of this section when we talk about Jesus' relationship to J it is useful to note Luke's preoccupation with how individuals respond and react to this in previous sections when exploring eschatolor[illegible]e [illegible]cifixion and the resur consistent with this theme. Many parables t[illegible] individual rather than the co rather than the group. For examp[illegible] t[illegible]rables of the lost it is the lost individu else, and the rich man and [illegible] focuses on the fortunes of people in relation to we can see this and [illegible] also emerge in Luke's description of smaller characte such as Zac[illegible]n Luke 19:1–10 or Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42.

But let's turn back to the mission statement for a moment. What also emerges b his emphasis on Jesus' ministry serving those who were traditionally outcast or n were considered disreputable by all spheres of society in the first century CE, suc be part of the crowds and company following Jesus (e.g. Luke 5:30, 15:1). What t non-judgement and forgiveness being part of the repentance act for Luke. For Je one should not attempt to judge others, this being the sole reserve of God. As su Luke not as present in the other Gospels. We can see this emerge particularly in it be Mary or Martha, Mary Magdalene or even the sinner who anointed the fee are encouraged to participate in the spiritual life Jesus offers at a time when wo inferior and refused teaching by rabbis.

Wealth and Reversal

However, perhaps the most radical element of Jesus' ethical teaching in Luke is t poor. It is explicitly stated in Luke 4:18 that the Gospel is preached for the mater Matthew, who refers to the 'poor in spirit' (Matt 5:3). This special interest in pov Gospel, with Jesus encouraging others – for example, at Luke 14:11–13 – to ado Equally, Jesus in Luke is often harsh towards those who are materially rich, as we rich man and Lazarus. While wealth itself is not demonised, the Jesus of Luke oft as an obstacle to the fully realised spiritual life. Moreover, the idea of **reversal** is teachings, which refers to the overturning of the present order, where the poor

Similarly, thinking about Luke's eschatology a bit mor[illegible]ca[illegible] more keenly obse connected to a particular vision of the Kingdo[illegible] o[illegible] Go[illegible]he ethical demands Jes all in anticipation of the coming King[illegible] o[illegible], whether one interprets this in Matera argues, the Kingdom [illegible]d i[illegible]he horizon against which Jesus makes his teachings of Jesus, th[illegible] a[illegible] not just a reflection of individual duty, but a re Kingdom o[illegible] n[illegible]he kind of people who are destined to occupy it. This is th those who a[illegible]mble and who have freed themselves of material possessions a experience good fortunes in the coming kingdom.

So, altogether we've seen four key ethical ideas emerge through our initial analy **judgement**, **forgiveness**, and **reversal**. We've also seen how these ideas connect Christology and how they are universally directed towards anyone who is willing teachings, especially if they are poor, outcast, marginalised or oppressed. Some between Luke's universalism and his preference for the poor but there is a key fi between the ethical conditions for salvation and the cultural conditions. It can be the strictest ethical conditions for salvation (as we shall see with the disciples), b

Many scholars as such have argued that the author of Luke was attempting to ap
that includes the Jews and the Gentiles. As always, there is potentially a layering
it's worth thinking about using redaction criticism when analysing the passages i
what was the author attempting to impart by including this particular passage, a
important to his audience? For there are some very recognisable parables in this
and meaning might still surprise you.

Discussion Activity:
Does Luke's ethics appear to be more radical in tone than in the other Gospels? C
scripture more than scholars tend to emphasise? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

Jesus' Moral Teaching

So far, we've noted some key elements of e s in Luke, but it's time to look at s
detail and see how they reflect th e n s. Not all are reflected in each parab
will also be taking a deep e the Sermon on the Plain, which, like the missi
seen as a bit e ation of Jesus' ministry. With that in mind, let's go ah

The Sermon on the Plain

If you have read through the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, it might seem a
bit of a disappointment by comparison. There is no lengthy analysis of Jewish La
features such as the Beatitudes, though they are changed and truncated in Luke
scholars, though, is the fact that both Matthew and Luke have some version of th
extensive discussions about whether Matthew and Luke were aware of each oth
course that might vary depending on when each has been judged to have been w
Luke to have been written later than Matthew, it could be that Luke is purposefu
summarised version of the Sermon that better fits his Gospel. Alternatively, both
independent source on Jesus' teachings.

