

## Jesus, an Introduction

This is not the familiar Jesus of middle class America. Jesus is a many faceted diamond. Christians often see several facets, but we have some characteristic blind spots. For example, the early church framed their belief about Jesus in many ways. One of the most resilient statements is the *Apostles' Creed*.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell.<sup>1</sup> On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

As a belief statement, it is amazing what it does say right about Jesus: 1) the Messianic Lordship of Jesus, 2) the Spirit produced virgin birth, 3) the historical death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and 4) that Jesus as Judge is the One with Whom we all have to deal with eschatologically. However, it says nothing about Jesus between His birth and His death. We Christians may often do the same. For example, one slice of evangelicalism's roots was expressed by *The Fundamentals*, a series of twelve small books published in 1917 in reaction to Christian theological liberalism.<sup>2</sup> Here, topics were discussed that include: 1) the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, 2) virgin birth, 3) Jesus teaching about money and prophecy, 4) penal substitutionary atonement death of Christ, 5) bodily resurrection, and 6) the second coming of Christ to reign on the earth. As we compare these two historically sensitive slices of Christology certain aspects overlap, which is significant. However, once again the focus is neglecting the lion's share of Jesus material in the Bible that focuses on Jesus life. What happened to His life? Aren't most of the gospels (that is, half of the N.T.) significant with reference to understanding who Jesus is? Outstanding theologians, like John Calvin, have framed Christology around specific roles of Jesus, like: prophet, priest and king.<sup>3</sup> Such an approach at least explores the prophetic aspect of Jesus earthly life that contributes aspects that the "Apostle's Creed" lacked. I think that these three slices of Christology show that certain facets of Jesus often get neglected, to the diminishment of Who He is. This is not to diminish these three approaches and the significant contribution they each made to theology. However, I think that Christianity is ready for further work that places

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<sup>1</sup> I take the sense of "descended into hell" as mentioned by the patristics to be a full experience of death, but some follow an interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, claiming that Christ proclaimed the gospel to some dead (*Gos. of Peter* 41–42; *Epist. Apost.* 27; Justin, *Dial.* 72.4; Hermas, *Sim.* 9.16.5–7; *Sib. Or.* 8.310–12; *Epistle Apost.* 27(38); Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 4.27.2; Hippol. *Bened. Moys.* 7; Clement Alex. *Strom.* 2.9.44.1–2; 6.6.445–52; Origen, *Contra Cels.* 2.43; *In Matt. serm.* 132). I follow a Reformed pattern and explore this issue in the chapter on "Jesus' Resurrection."

<sup>2</sup> *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, edited by R.A. Torrey and A.C. Dixon (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000 from the four volume edition by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917).

<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 2, chapter 15, "The Offices of Prophet, King and Priest in Christ."

Jesus in His context of second Temple Judaism and then listens to Biblical theology's presentation of Him, relating Christ to our own context as well.

A diamond like Jesus sparkles with many hews, some of which we might not expect. He even cuts deeply, especially against preconceived and limiting pictures that we might have from our youth with the warmly reassuring pictures that Jesus is so much like us, only better. Remember what Mr. Beaver told Lucy about Aslan in C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, when Lucy asked, "Then he isn't safe?" "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."<sup>4</sup>

All these approaches are framed in a context which contributes to the concepts of their Christology, whether they are: 1) the pursuit of the distinguishing essential form of Christianity (Apostles Creed and Fundamentals of the Faith), 2) a humanistic rhetorical clarity of the essential roles of Jesus Christ (Calvin), or 3) a literary piece framed to loosely mirror certain aspects of Christianity (Lewis). What is missing here is actually the contribution of two other twentieth century movements, that of the third quest of historical Jesus studies (especially the evangelical side) and the Biblical theology movement. This book would like to fuse all these influences together into one volume with the emphasis on Biblical theology, appreciated from within the possibilities rendered more likely by the second Temple Jewish context within which Jesus lived and ministered.

With regard to the historical Jesus, G. B. Caird affirms the task within which this volume hopes to contribute.

Anyone who believes that in the life and teaching of Christ God has given a unique revelation of his character and purpose is committed by this belief, whether he likes it or not, whether he admits it or not, to the quest of the historical Jesus. Without the Jesus of history the Christ of faith is merely a docetic figure, a figment of pious imagination.<sup>5</sup>

Such a historical figure is not only the Jesus which the Biblical authors comment about, Who comes from before the text. The Biblical authors also express their testimony of Jesus within the Biblical text, which the field of Biblical theology unpacks and explains. So without the contribution of Biblical theology, the historical Jesus is a man with some events. Together the historical and the Biblical theology expressed Jesus evidences a rich testimony beyond mere historical fact and community expression. Such a full testified to Jesus is what I wish to unpack here in this volume.

