

The Four Gospels: From Top to Bottom

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[0 : 0 0] I Late this week Bill called me with the the news that the church is starting summer early So he said, you know, let's have a talk from you and I have a few notes made about Because I was scheduled to do the last Sunday of June So this is it reminded me of before I went to Regent College for a while I I worked as many of you know I worked for a British news agency Reuters for many a long year and I always remember for some reason I don't know why things stick in your mind from Previous employments. I remember a boss of mine Peter Thomas. He was a Cambridge man And he always just apropos of nothing when one one day said to me Harvey always have a speech ready I don't know why he said that he thought I had a great future in the company and they were apparently to Give a speech so I I hope I have enough of a quote talk ready for us this morning Our our last gathering a last gathering

Which will look at the beginnings the four beginnings of of the four of the four famous wonderful God-given Gospels To be a bit painfully As they say relevant to begin with court trial scenes Are we I think we've been told this in this place before I think by other speakers court trial scenes It's good to be reminded I suppose are frequent in the New Testament very frequent courts courts in trials Each gospel ends with a trial scene Trials occurs we all know in the book of Acts Paul writes letters from prison while awaiting trial The Bible's last book is written by a writer who has been sentenced by a Roman magistrate by a Roman court to exile in Patmos as we all know There's more here of course on this theme Paul's doctrine of justification as it's called in our tradition is of a

Is from a court trial paradigm? I guess we can call it Someone is on trial and a judge declares not guilty This is central to Paul's thinking or it's one of the central Streams of his thinking This is a quite clearly a self-conscious mode or more or motif or paradigm in Pauline theology Who shall lay any charge?

Who is the one to condemn? Words we know so well don't we from Romans 8 This is the divine rhetoric of the apostle and it's from court scene The court scene world that we're involved in right now I'm going to extend this a little bit We learn to read better when we ponder I think This court language This applies just in passing We can't forget to the Old Testament as well as the New that we're going to look at today A part thereof Justice Justice The doing of justice Is a central demand laid on Israel The prophets demand a doing of justice That's so important The recent proceedings of our court case Seems again a good picture of how good engaged significant reading unfolds

At least it's one metaphor you might use The one in the witness stand we might liken to a text The first lawyer If you were down at the court case these last few weeks You saw this unfold The decorum of it all was quite impressive I found a couple of times I was there The first lawyer asked the text to speak So it speaks A second lawyer A cross-examining lawyer Asked the text to speak again Different questions Different perspectives It's all meant to further clarity And as this all proceeds A someone of course is listening Called in our system We were all reminded in the last few weeks In our system My Lord A real clue isn't it An indicator of this someone's status My Lord Wow Clarity again is sought

[4 : 40] By reading we seek clarity By re-reading we seek clarity In examining a text And re-examining it And by attention to particulars Especially we seek to find clarity Particulars are important They can give indications of what the whole is about Details here and there may be found especially illuminating It is like I suppose Detective work It obviously is like detective work There's a continuity between detective work and what goes on in a court You know the famous little moment in a famous author The dog didn't bark Sherlock Holmes knows something That that means The dog didn't bark And poor old Watson you know Who's a bit of a lame chap He doesn't understand that that's significant

But good old Sherlock does And presumably magistrates On the supreme court Know that little details Little absences of detail at times Might mean So it's good to look at details Clarity again is the desired end Clarity And clarity When it comes to reading of course Is composed of At least two things You want to know What is said Generally speaking The prose Call that exegesis What does a text say And then you move on To knowing What that means A more difficult Subtle Distinction Between What it says And what it means But You need to move on From what it says To what it means Hermeneutics The big fancy Name for that Second activity Some things of course Are presupposed usually

They're just beneath the surface Of our reading They're presupposed What is the text about Usually we kind of have an idea What a text is about We know when we pick up a Bible It's about something The world would call it religion It's different than a telephone directory Or other kinds of writings What and how significant Or important is the content Of a text Usually we bring A settled attitude To how important A reading of something is You know Aunt Hilda's will Is read With more care Than your shopping list Especially If said You know where I'm going If the said aunt Was suspected Of hoarding wealth Everyone is extremely Interested In how a lawyer Is going to unfold The will The Bible As we know Has been read And put on trial And examined So very much Because it has been Considered So very important

