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## The Gospels The Historical Foundation

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# **THE GOSPELS**

## **THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

**NORMAN W. MATHERS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The gospels have been largely misunderstood and misinterpreted. Misinterpretations, widely the case, lead to erroneous conclusions. These flawed misconceptions of the Gospels lead as well to mistaken understandings of the book of Acts and the New Testament epistles. *The Gospels the Historical Foundation was written to correct contemporary confusion abroad both in our land and world.*

Norman W. Mathers, Ph.D.

# 1

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

## 1.1 Kingdom Concepts

In Matthew chapters 8 and 9, Christ authenticated his offer of the Kingdom and his Messianic office by his miracles. Upon completion of his Sermon on the Mount in chapter 7, Christ healed the leper.<sup>1</sup> This miracle was followed by a request from a Roman Centurion to heal his servant.<sup>2</sup> Christ validated his offer of the kingdom to his disciples by the healing of Peter's mother-in-law.<sup>3</sup> Chapter 8 of the gospel of Matthew closes with the exorcisms of the Gadarene demoniacs.<sup>4</sup> There are key concepts that will help us understand the gospels and the Life of Christ. Three of these key concepts are the gospel of the kingdom, the purpose of miracles, and the use of parables in our Lord's teaching. The Jewish factor needs to be included in our understanding of the gospels and the Life of Christ. Jesus, the Son of God, was a Jewish Messiah. He came to offer a kingdom to Israel. This kingdom was the one promised to David.<sup>5</sup> In the gospel of Matthew, for example, Matthew refers to the gospel of the kingdom. The grammar of the Greek text has kingdom in apposition to gospel.<sup>6</sup> The gospel was the message of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is announced as the kingdom is near or at hand. In Matthew for example in the Sermon on the Mount, the ordination sermon of the disciples, Christ invited men into the kingdom through belief in himself as their Messiah Savior. The twentieth verse of chapter 5 presents the fact that men need a righteousness greater than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. The gospel of the kingdom appears in Matthew's gospel in Matthew 4:23, 9:35, and 24:14. The word kingdom in the gospel of Matthew occurs some 50 times.<sup>7</sup> Christ began his Galilean ministry by going throughout the entire province heralding the gospel the message of the kingdom.<sup>8</sup> He taught the gospel of the kingdom in their synagogues. In Matthew 9:35, Christ heralded the message of the gospel of the kingdom throughout all Galilee. In Christ's Olivet Discourse, the gospel kingdom message will be heralded throughout the whole earth.<sup>9</sup> This is the announcement that Christ's millennial kingdom will soon be set up. The will of God for tribulation saints those saved during the tribulation is to persevere until the end of the tribulation. This heralding of the message of the gospel

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 8:1-4

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 8:5-13

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 8:14-17

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 8:28-34

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 7

<sup>6</sup> Personal observation of the Greek text - Matthew 4:23 – Aland & Black (eds.). *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary by Barclay M. Newman, Jr.*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Moulton and Geden (eds.), *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, 141-142, 397.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 4:23

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 24:14

is during the second half of the tribulation. The message of the kingdom in Matthew has as its background the Old Testament promises to Israel. Many of these Old Testament promises have not been fulfilled to date. They await the institution of Christ's millennial kingdom for their fulfillment. The message of David's kingdom is one of the biblical covenants in 2 Samuel 7. The Lord God through Nathan the prophet promised David the perpetuity of his seed. The Davidic covenant is a biblical covenant. It is unending and eternal. David was promised a king to sit upon his throne and a kingdom. Christ will be the fulfiller of the Davidic Kingdom. This kingdom will be instituted at the end of the tribulation period. The word kingdom is used approximately 19 times in Mark. The word kingdom is used 46 times in Luke. The word kingdom is used approximately 6 times in John.<sup>10</sup> The gospel of the kingdom must be understood in terms of the rejection of the nation Israel. Christ presented Himself to the nation Israel as their Messiah. This was the official presentation of Messiah to the nation. Earlier, the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the crowds had attributed his works to the prince of the demons.<sup>11</sup> The Holy Spirit was convicting the nation Israel of Christ's offer of the kingdom. In attributing His miracles to the power of the Devil, nation Israel committed an unpardonable sin.<sup>12</sup> It is not possible to understand the gospels without the key concept of the gospel of the kingdom. The generation rejected Christ was under judgment of God. This period took place from the time of the rejection of Christ to 70 A.D. when the temporal judgment of God fell on the nation Israel. This interpretation is verified by Peter's words on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Peter admonished the Jews listening to him on the day of Pentecost to change their identity from that of the nation of Israel to Christ. Peter exhorted them: "start repenting and let each one start having been baptized for forgiveness of your sins."<sup>13</sup> The command to "start repenting" is a 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, Aorist Imperative Active.<sup>14</sup> Peter is addressing the around 3,000 souls that heard him on the day of Pentecost. The "start having been baptized" is an Aorist passive imperative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.<sup>15</sup> The action of the Aorist tense can precede, be simultaneous, or subject to the action of the main verb. "Start letting each one have been baptized" is subsequent to "start repenting an Aorist Active Imperative.<sup>16</sup> Those hearing Peter received his word to "start repenting." "They have been

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<sup>10</sup>Moulton and Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, 142.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 9:34, 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 12:31-32.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2:38 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition*, 414.