But we can instantly see a major difference in the location Jesus chooses to teac
the set of passages that precedes the Sermon in Luke:

> *He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his d
> great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the
> and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Th
> spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power we
> healing them all.* (Luke 6:17–19 NIV)

First, we can note that Jesus' ethical teaching is deeply connected to his works. J
depicted as ethics in practice. But the most important change is that Jesus does n
he descends to a 'level place'. This arguably indicates a mo galitarian picture
the needy or sick but is equal among them, willing to come down to a human lev
by placing Jesus on high, Matthew seems to present Jesus as the Messiah
possible, though, that Luke wishes to the Jewish nationalistic overtones of
more to a Gentile audien

Neverthele after this descent that Jesus delivers his version of the Beatitude
is that the bl ngs in Luke are shorter than in Matthew and are much more mate
example, of the 'poor in spirit' whereas Luke talks of those who hunger, who are p
will be the ones to be blessed under the new Kingdom of God. But equally, what L
often termed the 'woes', as he criticises those who are rich, well fed, and uncaring
claims will be condemned and suffer the same way as those who are poor and opp

> *'But woe to you who are rich,*
> *for you have already received your comfort.*
> *Woe to you who are well fed now,*

for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.' (Luke 6:24–26 N

This highlights Luke's focus on **reversal** and **wealth**. A good, righteous life is not j spirituality but acting to right the wrongs that currently exist in the world. Thus, gather wealth while other people remain poor and hungry.

So how does the rest of the Sermon proceed? Well, actually rather differently. W out of the way, Luke then focuses on more general ethical t[illegible]chings of Jesus. We sermon on loving one's enemies, which mirrors th[illegible]d Matthew 5, although on his teaching about turning the other c[illegible]nothing universally charitable.

'If someone slaps you o[illegible]e cheek, turn to them the other also. If someon withhold your cl[illegible]n them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyo you, [illegible]de and it back.' (Luke 6:29–30 NIV)

This is interesting as Jesus here is much more focused on worldly life than in Matthew. In particular, Luke 6:30 highlights the importance of charity and giving up one's wealth. In contrast, Matthew seems much more focused on loving one's enemies as an issue of interpretation of the Law. This is a point stressed by Matera, who argues that Luke takes a very different approach from Matthew for a variety of reasons. The first is that the ethics in Luke are largely built on a reinterpretation of Mark, where the author is refocusing Jesus' teaching onto the call to repentance, the reversal of fortunes, the correct use of material goods, loving one's neighbour and the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

Yet Matera also stresses that we see these differences between Luke and Matth interesting in presenting Jesus as a model for life, a person who Christians shoul discipleship upon. This is a radical call, as we can see from analysing the Sermon presenting Jesus as not just insisting on spiritual change, but real material chang of reciprocity is not a scriptural issue but an ethical and eschatological one. Peop lives not because it is the correct interpretation of the Law (although Luke is still because Jesus is emphasising the importance of a good ethical life in and of itsel Kingdom of God.

We can see this emphasis in the rest of the Se[illegible]n o[illegible]e Plain, which mirrors t we have a sermon on judging others f[illegible]uke and Matthew both remain c parables a tree and its fruit a[illegible]e w[illegible] and foolish builders. These contain simi can note that Matth[illegible]e with a small verse about Jesus' relationship to th Luke. In fac[illegible]g [illegible]the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew continually relates relationship Law, whereas Luke's shorter summary largely chooses to ove

Activity:
Read through the Sermon on the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount side by side Can you identify any contrasting or contradictory passages we haven't covered reflect broader differences between Luke and Matthew?