Using Hendrikus Berkhof's categories of Christology might help us unpack the levels and richness of Christological presentation here, that is, Christology: 1) from behind, 2) from above, 3) from below, and 4) from before.<sup>6</sup> Going further than Berkhof,

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<sup>4</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New York: Collier Books, 1986), p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> G. B. Caird, *Jesus and the Jewish Nation* (Ethel M. Wood Lecture, March 9, 1965; London: Athlone, 1965), p. 3, also contained in *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research* edited by James Dunn and Scot McKnight (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), p. 275.

<sup>6</sup> Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 267; I concur with Martin Hengel that Christology *from below* and *from above* presents a false alternative (*The Son of God* [London: SCM Press, 1976], p. 92) but hopefully Berkhof's additional categories show the fullness with which I am attempting Christology in this volume.

the presentation *from behind* begins each chapter, exploring the O.T. prophecy then charting through the second Temple Jewish expectations. As a historical study of Jesus' context, we need to enter into the second Temple Jewish world (Ezra's and Herod's Temple from fifth century B.C. to the Bar Kochbah rebellion in 135 A.D.). To set up this context, the Biblical prophecy is unpacked and then fleshed out by second Temple Jewish expectations prior to Messiah Jesus' appearance. The second Temple Jewish material also shows Jesus with continuity to His context and a unique voice as well. This is a forum in which Christology *from below* is given voice. Though in some Biblical theology sources, especially John, a Christology *from above* as the revelational God-man is also presented. In this Johannine material there is a hybrid of Christology *from below* mingled with *from above* so that this distinction may not be that helpful. Once Jesus is made sense of in His context He needs to be communicated to our context. This could be thought of as Christology *from before* in that it unpacks theological implications for belief and practice grounded in this truth. I unpack the Biblical text to draw out these trajectories. I also illustrate an artistic echo of this aspect of Christology as evident in the arts and literature (another expression of Christology *from before*, aimed more at the affect than mere intellect). This artistic echo tries to stir the passion and imagination about Christ.

Historical Jesus studies have attempted to do part of this contemporary communication, raising what can be known historically of Jesus, which is especially appropriate in light of the Biblical claims for historicity (e.g., Lk. 1:1-4). Modern historical Jesus studies had three quests which reflect the character of critical analysis embedded within them. Having written elsewhere at greater depth, I will briefly summarize certain aspects of historical Jesus studies here.<sup>7</sup> The first quest (1778-1906 A.D.) assumed that the Jesus of history was not the same as the gospel's portraits of Christ. For example, the first quest was initiated by H. Samuel Reimarus, who considered that Jesus was an apocalyptic preacher whose expectation of the impending

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<sup>7</sup> Marv Pate and I have addressed these concerns of the historical Jesus at greater depth in our volume: *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003, 2005), chapter sixteen, "The Historical Jesus and the Great Tribulation," pp. 519-551. Here, we discuss 27 criteria for recognizing historical Jesus statements (culled from Polkow-8, Walke-10, McElenry-11, Stein-11, Breech-10, Borin-10, Evans-3, Meier-10) and evaluate many of them for their usability. For general discussion of the historical Jesus issue see: Colin Brown, "Historical Jesus, Quest of," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 326-41; James Charlesworth, "Jesus Research Expands with Chaotic Creativity," in *Images of Jesus Today*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Walter P. Weaver (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1994), pp. 1-41; John P. Meier, "Reflections on Jesus-of-History Research Today," in *Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 84-107; Marcus Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1994); Ben Witherington III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995); *Jesus Under Fire*, ed. Michael F. Wilkinson and J. P. Moreland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), especially Scot McKnight's article, "Who Is Jesus? An Introduction to Jesus Studies," pp. 51-72; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus. The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*. (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publisher, 1996); N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 1-224; and especially Craig A. Evans, *Life of Jesus Research: An Annotated Bibliography*. New Testament Tools and Studies 13 (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