<sup>14</sup> Han, *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 232.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>16</sup> Han, *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 232.

baptized” follows “having received his word.”<sup>17</sup> The word “sins” is a genitive plural. The repentance would take care of their eternal judgment. The baptism followed taking care of their temporal judgment.<sup>18</sup> The nation was under the judgment of God for their rejection of Christ as their Messiah and Savior. “Now many other words he himself has testified and he was calling to them saying: “Start having saved yourselves from this perverse generation.”<sup>19</sup> [author’s translation] This generation is under judgment. This was a repeated exhortation as indicated by the present active participle saying.<sup>20</sup> In interaction, salvation was by repentance in the crucified risen Christ. Baptism is not a condition of salvation. In the case of the group addressed by Peter at Pentecost, they needed to change their identity from a nation under judgment to Christ. The truth of this interpretation is seen in the book of 1 Corinthians. Paul states that the Jews seek signs.<sup>21</sup> Tongues are a sign to unbelievers not believers. Therefore, tongues are a sign to unbelieving Jews that you are under judgment.<sup>22</sup> Paul uses an illustration from the prophet Isaiah that God spoke to the godless northern tribes of their impending judgment through the Assyrian tongue.<sup>23</sup> In the same manner, God spoke to the generation that rejected Christ through foreign tongues. The message conveyed to the Corinthians was you are under judgment. Tongues was a spoken message of judgment in the context of 1 Corinthians. The gospel is not repent and be baptized. The gospel to the generation that rejected Christ was repent. The temporal judgment fell on Israel in 70 A.D. by Titus and the Romans. All the Jews had been expelled from Rome by Claudius and they took up their residence in Corinth.<sup>24</sup> This is recorded in the book of Acts.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Acts 2:41 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition*, 414-415.

<sup>18</sup> Han, 232.

<sup>19</sup> Acts 2:40 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition*, 414.

<sup>20</sup> Han, 232.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:22.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:22.

<sup>23</sup> Isaiah 28:11.

<sup>24</sup> Tenney, *New Testament Times*, 221

<sup>25</sup> Acts 18:2

## 1.2 The Sign to the Nation

In evaluation, Christ authenticated his offer of the kingdom by his miracles. The authentication or validation of the offer of the kingdom, his Messiahship, and words were validated by these miracles or as they are often called signs. The main sign in Matthew's gospel is the healing of the leper. This was a sign to the nation Israel that Messiah was in their midst. In the Old Testament, it does not say Messiah will heal the lepers. It must have been understood that only Messiah can heal the lepers. The healing of the leper is missing from the signs or miracles performed by Messiah in Isaiah 35. It is of interest that Christ validated his offer of the kingdom to the disciples by the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in a private setting. Christ began to herald the gospel which was the offer of the Davidic kingdom promised to David by Nathan the prophet. The gospel of the kingdom was the message of the offer of the kingdom. The word gospel is in the accusative case in the original text. The word kingdom is in the genitive case. While the gospel names the broad category. The kingdom names the specifics of that gospel. The offer of the kingdom appears in three passages in the gospel of Matthew. These verses are 4:23, 9:35, and 24:14. The first two verses occurred during Christ's first advent. The last verse will occur during the second half of the tribulation. This is known as the Great Tribulation. As the time of fulfillment of the tribulation approaches, the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom will be announced. Christ will set up his millennial kingdom. This rule of Christ will for a thousand years from Jerusalem. This will be the fulfillment of Christ sitting on the throne of David. The offer of the kingdom will be in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to Israel. The Old Testament promised Israel the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom.<sup>26</sup> An example of this can be found in the prophecy of Micah. Matthew refers to terminology of the kingdom 53 times.<sup>27</sup> The offer of the kingdom was rejected by Israel. The gospels document this rejection in Matthew 9:34, 12:24, Mark 3:22, and Luke 11:15. It is not possible to understand the gospels without adhering to the inspired structure of the gospels. The gospel of the kingdom forms a key concept in our comprehension of the gospel of Matthew. Further, it must be understood that the generation that rejected Christ's offer of the kingdom was under judgment. This is referred to as the unpardonable sin in Matthew's gospel.<sup>28</sup> The Holy Spirit was convicting the nation concerning Christ's offer of the kingdom. The Pharisees, the Scribes, and that generation of the nation Israel fell under

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<sup>26</sup> Micah

<sup>27</sup> Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 18-19 in Saucy, "The Kingdom -of- God sayings in Matthew, 175-97. (Bibliotheca Sacra 151 (April-June 1994).

<sup>28</sup> Matthew 12:31

judgment for the unpardonable sin. The Pharisees, the religious leaders, attributed Christ's works to the powers of Hell.<sup>29</sup> The fact of the judgment of God on that generation of the nation Israel is further confirmed by Peter's sermon on day of Pentecost. He exhorted those listening to him to repent because the nation was under the judgment of God.