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Moving on, we can begin our examination of three key parables in Luke. The first undoubtedly heard of, the parable of the good Samaritan. It is often presented a and help one another, even if it seems to be an inconvenience. But analysing the great deal of nuance you might not have picked up before.

The parable begins with a lawyer, or 'expert in the law' (NIV) asking Jesus a ques life. This is likely to have been a person with great expertise in the first five book other religious and legal affairs of the time, and we can see this expertise in his s rhetorical question. Yet, the broader tone of the parable and Jesus' reply suggest lawyer has failed to understand the overall meaning and message of the Law. In simply follow the Law has a rhetorical flourish to it. H actually challenging the practise the teachings he claims to know. The lawyer, forced onto the defence question, 'Who is my neighbour?' (NI

It is interesting to no e that the word for 'neighbour' in Greek (*ho lesion*) w someone w ot imply someone who lives next door, but a person in the wi response is sing this particular meaning of the word, not just thinking abo another. More importantly, though, for Jewish people at the time, the belief was someone in the Jewish community. For many Jewish people are likely to have co the furthering of the fortunes of Israel, and not necessarily the wider world.

This is highlighted by Jesus' parable, which he uses to illustrate the notion that o universal. Consider the two people who first pass the injured man on the road: t these people would be expected to keep ceremonial purity, which they would tr person (see Leviticus 21:1). Of course, they don't know whether the injured man that they don't want to risk this. Furthermore, the crowd may well have anticipa that an ordinary Jewish person would be the third person to come along and hel that Jesus was known at this point for attacking the religious authorities. In this s been thought by the crowd to be an attack on religious hypocrisy.

However, Jesus reveals that the third person to come along was a Samaritan, a r been a radical, shocking reveal to the Jewish audience. Many Jewish communitie resentment for the Samaritans, who despite their partially shared religious and c them as pagans. Moreover, Jesus has the Samaritan escort the man on foot (the donkey) and paying two denarii (rations and accommodation have been estimat and one twelfth of a denarius) towards his recovery. In this way, Jesus counters t out that a neighbour is not someone who shares cultural or religious affinities, b who helps and cares for someone regardless of ritual or belief.

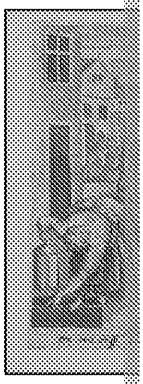
> *'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor t e man who fell into*
>
> *The expert in the law replied, 'The one w ho ha mercy on him.'*
>
> *Jesus told him, 'Go and do l ke* 10:36–37 NIV)

Thus, we can th number of important ethical sentiments at play in thi others shou niversal and not simply restricted to one's religious or cultura with Jesus' e ortations in the Sermon of the Plain, in particular Luke 6:27, '... Lo those who hate you' (NIV). However, there are questions here also about Jesus' relationship to Old Testament Law. Is Jesus arguing the lawyer should reinterpre new kind of Law altogether? While Jesus does not refute the importance of the L important aspects of it are the underlying moral principles, not its mere letters. I scholars have detected a shift in Luke again away from recognition of the Law as perhaps reflecting the author's attempts to appeal to a wider non-Jewish commu

Parables of the Lost

The parables of the lost consist of three parables Jesus delivers in a row to the 't gathered around him. It should be noted from the outset that tax collectors were communities because they were viewed as enablers of Roman rule. The taxes th benefit of religious authorities but the Roman governors, who would have used and guards garrisoned throughout Judea. Thus, the Jewish people saw these taxe oppression and as such it would be common for rabbis and other religious autho them, let alone teach them as Jesus does in these parables. However, the audien for the parables focus on the joys and virtues of repentance, and who needs to r sinned? Importantly, Jesus overturns the irony of refusing to engage with people