arrival of the Kingdom of God met stunning disappointment.<sup>8</sup> William Wrede especially showed that identifying the Jesus out of the earliest written sources was no longer sufficient for it was necessary to uncover earlier traditions upon which these sources rested.<sup>9</sup> A variety of responses emerged to answer this felt need. This first quest was populated by: 1) traditional conservative responses (e.g., J. J. Hess, Adolf Schlatter),<sup>10</sup> 2) the life of Jesus from an anti-supernatural perspective (e.g., Schleiermacher, Strauss, and Renan),<sup>11</sup> 3) a liberal Jesus as an ethical teacher, dominated by the Sermon on the Mount (e.g., Ritschl and Harnack),<sup>12</sup> and 4) Albert Schweitzer's work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*<sup>13</sup> which brought the quest to a close. Schweitzer identified three crises of the first quest: 1) bi-forcation of historicity and supernaturalism, 2) which meant that the interpreter landed in either synoptic gospels or John, and 3) either an eschatological Jesus or a non-eschatological Jesus. This quest came to a close with Schweitzer's criticism that the questers looked down the well of time to report on a Jesus, but the Jesus they described was their own image looking back at themselves from the bottom of the well. By putting these facets together (rather than bi-forcated) we can let the light that is Jesus Himself glint His image rather than our own. Therefore, Schweitzer concludes that the liberal "lives" of Jesus "never had any existence."<sup>14</sup>

There is general agreement that the second quest (1953-late 1960's) began with the celebrated paper by Ernst Käsemann, "The Problem with the Historical Jesus," which tried to bridge the radical divide of Rudolf Bultmann's frail human Jesus and docetic

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<sup>8</sup> Hermann Samuel Reimarus anonymously wrote and G. E. Lessing published, "Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Junger: Noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbüttelschen ungenannten fragment?" These extracts became known as the Wolfenbüttel fragments. Reimarus' fragment, "On the Intentions of Jesus and His Disciples" is available in English as *Reimarus: Fragments*. Trans. By Ralph Fraser and edited by Charles Talbert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (Cambridge: Clarke, 1971, originally published in 1901).

<sup>10</sup> Johann Jakob Hess, *Geschichte der drey letzten Lebensjahre Jesu* (*The History of the Three Last Years of the Life of Jesus*), (Leipzig-Zürich, Orell, Gesner, 1768-72, 1776); Adolf Schlatter, "Der Zweifel an der Messianität Jesu" (1970) now in *Zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments und zur Dogmatik* (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1969), pp. 151-202; *Die Geschichte des Christus* (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1923), now translated into English by Andreas Köstenberger as *The History of the Christ: The Foundation for New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> F. E. D. Schleiermacher, *The Life of Jesus*. Trs. S. M. Gilmour. Edited by J. C. Verhegden. Lives of Jesus Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), Original title: *Das Leben Jesu*. ed. K. A. Rutenk (Berlin: Reimer, 1868); D. F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. 3 vols. trs. G. Eliot (London: Chapman, 1846. Original title: *Das Leben Jesu Kritisch bearbeitet*. 2 vols. (Tübingen: Osiander, 1835-36); E. Renan. *The Life of Jesus*. trs. C. E. Wilbour (London: Trübner, 1864), Original title: *La Vie de Jésus*. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1863).

<sup>12</sup> A. B. Ritschl (1822-89), provides the classic liberal view of Jesus; see his *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*. 3 vols. (1870-74), along with Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*. trs. and ed. James Moffatt (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1972). The latter prompted the famous quip by Alfred Loisy, "The Christ that Harnack sees, looking back through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness, is only the reflection of a liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well" (quoted in Brown, "The Quest for the Historical Jesus," p. 331).

<sup>13</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948).

<sup>14</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 398.

Christ of faith.<sup>15</sup> Bultmann's form critical tools were conjectured to be able to bridge this chasm. This phase was followed by scholars like Fuchs, Bornkamm, Robinson and Perrin. Colin Brown criticized this quest as "unhistorical and short-sighted" on several counts, especially: 1) "it remained curiously indifferent to the world of first century Judaism as known from Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and rabbinic literature,"<sup>16</sup> and 2) for second questers, proclamation of the cross was a central event but they really gave no reason for it.

