

Two Missions: Part 7: Gethsemane, Calling, and Meat

Steve Thompson

Lesson 118

September 20, 2017

Two Missions: Petrine and Pauline

- The feud in early Christianity between the Jerusalem Church and the mission led by Paul can be observed in four places:
 - (1) in the *epistles of Paul*, explicitly in Galatians, and by implicit references in his other epistles
 - (2) in the *Synoptic gospels*, by observing what Mark writes, then seeing how Matthew and Luke change what Mark wrote
 - (3) in the book of *Acts*, where Luke plays down the bitterness of the feud compared to Paul's earlier writings
 - (4) the *Gospel of John*
- Last week we saw some examples of (1) and (2)
- Today we will see more examples of (2) and (4) regarding PJ&J
- Note: The material in this lesson comes from St. Paul vs St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions by Michael Goulder

Mark's Gethsemane Story

- In Mark 14:32-42 Mark portrays PJ&J rather unsympathetically when Jesus asks them to watch while he prays
 - ‘And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray. And he took with him PJ&J, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them ***“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here and watch.”***... he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? ***Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation;*** the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.“ And again he went away... again he came and found them sleeping, ***for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer him...’***
 - This is followed by a third instance of their falling asleep

Luke's Gethsemane Story

- Luke 22:39-46 has:
 - “And he came out and went, as was his *custom*, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And he withdrew from them... And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you do not enter into temptation.”
- Comparison:
 - Luke lessens the significance of them falling asleep by saying that Jesus led them to a place ‘as was his *custom*’, indicating that they have no reason to believe anything special was occurring; this is absent in Mark
 - Perhaps changing the location has a similar effect?

Comparison

- Mark singles out PJ&J, but in Luke it is *all* the disciples
- In Mark, falling asleep is a failure to watch out for Jesus, but Luke does *not* have Jesus tell them to watch, but merely to pray
- Mark has the failure as occurring three times, but Luke only once
- Luke omits Jesus' rebuke 'Could you not watch one hour?'
- Mark has Jesus make it clear that he is in deep distress, enough that PJ&J should be deeply worried about Jesus, making their falling asleep embarrassing even if Jesus had not commanded them to stay awake and watch; whereas Luke has Jesus say nothing of his being troubled, allowing them the excuse that they did not know Jesus was deeply distressed
- Mark says they fell asleep '*for their eyes were heavy*', suggesting apathy toward Jesus' plight; whereas Luke says '*for sorrow*', so Luke has them feeling a concern for Jesus that is absent in Mark

Luke's Changes

- So Luke makes the following changes from Mark's version
 - (1) places the story at a familiar, customary site, where they would be more relaxed and more likely to fall asleep
 - (2) removes the command to watch out for the sake of Jesus
 - (3) implicates all 12 disciples equally, not just PJ&J
 - (4) dissociates temptation from falling asleep
 - (5) omits Jesus' rebuke of Peter
 - (6) has them fall asleep only once instead of 3 times
 - (7) removes the disciples' awareness that Jesus was deeply distressed
 - (8) changes the reason they fell asleep from apathy to sorrow
- Can there be any doubt that *Luke intended to diminish Mark's negativity toward PJ&J?*

Mark's Background

- Paul mentions a 'Mark' in his opening greetings in Philemon and Colossians
- In Acts, Luke has a 'John', 'a John called Mark', and a 'Mark'
- When Peter is released from prison in Acts 12:12 he goes 'the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark'
- Goulder *speculates* on Mark's background, as follows:
 - That Mark's mother Mary held services for the Jerusalem church in her house, and PJ&J would visit there while Mark was a boy, so he got to know them first hand
 - That when he was older, Mark traveled with Barnabas, was won over by Paul, and traveled with Paul: the enemy of PJ&J!
 - That Mark wrote with first hand knowledge learned from PJ&J. Is this the source of Mark's stories about Jesus?

Matthew

- We do *not* have any biographical information about Matthew
- However, the author of the gospel of Matthew is certainly *not* the disciple Matthew for several reasons
 - The disciples were illiterate men who spoke only Aramaic whereas the author was a highly educated man who wrote fluent Greek, a language the disciples did not even speak, much less read, much less write fluently (Ehrman)
 - The disciples preached to fellow Jews, who spoke Aramaic, so writing in Greek would miss their target audience!
 - Had he been the disciple, surely Matthew would tell the stories in his own words, but instead he often quotes Mark verbatim
 - The gospel writer even copies Mark's version of the story of the *calling of Matthew to be a disciple!*

John

- Mark sided with Paul and saw Paul's anguish, and he attacks PJ&J and their successors who led the Jerusalem church
 - *Mark, like Paul, is a liberal* in breaking away from the Jewish ceremonial laws
- Matthew removed the sting from Mark's accounts of PJ&J, and is sympathetic to PJ&J and the Jerusalem church
 - *Matthew is the conservative gospel writer*: unwilling to break away from the Jewish laws: 'I have come not to abolish them (the law), but to fulfill them... not an iota ... will pass from the law until all is accomplished' (Matthew 5:17-18)
- *Luke is a liberal and supports Paul* , but seeks to unify the two church missions, so he removes Mark's negativity toward PJ&J
- *John is an ultra-liberal*, as will we see
 - Having seen Matthew and Luke diminish Mark, John reacts!