Let's consider the first parable, the parable of the lost sheep. This employs a met would understand, and it can be understood as a teaching device used by Jesus i through the parables of the lost. The crux of the parable is Jesus arguin his lost sheep is analogous to the joy God has on seeing a sinner repent. But ther end, which focuses on the intensity of this joy that occurs at repentance. Here, rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous repent.' Now, does this highlight the importance of repentance, but it shows help righteous people adhere to their good wills but to ensure salvation for peop



The same motif runs through the parable of the lost coin. For a poor person the loss of a silver coin would be a serious matter, and the search for repentance is painted as such. Similarly to the previous parable, the emphasis is that God actively searches for people to repent; he is not simply expecting observation of the Law as in Jewish tradition, but is wholly concerned with the salvation of human beings, of which repentance is the essential element.

We see this in the final parable, the parable of the lost son, which elaborates on the themes of love, redemption and repentance highlighted in the previous parables. It begins with two brothers, one older, one younger, with the younger asking his father for his share of his es the father of land or capital rather than income, which under Jewish tradition wo Thus, we naturally conclude that the younger son was given a large sum of mone squanders immediately. This means when the famine arrives and his money is go kindness of strangers and becomes destitute, relying on the meagre offerings a j that for Jewish people at this time, pigs were considered unclean, so this job wo humiliating, and the fact he desired the pods the pigs were eating means there i the younger son was stealing to survive.

The expectation by the audience here, who may have largely been Jewish, is that on living sensibly and morally. Yet, that is not the goal for Jesus, as foreshadowe Instead, he focuses on the son's return to the father, where the son genuinely se to be a paid servant, relinquishing his status as son (see Luke 15:21). But the key with the father's reaction of joy at seeing his son return, just like the sheep or s parables. The emphasis of the son's genuine repentance takes precedence ove father's response thus only that of love.

We can also contrast the father's response to that of the older brother, who ang decision to welcome back his younger brother. His stance here perhaps mirrors t authorities, who may be overly focused on justice and observance. But Jesus wa virtues of repentance above all, stressing that salvation is far more important tha states as much in his response to his older son, stressing that with his younger so lost and everything has been gained. Thus, we not only see the importance of re parables, but also a focus on the importance of a spiritual life over material weal important as one's connection and closeness to God.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

The final parable we shall look at comes at the end of Chapter 16 and is perhaps
eschatological and radical ethical parables. Although it is unique to Luke, scholar
may be adapting an older story, as the theme of a sinful rich man and a virtuous
either way the parable presents one of Jesus' strongest challenges to those who
that they necessarily have to use their wealth in an honourable and righteous fa
eternal punishment. In this sense, it's the clearest example of **reversal** in Luke.

But the picture Jesus draws of the rich man would have been a hyperbolic one fo
most expensive dyes in first-century Palestine and this with the mention of fine l
likely to have lived in very great luxury. This is in contrast to Lazarus, a name pot
name Eleazar, which means 'God has helped'. His misery is stressed by Jesus in a
descriptions of sores and his hunger, such that he longed to eat what fell fr
is said about the religious lives of either [illegible], but it is implied at the end of the
virtuous, as he is carried by angels to Abraham's side while the rich man is sent t

However, w[illegible] co[illegible] ironic is that even in Hades the rich man assumes th
shows that, [illegible] his torment, he still believes in the values of earthly life, whe
given him co[illegible] over others. He cannot accept that his change in fortunes is pe
down by Abraham, who informs him that this reversal cannot be unreversed. Th
good while living his life of luxury, and the power it gave him, have now gone, an
prosperity. The second irony occurs when the rich man asks Abraham to send La
them of his fate. Abraham of course reminds him that Moses and the prophets h
principles of how people should live their lives, so what further education should

This is an important ethical point in Luke, which is partially illustrated in other pa
questions about the continuity between Jesus and the Law. It's a relationship we
areas of Luke, but here it takes centre stage when considering the importance of
wealth. The rich man obviously throughout his life thinks of wealth as a reward a
spending contravenes observance of the Law. If he did think so, he wouldn't hav
brothers in Luke 16:30. But Abraham points out to him that the Law has always c
righteous, and how can one embody these virtues if one lets a person starve and
have all the means to intervene and help them?