That goes without saying People have died As we all know For translating it We look forward to Bill's talk On translation of scripture In the future Because people have died For translating it Some of our ancestors Died Because they wanted To make this text Accessible for us It has been banned In many countries People change How they live Because of ways Of reading it What they have found In this book It is regarded As very important So we do pay Close attention And again We pay close attention Even to details They're not insignificant We know They sometimes Speak loudly If you will Like a dog Not barking And as we do this We wait Of course For a verdict As my little introduction Here draws to a close A verdict That's Latin Isn't it Verdict Verdict And we wait

For a judge To rule on the reading Is this true speech There is indeed In a greater court There is a Lord Listening Waiting Waiting for time His turn If you will To speak And when he speaks His speaking Is the truth It will not be Subject to appeal His speech Is infallible And his speech Happily Is full of grace And truth And since this Is No pun intended The case We should ask For this judge His help Ask this judge For his help Shouldn't we In our reading This morning So before we begin Our reading Specifically Let's say A word of prayer Our Lord Jesus We thank you That you are In our midst Today And that your spirit Is showing us Things of the gospel Which we desire

[9 : 46] To see this morning And so we ask you To show us These These things In your word That will help us For your glory And to the glory Of your father We ask these things Amen So again Today we're just Going to Look at Details From the new testament Specifically Details From the four gospels The famous Famous Four gospels Matthew I'll remind you Matthew Mark Luke And John Opening words From each Are in front of us Here today Matthew Mark Luke And John Four gospels Indeed They are called Aren't they Four gospels That's a tradition Of course To call them Gospels They have That is to say Been found by

Many to be To contain To communicate What gospel means Good news Good news
These four gospels They are in a sense Held together By this settled Response to them I
think we might say A tradition I have no formal Authority for this But I think I would Call a
tradition A usual Or a settled Response Over a significant Amount of time So the church
By its tradition Calls these The gospels The church Calls them Good news They are Good
news Indeed So let's just Begin By doing a bit Of detective work A bit of A bit of Intense
looking At particular Words From Again From all four Gospels Starting where Else With
Matthew

A record Of the genealogy Begins Matthew's Gospel famously That's the NIV The RSV
Which I have In front of me Today Begins the book Of the genealogy The book of the
Genealogy A record of the Genealogy So begins Matthew Doesn't it Famously This might
be Seen As a rather It's been said Many times As a rather Uninspiring Start to Any book
But let's just Think about that For a moment Might that be A clue to Something Why might
Matthew so Start A genealogy Establishes Something about Someone The writer And
some Readers of course Matthew's not Writing We'll assume Just for his Own amusement
He wasn't Going to write A gospel And put it On a shelf He's thinking About readers When
he Writes A genealogy

Again Establishes Something The writer And some Readers Think that This is A value A
genealogy What Is it Here This value What value Is there In doing A genealogy Let's just
Stare to Maybe see Something obvious Matthew Wants To so Write Or We have to Be
careful When we Pose questions Or make Assertions About things Like Sherlock Holmes
Might remind Watson Does Matthew Need To write A genealogy It's not That he Wants to
Maybe he Wants to But he Needs to Or Perhaps He has been Same thing I think A slight
Variation He's been Challenged To write A genealogy Could that Be the case To so Write
This gospel Writer Has been Asked Or challenged To write A genealogy

The opening Places Jesus By so Doing A genealogy The opening Places Jesus In a
Narrative It places Jesus In a Story Of Israel It is And this Is a little Step into Meaning But
is Is it Justified As we Stare At a Detail It smells Like Forgive That picture Of it It is A
Legitimizing Exercise Perhaps Is it It feels Like something If I may Say so Does it To you
In the Discussion Time I'd like To hear Comments On these Kind of Things It just Has a
Slight Feel Like Something From the Letter To the Hebrews You know What tribe Was
Jesus From Letter to the Hebrews Has to Answer that Question Were priests From this
Tribe He has to Address that Question Well no