### 1.3 The Rejection of the Nation

This rejection of the nation is documented in all three gospels. These verses are Matthew 9:34, 12:24, Mark 3:22, and Luke 11:15. The exhortation to repent was to change their mind about the decision rendered by the nation that Christ was doing his works by the powers of Hell. It was also saving faith receiving Peter's word. Their baptism following their saving faith in Christ verified their decision to have trusted Christ as their Messiah Savior. The epistle of 1 Corinthians confirms the truth of the judgment of God on that generation of the nation Israel that rejected Christ. The Jews sought signs. Tongues were a sign not to believers but to unbelievers. Therefore, this syllogism must be concluded tongues are a sign to unbelieving Jews that you are under judgment. It is astounding that churches could not interpret a verse concerning the purpose and application of tongues not to believers but meant for unbelievers. Paul's argument was from the book of Isaiah 28:11-12. God has spoken a message of judgment to the godless Northern kingdom through the Assyrian tongue. In the New Testament, tongues are a sign not believers but to unbelievers.<sup>30</sup> This temporal judgment fell on Israel in A.D. 70 by Titus and the Romans. There was a large population of Jews living in Corinth due to their expulsion from Rome by the emperor Claudius. The emperor Claudius reigned from A.D. 41-54.<sup>31</sup> Bruce points out two references to the emperor in Acts 11:28 and 18:2. The latter reference from the book of the Acts states that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in A.D. 56 following his second missionary journey.<sup>32</sup> Acts was written by Luke from A.D. 60 to 62.<sup>33</sup> The edict from Claudius expelling the Jews from Rome was in A.D. 49 or 50.<sup>34</sup> Bruce in his *Christianity under Claudius* raises the question as to the date when the Jews left Rome.<sup>35</sup> Priscilla and Aquila were already in Rome when

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<sup>29</sup> Matthew 12:24

<sup>30</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:22

<sup>31</sup> Bruce, *Christianity Under Claudius*, 309-326. ([www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk)) (drawn up 9/12/20.

<sup>32</sup> Mathers, *Christian Hermeneutics: Dispelling the Myths*, 177.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>34</sup> Toussaint, "Acts", 349-432 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by the Dallas Seminary Faculty*.

<sup>35</sup> Bruce, 317.

Paul arrived in Corinth in last part of summer or the autumn of A.D. 50.<sup>36</sup> This leads Bruce to conclude that the Edict of Claudius is not to be given a date beyond A.D. 49.<sup>37</sup> Suetonius in his *Life of Claudius* describes riot happening continually on the part of the Jews to Chrestus.<sup>38</sup> James D.G. Dunn makes an interesting point on the name “Chrestus.” The consensus of scholars make an inference that the name “Chrestus” should be “Christus.” Suetonius did not understand the spoken account hearing the word “Christus” as “Chrestus.” Further, it was those who followed “Chrestus” caused these riots with the Jews.<sup>39</sup> Suetonius presents the fact that it was the incitement of “Chrestus” that led Jews to continual rioting prompting Claudius to issue his edict.<sup>40</sup> In terms of Peter’s exhortation to repent to the Jews listening to him on the day of Pentecost, repentance is used for saving belief or faith in Jesus.<sup>41</sup>

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### The National Repentance of Israel

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<sup>36</sup> Bruce, *Christianity under Claudius*, 317.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>38</sup> Toussaint, “Acts,” 405.

<sup>39</sup> Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 141-143 in [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suetonius\\_on\\_Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suetonius_on_Christians), fn 33. (drawn up 09-12-20).

<sup>40</sup> Suetonius, *Life of Claudius*, 25:4 in Bruce, *Christianity Under Claudius*, 316. ([www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk)) (drawn up 9/12/20).

<sup>41</sup> Acts 19:4.

## 2.1 Conditions for the Kingdom to Come

A long-awaited repentance on the part of the nation Israel is the message of John the Baptizer in Matthew 3:2. John was preparing a remnant for Messiah. He was heralding the message of “keep on repenting” to those coming from Jerusalem, Judea, and from the Jordan.<sup>42</sup> Two essential features were necessary for the kingdom to come a remnant prepared for Messiah and judgment was necessary for the kingdom to come. John came in the appointed way as predicted by Isaiah the prophet.<sup>43</sup> Another verse is from the prophet Malachi to be included in the Old Testament prediction of the forerunner John the Baptizer.<sup>44</sup> Both the forerunner, John, and Messiah, Jesus heralded the message of repentance to the nation Israel.<sup>45</sup> The reason is given “for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.”<sup>46</sup> [author’s translation] The verb *eggiken* is a perfect active.<sup>47</sup> The kingdom was about to be instituted through Messiah, Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup> Jesus proclaimed the same message.<sup>49</sup> In the Old and New Testament entrance into the theocratic kingdom called for the individual to repent.

## 2.2 Peter’s Preaching in Acts 2 and Acts 3

Peter preached this message in Acts 2:38 and 3:19 calling for Israel to repent.<sup>50</sup> The national repentance of Israel was long foretold in the Old Testament. The question is whether Peter was addressing the nation Israel for a national repentance or whether this is a salvation message as indicated by Acts 2:21. Peter quoted from the prophet Joel. Israel must repent as a nation. Repentance was necessary for individual salvation but it was also a must for the national repentance of Israel to take place for the promised kingdom to come.<sup>51</sup> Peter is addressing the nation as indicated by the words “Men of Israel.”<sup>52</sup> [author’s translation] Peter calls for a national repentance. The same

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<sup>42</sup> Matthew 3:5

<sup>43</sup> Isaiah 40:3-5

<sup>44</sup> Malachi 3:1

<sup>45</sup> Matthew 3:2, 4:17, Mark 1:14-15

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 3:2 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Revised Fourth Edition*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Han, *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Barbieri, Jr. “Matthew,” 24 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition*, 13-94.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 4:17.

<sup>50</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 453.

<sup>51</sup> Toussaint, *Acts*, 358 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), 349-434.