There is a tension here perhaps between the last set of parables, talking about th
parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which talks entirely of condemnation for th
not righteous. But there is an important link here because, even in his torment, t
of his own volition. Instead, he is focused on his agony and his thoughts about th
doesn't understand that he has behaved unethically and so can't understand wh
warn people. So, we see the same kind of idea emerge, that one's moral convicti
observance, and repentance is a matter of personal rectitude, not simply doing w

Beyond this point, there is a further point to be m[illegible]ut [illegible]t the ethics of Luke a
eschatology. Ian Marshall in particular st[illegible] that the themes of reversal and t
understood as being directly re[illegible]ed to [illegible]individual calls to repentance and dis
forward that the ethics [illegible]d to the ethics of the Kingdom of God, such that th
teaching ar[illegible]lly [illegible]onding to the arrival of the Kingdom of God. We've see
we've discu[illegible]alised eschatology in Luke; for instance, Luke 17:20–22 where
and ethics, the Kingdom of God is linked to teachings of repentance and reversal
in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

In this sense, Marshall notes the complexity of Luke's ethics and eschatology. As
eschatology, the ethical project of Jesus' ministry in Luke is aimed both at those
who can repent in the future, who can embody the kind of discipleship shown in
of God is not just a future reality but a ruling of God over individuals. Thus, Mars
just a set of static moral principles, but a fundamental ethical outlook that will g
and recognise the realisation of the Kingdom of God both in the present and the

The Relationship of Jesus to Judaism

Throughout our analysis so far, we've primarily looked at the key ethical themes
themes is a broader question about how Jesus' ethics related to Judaism and Jew
particular, we can ask the question, was Jesus seeking a renewal of the Jewish fa
with a new faith? This can be a bit of a loaded question. Jesus was a Jew and, un
ministry in the context of Judaism at the time. Yet, as we saw with the discussion
what degree Jesus was seeking a separation from Jewish traditions at the time. H
authorities and the more radical elements of his teaching mean that in an impor
ordinary Jew. In fact, his persecution by members of his own faith should be evid

But each of the Gospels has a slightly different perspective on Jesus' ministry when
Judaism. We've noted in this section how Matthew is the most 'Jewish' of the Gos
ethical teaching, often framing it within the context of Jewish tradition and Law. B
conservative in its interpretation of Jesus. Questions of ethics are more contained
spiritual life and are not as readily drawn into issues of wealth or material inequali
how Luke is ready to engage with such issues and has a distinct concept of reversal tied t

So which picture is right? Scholars such as E P Sanders have argued for a more Je
ministry, holding that the image of Jesus in Matthew is probably the most accura
concerned with a renewal and continuation of the Jewish faith rather than a spli
more radical scholars such as Dominic Crossan have often pointed towards the n
elements of Jesus' ministry, holding that Jesus must have been presenting some
otherwise it would have made little sense for him to be persecuted. Moreover, it
imagine more revolutionary Jewish figures emerging out of the occupation of Ju
hold more radical ethical ideas.

Jesus' Ethics and the Gospel of Mark

At heart, the problem is one of context. Do we presume Jesus held views closer t
communities at the time, or do we emphasise him as a figure who transcended t
degree? Let's think about this problem against the background of Luke. Although
than Matthew, its depiction of Jesus is still likely to be as historically accurate. Bo
off Mark and a number of shared sources, otherwise we wouldn't have chapters
Sermon on the Mount/Plain. Yet, it is clear that Luke is interpreting these source
is more likely that Luke is offering a reinterpretation of Mark rather than trying t