[14 : 50] Says the Writer to the Hebrews You recall And then There is a Legitimizing Reference To
priestly Talk in the Vicinity of Jesus By reference To the Melchizedek Episode In the Book
of Genesis You have To Legitimate Jesus For me Someone May be Asking Matthew Is
Creating Forgive This Language He may Be seen At least As creating Here What is
Sometimes Called A kind Of Meaning Space For some Of his Readers They sometimes
Call it Even worse Than that It's Hermeneutical Space There's Meaning A reader Needs
To carry On Thinking About Jesus But first Of all Who is He Is He Legitimate Who is He
Give Give me His Space Why should I pay Attention To this Jesus Matthew Appears By
just Saying a Record of

The genealogy The book Of the genealogy To be Engaged in That The early Christians
Especially Probably In Palestinian Circles Were Challenged Who is Jesus Give us His
Credentials Where does He stand In Israel Jesus Stands Here Says Matthew In the Story
Of Israel We know The genealogy Unfolds This is Where he Stands In the Story Of Israel
Otherwise Apparently We might Speculate Some Will Just Not Be Able To Consider Jesus
They Just Won't Be Able To Hear Of Him Who Is He In Israel It Has Been Said And Surely
It's True This Is A Jewish Gospel A Gentile Would Be Indifferent To Such Issues At Least
To Begin With Matthew Is At Some It Seems To Me When You Read Something

Like This As Well As A Further Point Is This True Again The Discussion Time You Can Tell Me Matthew Is At Some Leisure To So Right I Feel That In My Bones It It Feels Like There Is Here A Lengthy Detailed Even If You Will Exacting Conversation Going On Here Or It's About To Go On Here In This Gospel About Jesus That Is A Bit More Speculative It Feels As If Matthew Is In A Leisure Social Space If You Will And He Has Time To Say Here's A Genealogy Of Jesus And Then Move On To Tell You About His Birth His Teaching His Parables He's Got Some Social Space In Which To Have A Lengthy Conversation I Think That's Implied By Beginning With A Genealogy Maybe There Have

You Heard Of A Chat Named Boethius Apparently A Christian Fellow He Wrote A Philosophical Track It Was Called The Consolation Of Philosophy That's What it was called He wrote While he Was Awaiting Execution In A Jail So You Can Do A Leisure Text When You're Anything In Anything But A Leisure Social Space As you Call a Jail Place Of Leisure You're Waiting To Get Your Head Chopped Off Or Whatever This Feels Again Like Early Palestinian Christianity To me Very Much And That's In This Little Detail As Matthew Begins His Gospel Who Is Jesus Let's Talk In Detail Is How Matthew's Opening Feels Feels That's How It Feels An Economist Recently I

Sometimes Just To get Really Confused I Like Reading Things In The Popular Press By Economists An Economist Wrote Just Recently And Haven't We All Read These Things About Derivatives And Why They Why They Threaten The Banking System He Points Out That They're Worth Trillions He Said I Don't Know What Trillions Means Really But They're Worth Trillions But They He Points Out They're Apparently Very Hard To Trace Whatever These Things Are They're Hard To Identify I Bring This Up Because He I Love This Little Phrase That He Uses We Lack About Them He Said In This Article We Lack About Them Useful Facts We Lack About Them Useful Facts And The System So Shaky Useful Facts Not An Elegant Phrase I Know Useful Facts But He Was He Is

[19 : 51] An Economist They Don't Talk Eloquently Useful Facts With Apologies To Economists Useful Facts We May Look For Useful Facts If You Will As We Read The Opening Of Each Gospel Useful Facts Will Help Us In Our Reading They Inform History Useful Facts They Even They Inform Theology They Even Will In A Sense Inform The Way We Pray Little Details In The Gospels And In The Whole Bible Will Tell Us About Our God To Get A Hold Of A Useful Fact Is Really Helpful Matthew Starts With A Genealogy He's Leisure I Think He's Willing To Converse At Length About Jesus And He Wants To Say He's In The Narrative Of Israel You Won't Understand Him Outside Of That Narrative He's In That Story

The Genealogy The Genealogy A Record Of The Genealogy Is How The Gospels Begin He He's He's He's Of Israel He's Part Of A Long Story God Likes He Even Deals In Long Stories Our God Likes Long Stories Genesis To Revelation It's A Long Story He's Willing To Take His Time With Us And With The Mystery Of Salvation We Should Remember Those Facts I Think Just A Detail To That Before We Move On To Mark A Footnote Some Theologies Do Remove Jesus From Israel They Remove Jesus From The Old Testament Paul Sees Jesus And Writes About Him With Reference To And Deeply Embeds Jesus In The Meaning Of David Of Abraham Even Of Adam That's How Our Lord Is To Be Understood According To The Apostolic Witness