The third quest (mid 1970's-present) is a composite of conservative, radicals, and the new Jewish perspective. 1) The conservatives continued to heal the rift from Bultmann's radical divide. For example, C.F.D. Moule's *Origin of Christology* rejected the History of Religion's premise that the Jesus of history was transformed into the Christ of Faith under the influence of Savior cults.<sup>17</sup> Martin Hengel provided the groundwork demonstrating remarkable overlap of the two spheres within his work *Judaism and Hellenism*.<sup>18</sup> Building upon this foundation, I. H. Marshall demonstrated the gospels, especially Luke were credibly reliable historical documents, each with their unique theological voice.<sup>19</sup> James Dunn also championed a confidence in oral tradition upon the foundation of Birger Gerhardsson and Kenneth Bailey's investigation of the transmission of tradition within Middle Eastern oral village culture.<sup>20</sup> 2) The radical perspective, continuing Bultmann's heritage has most notably been dominate in the Jesus Seminar, where only 18% of Jesus' gospel sayings are voted to be authentic. Instead the main players, Burton Mack and John D. Crossan, envision Jesus as a cynic sage thoroughly immersed in Hellenistic philosophy.<sup>21</sup> This radical form has not emerged beyond the criticism of the second quest, in fact the conservative wing of the third quest has strongly answered this form. 3) In 1979 a new Jewish perspective emerged with Ben Meyer's study, *The Aims of Jesus*, rooting Jesus in the Judaism of His day.<sup>22</sup> Meyer was followed by Christian scholars (e.g., E. P. Sanders, James Charlesworth, N. T. Wright, John P. Meier, and Craig Evans) and Jewish scholars (e.g., Geza Vermes) who argue that there is

<sup>15</sup> E. Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," trs. W. J. Montague. *SBT* 41 (Naperville, Ill." Allenson/London: SCM, 1964). Original title, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus." *ZTK* 51 (1954): 125–53.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, "Quests for the Historical Jesus," p. 337.

<sup>17</sup> C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*. trans. by John Bowden. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974 and London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press International, 1989); cf. *The Hellenization of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1989).

<sup>19</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian; The Gospel of Luke; I Believe in the Historical Jesus*; "The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion." *NTS* 12 (1965–66): 327–51; "The Divine Sonship of Jesus." *Interp* 21 (1967): 87–103.

<sup>20</sup> James Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 197–254; B. Gerhardsson, *The Gospel Tradition* (Lund: Gleerup, 1986); *Memory and Manuscript: Oral tradition and the Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961, 1998); K. E. Bailey, "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *Asia Journal of Theology* 5 (1991): 34–54; "Middle Eastern Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *Expository Times* 106(1995): 363–67.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence. Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991); *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994). I answer this model in the chapter "Jesus as Sage" as not fitting Jesus emphasis.

<sup>22</sup> Ben Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979).

substantial continuity between Judaism, Jesus' teaching and that of the early church.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the possibilities raised by similar Jewish teachings in the context serves as a strong guide to help prevent reading onto Jesus, interpretations floated by traditions removed from this Jewish context. The Jewish material before and concurrent with Jesus and the composition of the gospels is given more weight than Jewish rabbinic writings of the second and third century A.D., which still may provide a window into possibilities of second Temple Jewish thinking by noticing where such ideas go. However, the second Temple Jewish material before and during Jesus' ministry provides continuity contributing toward a greater confidence that the historical Jesus being expounded is the factual Jesus of His time. Adding to this contextual sensitivity is the inclusion of Jewish sensitive rhetorical criticism which recognizes when Jesus' context echoes that of common or sectarian Judaism beyond it. In the mid 1990's this perspective began to develop enough nuance and sensitivity to recognize that there were varied voices, some of which were sectarian, and thus we could not read this material as a pan-Judaism.<sup>24</sup> In the chapters that follow I will show my indebtedness to this nuanced perspective by discussing in the text and the notations Jewish possibilities which provide context for making sense of the teaching and life of Jesus. As an evangelical, I will appreciate a wide array of historical documents but I will also consider that the canonical Scriptures are privileged as divinely authoritative sources. Thus, Biblical references will often be imbedded within the text as authoritative, whereas extra-biblical manuscripts will be highlighted especially in the notes as less authoritative, yet valuable as a historical source. So this book can be read as an attempt at moving the third quest further.

I summarize my criteria for evaluating the historical Jesus to be: 1) multiple attestation, 2) continuity, 3) discontinuity, 4) embarrassment, and 5) memorable form. The *multiple attestation* of the Biblical gospels, and extra-biblical material contribute to the historical confidence of the events described. The *continuity* of Jesus' teachings with the previous revelation and the second Temple context shows the possibility of contextually sensitive interpretations. Another form of continuity moves the interpreter into Biblical theology and the continuity within an authorial approach to the material (e.g., Matthew's perspective). When this is connected with particular *discontinuity*, showing Jesus' teachings also are unique though similar to second Temple Jewish teaching, the combination of continuity and discontinuity further confirms historical reliability of the accounts. These are especially compelling when they couple with *embarrassment* of a main character (like in Peter's denials) or *memorable form* as in the

