

Making Sense of the Bible
by Adam Hamilton
Lenten Bible Study
Making Sense of the New Testament
Week #2
Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 6:30pm

1. Welcome/Introductions
 - a. Is it ok to record this class?
 - b. List of those willing to read aloud?

 2. Opening Prayer
Come, Holy Spirit. We yearn to encounter you, the Living God, as we explore the New Testament Scriptures. Be present today, and guide us to deeper understandings of your Holy Word. **Amen.**
- Leader Guide pg 36
3. Video (about 15 minutes)

 4. Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-19
 - a. Jesus is not only the messenger but also the message. How do you see this reflected in Paul's conversion?
 - b. How was Paul transformed by his encounter with Jesus?
 - c. What does Adam Hamilton mean when he says that in reading the Epistles, we are reading someone else's mail? How does it make a difference to keep this in mind?

 5. Galatians 1:6-9; 2:15-16
 - a. Hamilton notes (pp79-80) the two poles of "legalism" and "libertinism" in the time of the Galatians. How was that capable of potentially wrecking the Christian faith? In what ways are these extremes still a problem?
 - b. How does the letter to the Galatians help us in navigating between these two poles?
 - c. Are we, as 2021 Christians, more like the New Testament Gentiles or Jews? Why / In what ways?
 - d. Hamilton writes about cultural context. How does/should cultural context affect the way we read scripture? Is there room to ask questions about how to apply the letters to our own lives? Why or why not?
 - e. How does the understanding that there are "Deutero-Pauline" or "disputed" letters affect how you read scripture?

 6. The Gospels
 - a. The Gospels were put to paper around 70-85AD-ish. How were they shared prior? Why were they shared in that way? Why were they written down?
 - b. The synoptic Gospels - what are they? Why are they called that?
 - c. What is the "synoptic problem?" Why are the Gospels not all the same? Why are there differences between similar/same Gospel stories?
 - d. What is the four-source/two-source hypothesis? Have you heard of that before? Does this theory diminish or enhance your understanding of the Gospels as God's Good News? How does that affect your perception of the reliability of the Gospel accounts?

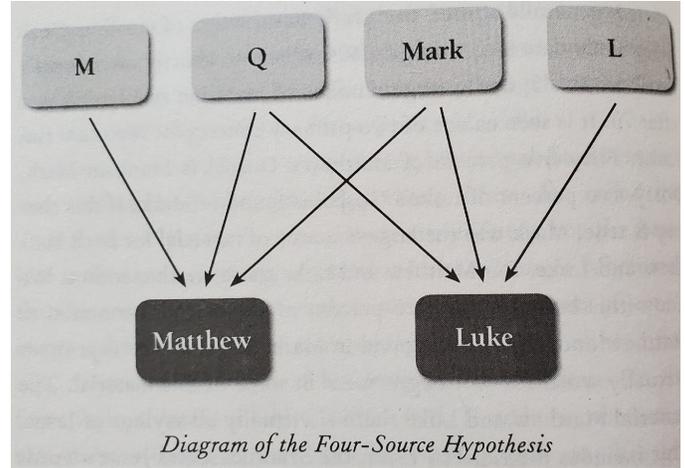
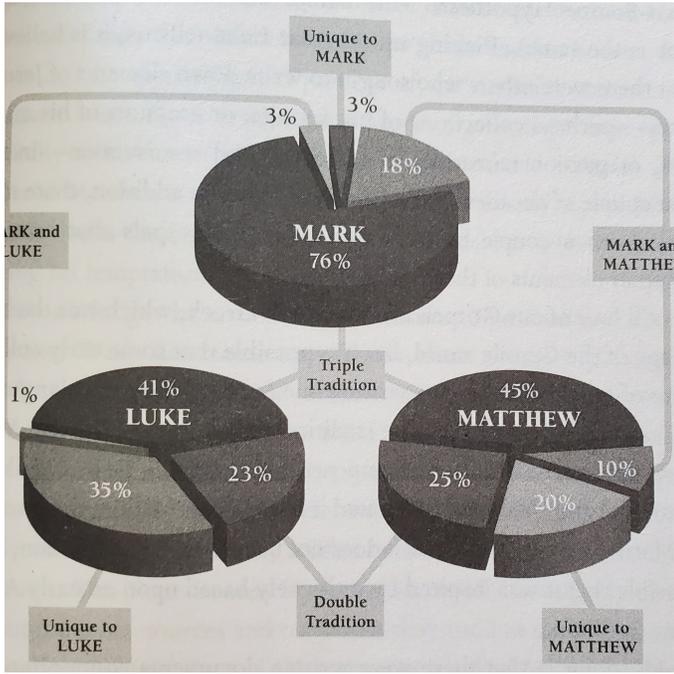
 7. Acts 2:22-24; 2 Peter 3:15-16
 - a. What were the criteria for determining the New Testament canon?
 - b. Hamilton notes that the process does *not* read like a mystery novel filled with conspiracies and intrigue. Would you agree? Why or why not?
 - c. Hamilton notes the Bible is a product of human authors inspired by God who wrote to meet the needs of their time. What does this say to you about how God spoke and continues to speak through scripture?

 8. Wrapping Up
 - a. In learning more about the New Testament,
I was struck by...
I still have some confusion or questions about...
I want to think further about...

 - b. Questions to ask yourself when reading scripture:
What is the context of the words I am reading?
What was the writer trying to say to the people?
What is my context? How is God speaking to me through these words?

 9. Additional Announcements/Comments/etc
Next Week: The nature of scripture: is the Bible the inspired Word of God, how does God speak through the Bible, and is the Bible ever wrong?

 10. Closing Prayer
Gracious God, we give thanks for your son Jesus Christ, who was not only the messenger, he was the message. We give thanks for those first-century authors who demonstrate the New Testament's humanity. Open our hearts that we might continue to be transformed by your living word. In the name of Jesus, the message. **Amen.**



Synoptic Pie Chart - pg 95
 Four Source Diagram - pg 98
 Map - pg 78
 Bookshelf - My Confirmation - pg 7