But what is interesting about Mark is that Jesus' ethics is not prominent through
portraying Jesus as the Messiah and the eschatological ramifications of his arriva
redeveloping Markan eschatology, but also weaving in a more fully realised vers
narrative. The differences between Luke and Matthew are a matter of not only in
into Mark but crafting a unified picture of Markan eschatology and Lukan ethics.
between Luke and Matthew can be understood because both are drawing on simi
different interpretations of Jesus' ethics and the way they connect to his eschato
isn't exactly possible if one is developing a theologically rich account of Jesus' mi

So, what we have are two different readings of Jesus' ethics. But this doesn't nec
one is wrong. However, Jesus may well have taught parables that, gathered togeth
a unified world view. He might have taught things early on in his ministry that we
most importantly, his relationship to Judaism might have changed through his m
oppressed by the religious authorities. If holding Jesus to be somewhat human, v
figure repeating the same ethical teaching to different crowds. We have to consi
dynamic individual, responding to social conditions of the time and the people h
seen this in part by talking about how the ethical parables are crafted for the au

The Jewish Element in Jesus' Ethics

With that in mind, let's think about Jesus' ethics in Luke against his discussion of
Jesus is not asking people to transgress the Law in Luke. The parable of the rich r
that Luke's Jesus is relating his ethics to Jewish ethical tradition at the time. But
talks about the Law, it is less concerned with interpretation of the Law and more
virtues underneath, which are key for repentance and living a righteous life. Mat
virtues, but also often takes pains to illustrate Jesus' observance to the Law and
the context of its teachings.

There are a few explanations for this. Perhaps Luke was writing to a mixed Jewis
wanted Jesus' ethical teaching to appeal to a wider audience. The same is true o
writing for a primarily Jewish audience and so could h[illegible] more concerned
continuation of Jewish tradition. But Luke as '[illegible]' emphasised by Marshall
correctly as a radical who did in some [illegible] overt Jewish expectations for a m
about universal salvation. We [illegible] draw from our analysis of the conflicts a
ministry may well h[illegible] nged both religious and political authority in first-c
Jesus was [illegible] ki[illegible] a renewal of the Jewish faith then perhaps it is more diffi
plotted his [illegible]

If this is the case, then maybe Luke is recording Jesus' ethics faithfully and Matth
steps to try to reconcile them with Jewish Law. As such, Matthew might be respo
Jewish-Christian communities that Jesus was too much of a firebrand to be acce
way, it is still important to note that both Luke and Matthew still root Jesus' teac
Law. Neither paint Jesus as being concerned with the beliefs of their communitie
trying to develop a deeper understanding of what the Law *means*, not just what
can be potentially interpreted as a matter of degree rather than change; an atte
of Jesus which hold a universal appeal beyond Jewish communities, while still re
of Jesus' ministry.

Discussion Activity:
Do you believe that Jesus in Luke is seeking a renewal of the Jewish faith? Or is
transformation? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

The Bible and Modern Christian Ethics

We've analysed different views on the interpretation of Jesus' ethical teaching in L
to Jewish traditions and beliefs during his ministry. But there are broader question
Luke's ethics affected Christian beliefs in the past and how we should interpret Luk
important aspect to focus on is the **universalism** present throughout Luke. For it is
cultural background is not an obstacle to salvation. Yet, as [illegible] xplored in the tens
this was not always assumed, and early Christian c[illegible]mmunities may well have view
and Christians second. Moreover, if Jesus [illegible] eking a renewal of the Jewish faith
it, does this mean that he would have [illegible] held to the belief that the Israelites were

These are d[illegible] q[illegible]ons to answer from our modern vantage point. Howeve
universalism [illegible]e carries forth into John, the Gospel written latest out of all th
we can note over time that elements of universalism began to drift into Christian
there began to be converts not just among Jewish groups but Gentile ones also.
Luke as endorsing a broadly **egalitarian** (focused on equality) and **pluralistic** pers
that potentially has a deeper interpretation for modern Christianity.