A Genealogy Is Important It's A Magnificent Detail In The Painting Of The Gospel He Is Jesus Christ The Messiah Of Israel He Fulfills God's Promises To The Patriarchs And He Fulfills God's Promises To Israel A Record Of The Genealogy What A Detail That Is Mark Let's Move On To Mark Mark You Know How It Begins It Begins By Invoking Beginnings The Beginning Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Says Mark The Beginning Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ The Son Of God So He Begins Here Is Mentioned It's The Only One Here Of The Four Isn't It Here Is Mentioned Gospel We Might Note It Sounds By Having That Word Gospel In There The Beginning Of The Gospel

Of Jesus Christ The Son Of God It Sounds Very Much Like An Announcement Here Is An Announcement Here Is A Proclamation Quite Distinct From Matthew Let's Have A Conversation About Who Jesus Is In Israel Mark Says Here's An Announcement Of Proclamation Mark Was Associated Very Early On From Sources Or At Least One Source I Think It May Be Plural He Was Associated His Gospel Is Associated With Peter You Probably You Know You've Heard That An Early Source Again Calls Mark In Fact A Kind Of A Record Of Peter's Preaching Turned Into Narrative If You Will The Beginning It Begins The Beginning Does This Mean Be Sherlock Holmes For A Moment Does That Mean Here My Text Starts I Hope Not Seems

Kind Of Wow Why Bother I Know You Start I Don't Think It Means That Seems Unlikely Maybe It's A Kind Of Challenging Theological Statement Here This News Begins And It May Continue In You In Your Life Reader It Will Begin In Your Life If You Read And Believe What I'm Saying Here Here This News Begins And Again It May Continue In Your Life So Read And Hear This Proclamation It Has Made Me A Distant Echo No Authority Again For This It Has A Distant Echo It Seems To Me In Paul's He Who Began A Good Work In You Will Bring It To Completion Maybe The Early Christians Like To Think About Beginnings Here It Begins God Will Bring It To Completion The Beginning of The Gospel The Son Of God God Will Bring It To Completion

[24 : 53] These Kind of Announcements Apparently Were Quite Well Known Were I Guess Frequent Enough In Antiquity Especially Greek Or Hellenistic Antiquity That part Of Antiquity Which Was Saturated By Greek To Some Extent Roman Culture Roman Emperors Proclaimed Gospel Announcements Which Were Claimed To Be Good News But They Rarely Were Nero Or Domitian Announced Imperial Propaganda And Announcement I'm Going To Invade Britain Again And I'm Raising Your Taxes Aren't You Happy Good News This Opening Looks Like From Mark Perhaps It Really Was Meant To Be A Kind Of To Use A Modern Word I Like This Modern Word It's Helpful A Kind Of Deconstruction Of Imperial Ideology We Read this As Religious

It may Have Been Read By It's First Readers And Hearers As Political More In The World Of Politics Mark Mark Mark May May Be Saying There's Another King It's Not Nero It's Not Domitian It's Not It's Not A Roman Caesar Anymore The Beginning Of The Gospel Here's A Public Announcement From A King And It's About A Guy Named Jesus Christ The Son Of God Here's A Message From And About The True King And A Most Surprising And Strange King He's Called Jesus One Jesus As The Book Of Acts Wonderfully Says In The King James Reading One Jesus A New King One Jesus When You Provoke Or Challenge Like This If That's A True Reading Of It You May End Up In Court When You Challenge Powerful People Court

May Loom On The Horizon In Fact This May Have Been I'm Speculating I'm Trying To Stare And Look For Interesting Details Some Christians May Have Heard It So Much In Those Terms And It Was Meant To Be Heard In Those Terms That They Went Way Too Far In Their Understanding Of Christianity As A Zealot Like Revolutionary Movement Maybe Too Much Of This Merely For Its Own Sake If You Will Occurred Is That Why You Hear Peter In His Epistles Saying Things Like Honor The Emperor You Know It's You Forgot That Yes Jesus Is The True Emperor The True King But We Have To Still Be Good Citizens We Can't Turn Our Faith Into A Mere Zealotry To Overthrow Roman Order As Much As It Might Have Been Great Fun