<sup>52</sup> Acts 2:22 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Revised Fourth Edition*, 412.

motif is found in Acts 3. Peter's inspired inerrant message was a call for the national repentance on the part of the nation Israel. Both messages are a call for a national repentance on the part of Israel. It was as well the condition of individual repentance that was necessary for the individual Jew to enter the kingdom. The nation Israel did not repent. The kingdom did not come. Pentecost gives several reasons why this could not be a reoffer of the kingdom. The signs taught by Christ had not occurred. These were not completed. The result was the kingdom could not be offered again to the nation Israel. Acts 3:21 confirms the truth of this view. The age of grace and the formation of the universal church on the day of Pentecost with all that would be involved for the divine program for the church had not been completed.<sup>53</sup> Acts 1:8 does not line up with kingdom offer. The king was absent. Christ's work in heaven for the church must be completed.<sup>54</sup> Acts 2:38 does not relate to the earlier offer of the kingdom as evidence in the message of John the baptizer.<sup>55</sup> The offer of the kingdom by John the baptizer and Christ at his first advent was the theocratic kingdom. This offer of the kingdom at Christ's first advent was only for Israel. This differs from the offer of the kingdom at Christ's Second Coming.<sup>56</sup> This will be proclaimed not only to Israel but to the world. Pentecost draws support for this from Matthew 24:14, Revelation 7, 11, and Matthew 17:11. This scripture confirms the message of the gospel of the kingdom through the remnant and the two witnesses.<sup>57</sup> At Christ's first advent, the "gospel of the kingdom" restricted to Israel was heralded by John, the disciples, the seventy and the Lord himself. Support for this truth is from Matthew 3:3, 10:7, Luke 10:19, and Matthew 4:17.<sup>58</sup> The news of the kingdom offered at Christ's Second Coming is found in the book of Revelation 11:15-17, 14:6-7.<sup>59</sup> The "gospel of the kingdom" at Christ's Second Coming is also called the "eternal gospel."<sup>60</sup> [author's translation] The word eternal is in the second attributive position of the adjective. The emphasis is on the word eternal. The proclamation by John and Jesus to repent was calling for a national repentance on the part of the nation. The gospel of the kingdom was the offer of the kingdom to Israel. This was in line with the divine plan for Israel. John the baptizer was preparing a remnant for Messiah. Jesus called on the nation to repent. The "gospel of the kingdom" was the actual offer of the kingdom promised to Israel in the Old Testament. It is necessary to distinguish

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<sup>53</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 469.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 469-470.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 470.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 470-472.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 472.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 472.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 472.

<sup>60</sup> Revelation 14:6 (partial) in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition*, 863.

the divine plan for the ages.<sup>61</sup> The “times of the Gentiles” spoken by Christ in Luke 21:24 must be distinguished from the “times and seasons” for Israel found in Acts 1:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1. In addition, there are last days for both Israel and for the church.<sup>62</sup> Support is from Isaiah 2:1-5 for Israel. His support for the church is from the second epistle of Timothy 3:1-5.<sup>63</sup> Israel is yet to experience the new covenant found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. All Christians saved from the day of Pentecost are recipients of the new covenant by Christ’s blood. Chafer’s support is from Matthew 26:28 and 1 Corinthians 11:25.<sup>64</sup> A distinction must be made between Israel and the church. There is not any church in the Old Testament. The church yet future in Christ’s day is proclaimed by our Lord in Matthew 16. The universal church, the body of Christ was formed on the day of Pentecost as found in Acts 2. In the New Testament, the church and Israel are not one and the same. Israel is Israel in the New Testament. Support can be drawn from 1 Corinthians 10:18 and Galatians 6:16. Three chapters in the epistle of Romans chapters 9 through and including chapter 11 deal with the question of Israel. The church is the church in the New Testament. The church is not the new Israel. The New Testament epistles are the teachings for the church. Peter’s messages in both Acts 2 and 3 were not a reoffering of the kingdom. They were instead a call to national repentance on the part of Israel. There is a distinction to be made between the message of the gospel of the kingdom restricted to Israel at Christ’s first coming and the proclamation of the message called “eternal gospel” at Christ’s second coming. Peter’s message in Acts 2 and 3 could not be a reoffer of the kingdom announced by Christ at His first coming. The church age began on the day of Pentecost had to first run its course as indicated by Acts 1:8. The ‘gospel of the kingdom’ was an appeal to the nation Israel the offer of the Old Testament promised kingdom to David. This is found in 2 Samuel 7. While each of the gospels present a different theme of Christ, the gospels of Matthew and Mark present a similar structure. The gospel of Luke presents a different structure.

### **2.3 The Davidic Kingdom**

The gospel of the kingdom heralded by Christ in all of Galilee was the offer of the Davidic Kingdom.<sup>65</sup> The progression in Matthew chapter 9 is throughout every city and village in Galilee.<sup>66</sup> Christ’s Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5 through 7 of the

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<sup>61</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology vol 1*, xi.