Let's think about this in a bit more detail. We've noted before that Luke greatly e
poor, marginalised and oppressed throughout his Gospel. This has included ever
tax collectors, and the message of Jesus' ministry is arguably that salvation is ava
it. Moreover, we've analysed on an authorial level how Luke appears to be writin

but a non-Jewish one also. These factors indicate that Jesus' ethical teaching is fo
equal. There are not any innate special characteristics that set apart some peopl
compared to others, although such beliefs have been proposed in Christian view
that Luke is very concerned with equality, and if we extrapolate that idea to our
world, we might well argue for a more radical egalitarianism than we typically fin

The same is true of pluralism. The fact that Luke attempts to perhaps distance Je
well endorse a kind of religious pluralism that doesn't focus on religious, politica
would be a radical reading indeed, but in Luke we might find the seeds of a stanc
universal call to repentance rather than anyone having to follow the ethical code
Law of Moses). In other words, how we read Jesus' relationship to Judaism in Go
we interpret the relationship of Christianity to other religi[illegible]n a broader level.

Finally, we might think about Luke's idea of [illegible]rs and its focus on material inj
our understanding of the ethics of [illegible]cumulation. If you think about the p
Lazarus, it is hard to think [illegible]ything else but an indictment of the wealthy
considering th[illegible]ee[illegible]hers on their doorstep. Thus, in a modern context, we
importance [illegible]ity when reading Luke, but broader ideas of redistribution and
wealth. All th[illegible]ideas of course are dependent on a particular reading of Luke, b
think about not just how the ethics in Luke reflect the context of beliefs in first-c
context should be interpreted when thinking about Christian ethics in our world

Quick Quiz

1. What three parables focus on the joys and virtues of repentance in Luke?
2. What theme is displayed in Luke throughout Jesus' ethical teaching, whic
of salvation for all people?
3. What is the equivalent in Luke to the Sermon on the Mount?
4. Which is the more 'Jewish' of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew or Luke?
5. What theological field does Ian Marshall argue that the ethics in Luke sh
context of?
6. What theme is particularly highlighted in the parable of the rich man and
7. What ethnic group were the Jewish people often hostile to, which is feat
famous parable in Luke?

Answers to Quick Quiz

4.1: Ways of Interpreting Scripture

1. The allegorical approach searches for the deeper, underlying meaning within biblica
2. The moral approach is not concerned with theological meaning, but instead discove beneath biblical narratives.
3. Barth's use of 'witness' refers not just to the Bible's recording of God's revelatory a communicate this revelation to the reader.
4. The process of stripping myths from the biblical text in order that its mythological c from its other philosophical and theological teachings.
5. Kerygma
6. A field of philosophy that deals with questions about the meaning and nature of hu
7. The rational approach
8. The literary approach

5.1: The Kingdom of God in Luke

1. Futuris[illegible]ol
2. Realise[illegible]ology
3. Repentance
4. Futurist eschatology
5. C H Dodd
6. It typically refers to beliefs concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
7. Imminent eschatology is used to refer to forms of eschatology that believe that a se very near future, if not immediately.
8. Inaugurated eschatology

5.2: Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

1. Caiaphas
2. The Jews
3. Pontius Pilate
4. King of the Jews
5. The Temple Cleansing
6. R A Culpepper
7. E Rivkin
8. Sanhedrin

5.3: The Crucifixion and Resurrection in Luke

1. Atonement
2. Salvation history
3. Innocence motif
4. Isaiah and Psalms
5. Fulfilment
6. The suffering servant
7. The physical resurrection

6.1: Scientific and Historical-critical Challenges

1. The Enlightenment
2. David Hume
3. Celsus
4. Joseph of Arimathea
5. Mary Magdalene
6. Frank Morison
7. Ian Wilson
8. [illegible]eph of Arimathea, Sanhe

6.2: How Should We Live?

1. The parables of the lost
2. Universalis[illegible]
3. Sermon [illegible]Plain
4. Matthew
5. Eschatology
6. Reversal
7. Samaritans