John's Calling of Peter

- *John is an ultra-liberal*, and as we will see, hated PJ&J even more than Mark, but John has to contend with the fact that they were disciples of Jesus
- According to Matthew, Peter is the *first*, along with Andrew, called to be a disciple, and is called *by Jesus*
- John's account of Peter's call is in John 1:40-42:
 - “One of the two [of Jesus' first disciples] who heard John [the Baptist] speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him “We have found the Messiah.” ... He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, “So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas.”
- John demotes Peter from first to *third* in being called, and writes that *Peter was brought by Andrew, not called by Jesus directly*

John's Calling of Peter

- Remember how glorious Luke and Matthew made it sound that ***Peter is the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah?***
- Mathew 16:15-23 has: "... Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you...for ***flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven.*** .. You are Peter and on this Rock I will build my church... I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”
- In John's account of Peter being called, ***Jesus is known to be the Messiah before Peter even meets Jesus – his own brother Andrew knows that Jesus is the Messiah and he tells Peter***
 - What a demotion! John contradicts Matthew's claim and has Peter learn of Jesus being the Messiah from Andrew
 - ***Peter learns through his own flesh and blood brother!***
 - *This has to be a deliberate reversal!*

John's Demotion of Peter

- In the Synoptic Gospels, which of course includes Mark, Peter is the spokesman for the 12 disciples, but in John 1-12, during Jesus' ministry, Peter is seldom even mentioned
 - The spokesman are Philip, Andrew, and Thomas
- John downgrades "You are the Christ!" to 'we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God' John 6:69
 - The disciple (i.e. the Jerusalem church) is limited
- John shows Peter completely misunderstanding his baptism by Jesus in 13:2-11:
 - 'Peter said to him "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him "What I am doing, you do not know now, but afterward, you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.'"

John's Demotion of Peter

- In the Synoptic Gospels, the disciple who cuts off the ear of the High Priest's servant is not named
 - John says it was Peter who did it and received a rebuke from Jesus (John 18:10)
- Regarding all the attacks we have seen from Mark and John on PJ&J, Goulder writes:
 - “It is often dismaying to those who have read the Bible for spiritual edification to find what appears to be a series of character assassinations. But I think it is a mistake to be too distressed. No movement as vital as the early church could fail to feel strongly the importance of the principles that were at stake. later movements would sink to real assassinations.... The Catholic Church was to burn dissidents alive by the hundred. By such standards ... St. Mark and St. John were gentlemanly.”

Wisdom Degraded

- In I Cor 1:19ff, Paul writes “Where is the Sage? Where is the scribe? Where is the scripture expert of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”
 - Whoa! Isn’t God supposed to be in favor of wisdom?!
- In I Cor 2: 5 he writes “that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”
 - OK, but why degrade man’s wisdom? What wisdom?
- In I Cor 2:13, he writes “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.”
- What do these passages mean?
 - What wisdom of the world does God make foolish?
 - What does “taught words of human wisdom” refer to?

The Problem of non-Kosher Meat

- Leviticus 17:12-14 says: “No person among you shall eat blood ... for the life of all flesh, its blood is in its life.” (Goulder)
 - Jewish thinking was that life was holy; life belonged to God; life was in the blood; *so do not eat the blood.*
 - So Jewish sages developed rules for determining how to kill an animal and drain its blood to avoid eating blood
- Adherence to rules such as these defining kosher meat and prohibiting the eating of non-kosher meat became one of the disagreements between Paul and PJ&J
 - PJ&J argued that these laws are Jewish laws, so they must be obeyed
 - But what was Paul to do when his worship service was hosted in the home of a Gentile who served non-kosher meat?
 - Paul wanted to ignore the kosher food laws – but how?

The Problem of non-Kosher Meat

- How is Paul to get around traditional Jewish interpretation of the Leviticus passage?
 - Paul does so by the following logic:
 - He notes that Leviticus says only that the blood must not be eaten, with no mention of rules for how to cut the animal's throat
 - He *notes that the problematic kosher food laws are part of the layers of interpretation* that have accumulated over the years
 - Jews give these interpretations equal weight
 - The Greeks thought highly of wisdom and so Jews often portrayed Judaism as wisdom (“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”)
 - *Wisdom is viewed as expanding the law.*

The Problem of non-Kosher Meat

- How is Paul to get around traditional Jewish interpretation of the Leviticus passage?
 - So Paul *distinguishes between what is in the scripture versus the interpretation* that is external to scripture
 - Paul coins the phrase “*taught words of human wisdom*” to describe traditional layers of Jewish interpretation of the scripture
 - *By distinguishing Scripture from interpretations of Scripture, he is able to claim that he obeys Jewish scripture, but simultaneously dismisses scriptural interpretations, such as those on kosher food laws, that he wants to ignore*
 - *Hence the passages from Corinthians we saw earlier where God makes wisdom foolish and “taught words of human wisdom” is degraded*

Wisdom Degraded

- So when Paul writes “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”, what he is doing is putting down traditional Jewish interpretations of Scripture while upholding the Scripture itself, which Paul believes did come from God
- Ditto when he writes “that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”
- When he writes “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit”, the “taught words of human wisdom” refers to things such as kosher food laws that are not actually in the Scriptures
- This is one of several examples where Paul maintains the sanctity of the Jewish scripture yet simultaneously argues that *salvation does not come through the law, but through the crucifixion of Jesus*