<sup>62</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology vol 1*, xii.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

<sup>64</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology, vol 3*, 375.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 4:23, 9:35

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 9:35

Gospel of Matthew is a reinterpretation and exposition of the Mosaic Law. The Pharisaic theology was that one would be admitted into the kingdom if they kept the externals of the Law. Christ expounded the Law showing that righteousness was a far greater than this and it was a matter of the heart. The key verse is Matthew 5:20: “for I say to you that except your righteousness may have exceeded greater than the Scribes and Pharisees you may not at all have entered into the kingdom of the heavens.”<sup>67</sup> [author’s translation] Israel entered into a covenant relationship with Yahweh at Mount Sinai as recorded in the book of Exodus. The history of the Old Testament is that Israel did not live up to the demands of the Mosaic Covenant. Israel continually departed from this commitment. The prophets were continually bringing Israel before Yahweh’s bar of justice. The ten northern tribes were deported to Assyria in B.C. 722. The southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin were deported to Babylon in three deportations. These deportations were B.C. 605, 597, and 586. The prophet Daniel records how the Lord God gave Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>68</sup> In order to understand the word repent by John the baptizer, and Jesus, we should consider the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New covenants. Abraham covenant promised the land of the Middle East to Abraham and his seed. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment. Paul in the epistle of Galatians informs that seed is singular not plural. The Palestinian covenant promised God would bring scattered Israel even at the ends of the earth back to the promised land if they returned to the Lord God with all their heart. The Davidic covenant promised David a king and a kingdom in perpetuity. The New Covenant promised Israel would be saved. The prophet Malachi closes with the spiritual condition of Israel as one of apostasy. As Matthew’s gospel opens, Israel is still in a condition of apostasy. Both John the baptizer and Jesus commanded the nation to repent. A national repentance was the condition upon which the kingdom would come.<sup>69</sup> This was not an offer of the kingdom as indicated by the word repent and “the gospel of the kingdom.”<sup>70</sup> “The gospel of the kingdom” was the offer of the kingdom promised to David in 2 Samuel 7. Metanoieite, the Greek word, translated repent is a second person plural present active imperative.<sup>71</sup> Those coming to John, the baptizer, were given this message with good reason. “for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.”<sup>72</sup> “The kingdom of

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<sup>67</sup> Matthew 5:20 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament revised fourth edition*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel 1:1-2

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 3:2, 4:17

<sup>70</sup> Matthew 4:23, 9:35

<sup>71</sup> Han, *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 3

<sup>72</sup> Matthew 3:2 partial verse in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary*, 6.

the heavens” would reach to the earth.<sup>73</sup> This was God’s sovereignty over the earth as actual rule to be carried out by Jesus the Messiah.<sup>74</sup> This was a repeated motif in the Old Testament.<sup>75</sup> John’s audience understood his message.<sup>76</sup> Repentance on the part of the nation was both necessary individually and corporately.<sup>77</sup>

## 2.4 Christ’s Works Attributed to Powers of Hell

The national repentance of Israel did not come about as indicated by the decision of the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the crowds attributing Christ’s works to the powers of Hell.<sup>78</sup> “The kingdom of the heavens” could not come unless there was a national repentance on the part of the nation Israel. This must be distinguished from the message of “the gospel of the kingdom.” Was Christ’s offer of the kingdom a valid offer since there was not a national repentance on the part of the nation Israel? The answer is in the affirmative. Yes, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the eternal Son of God was omnipotent. He could have brought it about. God the Father could have sent David’s kingdom. Why couldn’t that generation respond to the call for a national repentance on the part of the nation Israel? Jesus was the first paraclete.<sup>79</sup> Prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Jesus carried out this ministry. John’s gospel teaches that Christ blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.<sup>80</sup> The elective purposes of God the Father extended to the nation Israel. The apostle Paul in Romans 9 informs under inspiration of the Spirit of God: “Now not as that the Word of God has failed.” “for not all the ones from Israel these [are -understood but not in the manuscript] Israel.”<sup>81</sup> [author’s translation] The real Israel are those descended from Abraham through the line of promise. A real Jew born a Jew is not a Jew according to Romans 9:7. A real Jew according to Romans 9 is a descendant of Abraham through the line of promise. He is born physically a Jew but has the faith of Abraham in Jesus.<sup>82</sup> The Word of God tells us this because of the elective purposes in eternity past before the world began by God the Father.<sup>83</sup> James in his epistle addresses the twelve tribes. This epistle confirms that the real Jew is born physically a

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<sup>73</sup> Barbieri, Jr., “Matthew,” 24 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition*, 13-94.

<sup>74</sup> Barbieri Jr., 24

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 24

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 24

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 24

<sup>78</sup> Matthew 9:34, 12:24

<sup>79</sup> John 17:12

<sup>80</sup> John 12:39-41

<sup>81</sup> Romans 9:6

<sup>82</sup> Romans 9:6-8

<sup>83</sup> Romans 9:14-18

Jew with faith in Jesus.<sup>84</sup> The twelve tribes are Jewish evangelists sent out to preach the gospel at the beginning of the tribulation.<sup>85</sup> The prophet Zechariah proclaims that two thirds of the Jews in the land of Israel during the tribulation period will be cut off.<sup>86</sup>