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<sup>23</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism; The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penquin, 1993); James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism*. Anchor Bible Reference (Garden City: Doubleday, 1988); N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God. vol. 1 of Christian origins and the question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); *Jesus and the Victory of God. vol. 2 of Christian origins and the question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: the Roots of the Problem and the Person*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1991); *A Marginal Jew: Mentor, Message and Miracles*. vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1994); *A Marginal Jew: Companions and Competitors*. vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 2001); Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (New York/London: MacMillan/Collins, 1973). Second edition: 1983; *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia/London: Fortress/SCM, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> Sectarian Judaism is highlighted in studying the sectarian documents themselves but is aided by secondary sources as well, e.g., Mark Adam Elliott, *The survivors of Israel: A Reconstruction of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

use of parables and maxims. With such a historical Jesus approach, I have used this text to teach courses on Jesus and the gospels, by requiring the reading of the complete manuscript.

A Biblical theology perspective takes the issue of continuity and discontinuity further, because through this orientation I will also develop the unique voices of those Biblical authors who comment upon Jesus. The Biblical theology movement rose from Johann Philip Gabler's lecture at the University of Altdorf in 1787.<sup>25</sup> Gabler's approach offered an optimistic empirical spirit that the meaning of the text was accessible to individuals from the straightforward study of the Biblical text's details in an attempt to be sensitive to the distinctive voice of each author. This movement builds on the historical Jesus and reflects the particular sensitivity to the Biblical authors' voices, without losing the contributions of extra-biblical corroboration of the historical facts, as is evident by the Biblical theology Christology volumes of Rudolf Bultmann, N. T. Wright and James Dunn.<sup>26</sup> That is, the second Temple sources provide possibilities but the Biblical text is the forum where interpretations must be demonstrated if it is to be exegesis. In this, the voices most emphasized by this movement are those of the inspired Biblical authors.

Each presentation of Jesus shows unique authorial coloring. For example, in broad brush strokes Matthew is written by the early sixties A.D.<sup>27</sup> for a Jewish audience, strongly affirming the Mosaic Law and going beyond it in embracing a New Covenant perspective, and for at least some time limiting the disciple's ministry to that of Israel. Luke and Mark are written by the mid sixties A.D.<sup>28</sup> for a Gentile audience, with increased explanatory material. Tradition has it that Mark reflects Peter's gospel to Italy, and Luke reflects Paul's gospel to Achaia, and that John wrote last of all from Ephesus.<sup>29</sup> A few broad brush strokes show the different voice of each Biblical author. Luke-Acts shows the extension of Christianity to Gentiles and the Law free resolution for Gentiles at the Jerusalem council. Luke also especially encourages the poor and women as having significant inclusion as a part of the audience to which their voice is especially sensitive. All the Gospels contain ample miracles. However, Mark's lack at including much teaching leaves a picture of an authoritative Jesus from these miracles as strongly meeting real needs. While, the other gospels include many of the same miracles, their inclusion of sermon material adds distinctive character to their voice. For example, Matthew includes a series of long sermons which lay out Jesus' Kingdom agenda for His disciples. Luke contains much of the same sermon material presented on alternative occasions and often in Jesus' response to questions. As such, Luke presents a more

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<sup>25</sup> Gabler's lecture 'On the proper distinction between Biblical and dogmatic theology and specific objectives of each,' is translated and commented on in John Sandys-Wunsch and Laurence Eldredge, 'J. P. Gabler and the Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology: Translation, Commentary, and Discussion of his Originality,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33 (1980): 133–58 and also in *The Flowering of O. T. Theology*, eds. Ben Ollenburger, Elmer Martens, Gerhard Hasel (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 492–502.

<sup>26</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (London: SCM, 1952); N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*; James Dunn, *Jesus Remembered. Christianity in the Making*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1–2.

<sup>28</sup> Mk.: Eusebius, *Anti-Marcionite Prologue*; *H.E.* 2.15.1–2; 6.14.5–7; Lk.: Acts 28:30–31 with 24:27 occurring in 59 or 60 A.D.; 1 Tim. 5:17 quoting Lk. 10:7.