## 2.5 Gospel Structure

In Matthew's thematic presentation of the Christ the Messiah Savior, his miracles<sup>87</sup> authenticate his offer of the kingdom. The first miracle validating Christ's offer of the kingdom and his Messianic office was the healing of the leper. In the Old Testament, there is not any evidence that when Messiah comes he will heal the lepers. The works of Messiah are stated in Isaiah 35:5. In Matthew 8:1-4, Christ heals the leper. He has sent a sign to the nation that Messiah is in their midst. Non-Jewish persons such as the Roman centurion approached Christ based on his person. This Roman soldier was a soteriological relationship to Christ. His admission is of the deity of Jesus Christ and faith in his person to heal his servant.<sup>88</sup> The healing of Peter's mother in law is an authentication to the disciples of his offer of the kingdom and his Messianic office. The healing of the Gadarene demoniacs in Gentile territory illustrates Christ's authority over the spiritual realm. A marker is placed in the offer and authentication of the kingdom and his Messianic office with the healing of the paralytic. This is the investigation of Christ's credentials. "and behold some of the scribes have said among themselves this one blasphemes."<sup>89</sup> In response to further miracles in Matthew chapter 9 particularly the man unable to speak possessed by a demon brought condemnation from the Pharisees. "Now the Pharisees have said: 'by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.'<sup>90</sup> In chapter 10, Christ sent out his disciples to proclaim the "the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."<sup>91</sup> [author's translation] This is not an offer of the kingdom but is a message by the disciples calling for the national repentance on the part of Israel. The disciples are instructed by Jesus not to go to the Gentiles nor Samaritans.<sup>92</sup> The message was limited to Israel. "but you yourselves keep on proceeding to the lost sheep of house of Israel."<sup>93</sup> [author's translation] The Pharisees recognized there was a power behind Christ's

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<sup>84</sup> James 1:2

<sup>85</sup> Revelation 7:1-8

<sup>86</sup> Zechariah 13:8

<sup>87</sup> Matthew 8:14-17

<sup>88</sup> Matthew 8:5-13

<sup>89</sup> Matthew 9:3 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Revised Fourth Edition with Dictionary*, 29.

<sup>90</sup> Matthew 9:34, *ibid.*, 32.

<sup>91</sup> Matthew 10:7, *ibid.*, 34

<sup>92</sup> Matthew 10:5

<sup>93</sup> Matthew 10:6

miracles but they attributed his miracles to the powers of hell. “Now the Pharisees having heard have said: This one casts out demons if not by Beelzeboul the one ruling the demons.”<sup>94</sup> [author’s translation] The other use of the gospel of the kingdom is found in the Olivet Discourse. “and this gospel of the kingdom will have been heralded in whole inhabited earth to testimony to all the Gentiles and then the end will come.”<sup>95</sup> [author’s translation]

## 2.6 The Gospel of God

In Mark’s gospel to the Romans, our Lord Jesus offers a call to Israel for a national repentance on the part of the nation. The gospel of the kingdom in Mark is called “the gospel of God.”<sup>96</sup> In Mark 1:15, this is defined as the message of “the kingdom of God.” [author’s translation] This is an unconditional message from the heavens to Israel calling for a national repentance on the part of the nation. Mark 1:40-45 is the sign to the nation Israel that Messiah is in their midst. The second chapter of the gospel of Mark begins with the Scribes investigation the credentials of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Jesus heals the paralytic. Christ told the paralytic that he received forgiveness for his sins.<sup>97</sup> The Scribes accused Christ of blasphemy. They reasoned only God can forgive sins.<sup>98</sup> Mark 2:10 reads: “Now in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to have forgiven sins on the earth.” [author’s translation] Mark chapter 1 is a brief narrative as Mark is pushing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God and the supervision of the apostle Peter to the decision of the Scribes.<sup>99</sup> These scholars were from Jerusalem. They accused Christ of being demon possessed and casting out demons by the ruler of the demons Beelzeboul. In Mark 1:14, the gospel of God should include kingdom. The variant reading “the gospel of the kingdom” is preferred.<sup>100</sup> In a lot of Greek manuscripts, the word kingdom appears before God.<sup>101</sup> Reference is to the King James Version.<sup>102</sup> It could be added that this would line up with the gospel of Matthew. The heralding of “the gospel of the kingdom of God” was an offer of the Davidic kingdom promised to Israel. “and saying that the season having been fulfilled and the kingdom of God

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<sup>94</sup> Matthew 12:24 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Revised Fourth Edition*, 43

<sup>95</sup> Matthew 24:14

<sup>96</sup> Mark 1:14 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary*, 119

<sup>97</sup> Mark 2:5, *Ibid.*, 123

<sup>98</sup> Mark 2:6-7, *Ibid.*, 123

<sup>99</sup> Mark 3:22, *Ibid.*, 129

<sup>100</sup> Mark 1:14 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary*, 119  
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<sup>101</sup> Grassmick, “Mark,” 107 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition*, 95-197

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

has drawn near; keep on repenting and keep on believing in the gospel.”<sup>103</sup> [author’s translation] Jesus was addressing as well all those who had believed on Him from the preaching of John. Repent is a present imperative active, second person plural.<sup>104</sup> Pisteuete translated believe can be translated as either a present imperative active, second person plural or as a present indicative active.<sup>105</sup> Since Jesus is addressing those who had believed on Him from the preaching of John, the better translation is taking it as a present imperative active. The Jews of Jesus’ day understood this concept of David’s Messianic kingdom.<sup>106</sup> Support is from 2 Samuel 7:8-17, Isaiah 11:9, and 24:23. Jeremiah’s prophecy is referred to as well in 23:4-6. Other Old Testament prophets given are Micah 4:6-7 and Zechariah 9:9-10 and 14:9.<sup>107</sup> The Old Testament predicted the future coming kingdom of Messiah the Davidic kingdom.<sup>108</sup> Support from the New Testament is from Matthew 20:21, Mark 10:37, 11:10, 12:35-37 and 15:43. He includes Luke 1:31-33, 2:25 and 2:38. Reference is made as well to Acts 1:6.<sup>109</sup> Christ’s purpose in Luke 4:43-44 was to preach the message of the kingdom of God. This is the offer of the Messianic kingdom to Israel. In Luke 8:1, Christ is “heralding and himself proclaiming the kingdom of God.”<sup>110</sup> [author’s translation] Luke 10:9,17, 16:16 and 19:11-27 are additional references to the offer of the Messianic kingdom to Israel.<sup>111</sup> The healing of the leper is found in the fifth chapter of Luke.<sup>112</sup> This is followed by certain Pharisees and Doctors of the Law investigating Christ because of the sign of the healing of the leper. They came from Galilee, Judea and from Jerusalem.<sup>113</sup> Christ forgave the sins of the paralytic. The scribes and the Pharisees accused Christ of blasphemy. Christ refuted their reasonings.<sup>114</sup> The clincher was Christ told the paralytic to pick up his pallet and walk. This validated Christ’s claim to be the Son of Man and to forgive sins. Christ referred to himself as the Son of Man.<sup>115</sup> Christ’s Sermon on the Mount comes after these two signs to the nation of Israel. The Sermon on the Mount is found in Luke 6. Chapter 7

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<sup>103</sup> Mark 1:15 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary*, 119

<sup>104</sup> Han, *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 66

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 66

<sup>106</sup> Grassmick, 107

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

<sup>110</sup> Luke 8:1 partial verse, in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary*, 228

<sup>111</sup> Mathers, *Knowing God’s Word: Key Issues*, 54

<sup>112</sup> Luke 5:12-16

<sup>113</sup> Luke 5:7

<sup>114</sup> Luke 5:24

<sup>115</sup> Luke 5:24

finds Christ back in Galilee in Capernaum.<sup>116</sup> He heals the Roman Centurion's servant.<sup>117</sup> He raises the widow of Nain's dead son.<sup>118</sup> **Christ began to teach in parables.**<sup>119</sup> The structure of the gospel of John is entirely different to the three previous gospels. The word kingdom is used only in John chapters 3 and 18.<sup>120</sup> The first twelve chapters of the gospel of John are signs to the nation Israel.<sup>121</sup> These seven signs (miracles) validated Christ's offer of the kingdom, his Messiahship, and his words to the nation Israel. The seven signs are turning the water into wine (2), the nobleman's son healed (4), the paralytic (5), feeding the 5000, and Christ walking on the water (6), the healing of the blind man (9), and raising Lazarus from the dead (11).<sup>122</sup> "for this reason they were not able to believe because again Isaiah has said, He has blinded their eyes and He has hardened their hearts, in order that they may not have seen with their eyes and that they may not have understood with the heart and they may have been turned and I will heal them."<sup>123</sup>

## 2.7 The Supposed Q Source

This is the origin of the idea of the Q source. Q stands for the German word *quelle* meaning source. The theory was that both Matthew and Luke used Mark in the writing of their gospels. The Q source was as well supposed to be a collection of sayings of Jesus. According to the theory, Matthew and Luke used two sources in the writing of their gospels, the gospel of Mark and the Q source.<sup>124</sup> Some of the material found in Matthew and Luke is not found in Mark.<sup>125</sup> The problem with this theory is that Matthew and Luke were both written before the gospel of Mark. Matthew was written in A.D. 40. Luke was written between A.D. 57-59. Mark was written in A.D. 62-64.<sup>126</sup> "Why would Matthew and Luke use Mark to write their gospels when they knew Jesus personally."<sup>127</sup>

## 2.8 Summary

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<sup>116</sup> Luke 7:1

<sup>117</sup> Luke 7:2-10

<sup>118</sup> Luke 7:11-17

<sup>119</sup> Luke 8:4-15

<sup>120</sup> John 3:3,5 and 18:36

<sup>121</sup> Blum, "John," 267-348 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition* in Mathers, *Knowing God's Word: Key Issues*, 56

<sup>122</sup> Mathers, *Knowing God's Word: Key Issues*, 57.

<sup>123</sup> John 12:39-40 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition with Dictionary*, 372

<sup>124</sup> [<sup>125</sup> Smith, \*The Path of Reason\*, 173 in Mathers, \*Battle for Orthodoxy: American Religious Thought \(1870-1910\)\*, 55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Hermann>Weisse</a> (drawn up- 6/20/2020)</p></div><div data-bbox=)

<sup>126</sup> Hoehner, "New Testament Introduction," no pages, in Mathers, *Christian Hermeneutics: Dispelling the Myths*, 177-178