<sup>29</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.14.6–7; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; Origen, *Frag. En comm.. in Mt.* 1.1–20; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmida dogmatica* 1.12.6–9.

interactive and responsive Jesus when compared to that of the other synoptics. John retains similar interactivity in those conversations which Jesus has with individuals and groups. Additionally, John is focused on Jesus' Judean ministry in contrast to the synoptics which focus on the Galilean ministry, thus reserving Jerusalem to set up His martyrdom. Furthermore, John has a realized eschatology (of present everlasting life) in a mystical manner very different from the synoptic presentation (of the eschatological Kingdom as coming). Of course, Paul and Hebrews also have much to contribute but this material comes from different genres than the narrative material which makes up half the N.T. and the primary focus of this book. Such Biblical theology voice is included within the book, and at times identified as a section. So that if you wanted to explore a Biblical theology of the synoptics and Acts, then read the volume in the order of presentation, skipping chapters on "Jesus as Sacrifice," "Priestly Messiah," and "The God-Man," and skipping sections indicating another author (like a Johannine perspective), and the final section of each chapter which illustrates these ideas in the arts. If a Johannine Biblical theology is desired then begin with the last chapter, "The God-Man," then "Kingdom Miracle Worker," then the first section of "Jesus as Gospel," then "Discipler," then the Johannine section of "Jesus as Sacrifice" and "Priestly Messiah," then "Jesus' Resurrection." I have found that this volume works well for Biblical theology courses (synoptics, synoptics and Acts, and Johannine theology). Biblical theology coverage of Paul and Hebrews are included within this volume on select Christological topics but the additional agendas which those authors present ranges beyond the Christology in this book, so this volume would only contribute partially toward their Biblical theologies.

This volume was originally designed to ultimately service a systematic theology perspective as well. Which was Johann Gabler's original desire in establishing Biblical theology in the first place. The descriptive cataloging of the details of the Biblical text would then be used by Gabler to construct a new inductive tradition within systematic theology as an alternative to dogmatic theology. Others have followed this approach, to bridge from Biblical theology to systematic theology before on the subject of Jesus (such as: David Wells, B. B. Warfield and James Dunn).<sup>30</sup> I follow in their train. For example, in attempts to describe views I interact with a range of traditions and the contemporary scene as I try to communicate this Biblical theology into the modern American evangelical context. I also try to bridge to the arts student who may be more affectively influenced by the arts than a Biblical study, in completing each chapter with a discussion of literature and art<sup>31</sup> that often supports the main thrusts of the chapter, but sometimes (as in "Jesus as a Priest") serves as contrast to the historical Jesus. I have found that if this book is used as a Christology text for systematic theology classes then begin with the chapter "The God-Man" to present a revelational divine perspective. Then most of the book unfolds after that as a Christology on each topic (*from behind, below, and before*) contributing a revelational orientation through the different authorial voices.

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<sup>30</sup> David Wells, *The Person of Christ: A Biblical and Historical Analysis of the Incarnation* (Westchester, Crossway Books, 1984), B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970), James Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit: volume 1 Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Two who do this well are Frederick Buechner (*Faces of Jesus* [Croton-on-Hudson: Riverwood Publishers, 1974]) and Jaroslav Pelikan (*Jesus Through the Centuries* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985]), though I have added literature to their artistic strength.



Occasionally we get a glimpse of Christology *from above*, but most of the gospels portray a Jesus *from below*. Always the gospels offer their revelation in context (*from behind*) to address issues that have a life beyond them (*from before*). This book journeys through the wonderland of reassuring and odd colors reflected from the diamond of Jesus in the second Temple context. My hope is that the reader will begin seeing Jesus one facet at a time.

In each chapter, the prophesied material and the second Temple Jewish expectations set Jesus in a context so that He can be understood within His time. Then I develop Jesus distinctive voice, so that we do not merely hear about Him, but hear Him. It is important to let Christ frame our theology if we are trying to portray Christianity, rather than something like Paulinism. This voice of Jesus will be followed by a turn of the diamond, so that we might see His reflection through the variety of Biblical voices and then reflected by literature and art. It is through these artistic genre that the metaphors of Jesus' image take a strange and yet familiar twist. They are attempting to do as C. S. Lewis once claimed, "to water the desserts of parched imagination." In this section I am trying to woo the affect to another level of engagement. In Hebrew thought forms, the spoken word was effective to bring blessing or curse. In Christology, the Word is effective to transform a life. To make a life anew. To make us odd for God and Kingdom bound. What is before us is the need to journey through the looking glass and to follow Jesus wherever He will take us. When one takes on this journey, as with Alice, the facets which are Jesus will be richer and fuller than ever before and nothing will ever be the same again.