<sup>127</sup> Hoehner, "New Testament Introduction," no pages,

In recap, the gospel of the kingdom was the offer of the Davidic kingdom promised to David. The command to start repenting was the call for the national repentance on the part of the nation Israel. John the baptizer prepared a remnant for Messiah as well as preaching a baptism of repentance to believe on Christ. This was Paul's inspired interpretation in Acts 19. The miracles of Christ validated or authenticated his offer of the kingdom, his Messianic office, and his words. The gospel of the kingdom is found in Matthew's gospel in 4:23, 9:35 and 24:14. Matthew 4:23, and 9:35 were true at his first advent. Matthew 24:14 will happen during the second half of the Great Tribulation. The gospel of the kingdom was a particular message to Israel. The word kingdom is a genitive of apposition. Gospel names a broad category. The specific category is the kingdom message to Israel. Matthew was written to the Jews. The earliest writing of the New Testament occurred in A.D. 40. It answered the question if Jesus is the Messiah, what happened to the kingdom. "and this gospel will have been heralded in whole world to witness to all the Gentiles and then the end will come."<sup>128</sup> [author's translation] This is not to be confused with the gospel message of saving faith in Christ because of the grace of God.<sup>129</sup> The rule of the day was the Mosaic law when Christ was on the earth. The Mosaic law had been given to Israel at Mount Sinai.<sup>130</sup> This dispensation or age of the law continued until the death of Christ. Technically, it ended with the introduction of the dispensation or age of grace instituted on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 when the universal church was formed. The nation did not repent but instead attributed Christ's miracles to the prince of the demons. Peter's messages in Acts 2 and 3 were not a reoffer of the kingdom. The age of grace had begun on the day of Pentecost. The universal body of Christ was formed. The church age had to run its course. Spiritual blessings were possible through repentance but millennial blessings would have to wait following the tribulation. The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed not only to Israel but to the world of the Gentiles. The remnant of Jews is found in Revelation 7 and in the two witnesses of Revelation 11. Twelve thousand from each tribe of Israel will preach the saving message of faith in Christ throughout the entire tribulation. The two witnesses centered in Jerusalem will have the gospel message for the world. Their ministry will be during the last three and a half years of the tribulation.<sup>131</sup> The 1260 days is 42 months or three and half years. The biblical month is thirty days. The gospel of the kingdom at Christ's first coming heralded by John, the disciples, the seventy, and

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<sup>128</sup> Matthew 24:14 in Aland & Black (eds.), *The Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition*, 93.

<sup>129</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol 1, and 3

<sup>130</sup> Exodus 19

<sup>131</sup> Revelation 11:3

Christ himself was restricted to Israel.<sup>132</sup> Support for this truth can be found in Matthew 3:3, 10:7, Luke 10:19, and Matthew 4:17.<sup>133</sup> The political marker the “times of the Gentiles” was also in place beginning from the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 586. The times of the Gentiles will continue until the tribulation period.<sup>134</sup> The “times and seasons” refers to the eschatological plan for Israel.<sup>135</sup> Support is found in Acts 1:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1. There are last days for Israel and last days for the church.<sup>136</sup> Support for Israel’s last days is from Isaiah 2:1-5. His support for the church is from 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Israel will experience the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34. All those saved from the day of Pentecost are recipients of the new covenant by the blood of Christ.<sup>137</sup> Support is drawn from Matthew 26:28 and 1 Corinthians 11:25.<sup>138</sup> In communication, there is not any church in the Old Testament. The word for church is used of an assembly of nation Israel. The church was future to Christ’s day as found in Matthew 16:18. The universal body of Christ, the universal church, was formed on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit placed them in the body of Christ. This is a positional truth. In the New Testament, the church and Israel are not one and the same. 1 Corinthians 10:18 and Galatians 6:16 support this observation. The question of God’s Sovereignty and prophetic plan for Israel is dealt with in Romans 9 to 11. The Old Testament is a witness against Israel that they did not live up to the Mosaic covenant. The Northern tribes were deported to Assyria in B.C. 722. The remaining southern tribes were deported to Babylon in B.C. 605, 597, and 586. Yahweh gave Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar as recorded under the inspiration of the Spirit of God by the prophet Daniel.<sup>139</sup> The biblical covenants are Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and the New Covenant. The Abrahamic covenant promised the land of the Middle East to Abraham and his seed. The near fulfillment was Isaac. The far fulfillment is Christ.<sup>140</sup>

The gospel of Matthew and Mark follow the same structure. The structure of the gospel of Luke is different but follows the key points of both Matthew and Mark. The gospel of the kingdom message was only for Israel.<sup>141</sup> The concept of David’s

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<sup>132</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 472

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 472

<sup>134</sup> Luke 21:24

<sup>135</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol 1, xi-xii

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, xii

<sup>137</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol III, 375

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 375

<sup>139</sup> Daniel 1:1-2

<sup>140</sup> Galatians 3:16

<sup>141</sup> Matthew 10:6

Messianic kingdom was understood by the Jews living during the days of Jesus.<sup>142</sup> The<sup>143</sup> first 12 chapters of the gospel of John are 7 signs validating Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, to Israel.<sup>144</sup> Blum points out this extends from John 2:1 to 12:50.<sup>145</sup>

Matthew was the first book of the New Testament written in A.D. 40. Luke was written in A.D. 57-59. The gospel of Mark was not written until the early 60's. It is dated at A.D. 62-64. Mark wrote under the supervision of the apostle Peter.<sup>146</sup> Luke wrote under the supervision of the apostle Paul.<sup>147</sup> Luke was not an apostle.

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<sup>142</sup> Grassmick, "Mark," 107 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition* in Mathers, *Knowing God's Word: Key Issues*, 95-197

<sup>144</sup> Blum, "John," 268 in Walvoord & Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition* in Mathers, *Knowing God's Word: Key Issues*, 267-348

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 268

<sup>146</sup> 1 Peter 5:13

<sup>147</sup> 2 Timothy 3:11