To Overthrow Roman Order Order Is Good Christ Is King In Meekness You Challenge An Order Best By Being Meek And Lowly And Living A Life Of Self Sacrificial Love You Become A Citizen That's Hard To Deal With If You Live A Life Of Love There It Is The Beginning Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ The Son Of God A Challenging Message To Be Heard In Antiquity And Today It's A Challenging Message It May Land You In Court As They Say It Just Might Christ Here Therefore Christ That Word Christ That Mark Wants To Use Resonates As If You Will As A True King Israel's True King And He Is Mark Tells Us Right Off The Bat In His Gospel He Is The Son

Of God Says Our Second Gospel Jesus Christ The Son Of God Roman Caesars You You Will Know Sometimes Had Delusions That They Were Divine I Don't Think Our Leaders Have Got There Yet But Sometimes You Want To They Are Getting There They Were If You Will A Son Precisely A Son Of A Small G God Since My Daddy Was A God I Guess I Am A God Too Is Mark Again Saying A Kind Of No I Will Tell You Of The Real Son Of The Capital G God If You Will Yes I Think He Probably Is An Interesting Thing To Note And I Noticed This Morning That This Is Noted In The RSV I Not Sure In What Other Versions It Is Noted Some Early Manuscripts Do Not Contain This Son Of God Phrase Let's You Can Stare At A

[29 : 56] Little Detail Like That In The Manuscript Tradition Why Well Who Knows But I Am Going To Guess As You Can Probably Guess An Early Scribe I Think Of Cultural And Theological Sensitivity If You Will He Wondered If Mark's Greek Readers Hellenistic Readers Would Identify This Reference With The Same When Applied To A Caesar In A Sense In A Sense The Scribe Said Let's Let The Body Of The Text Make The Point That Jesus Is The Son Of God And Let's Leave It Out To Begin With Just In Case A Naive Uninstructed Reader Thinks It Means Oh Jesus Is The Son Of God In The Same Sense That Nero Is The Son They Have Variations In Them There's Apparently A Predominance Of The Reading

With The Son Of God In It So Our Translations Usually Include It But We Are Told Some Early Manuscripts Dropped It Who Knows That May Have Been What Was Happening There I Think I'm The Only Person In Christendom Who Wants To The The Son Of God The Son Of God Mark Calls Him Is Israel Of Course Was Sometimes Referred To As The Son Of God Out Of Egypt Have I Called My Son We Hear In Scripture So Jesus Is Implicitly Understood Here As A Kind Of If You Will Israel In Person Or The Messiah Christ And As Such He Is Israel Or He Is God As Immediate Knowable Presence Mark After All Is Writing About Someone That They Knew They Touched They Saw They Heard They Handled As One John Says

God Was Present Certainly Israel Understood That God Could Be Present As Wisdom In The Creation He Could Be Present In The Creation As Spirit Spirit They May Have Thought Of That Spirit As A Kind Of Energy Of God Trinitarianism Suddenly Realizes Pondering The Gospel That He's Person Even Even Sometimes Understood As God Present As Torah Amazing A Great Jewish Scholar Jacob I Believe You Pronounce Jacob Noisner Thinks That Jesus Thought Of Himself As Possessing A Kind Of Torah Status He Says Quite Very Profound Scholar He Says That's Why I Don't Believe In Jesus As A Jew I Can't Believe That Anybody Would Have Such Status Very Frank Appraisal From An

Honest Good Jewish Scholar This Presence Then Of Course Unfolds Into A Full Glory Of As We Saw Last Week We Hear About Last Week From Mr.

Newdorf The Full Glory Of Trinitarian Theology God The Father If you Will Necessarily Knowing Himself All All All Consciousness Seems To Know Itself And That Perfect And Infinite Knowing Is His Son And Their Relationship Is As All Relationships Are They Have A Spirit And The Spirit Is A Person True So The Full Glory Of Trinitarian Theology Of Divine Oneness And Oneness Things In The

[34 : 16] Beginning Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ The Son Of God What a beginning To A book We take it for granted Imagine Somebody Just Beginning A book That Way Here's What I Want To Write About The Beginning Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ The Son Of God Do You Want To Read On I Think So It's Amazing So We Move On To The Next One I Was Going To Give A Test As We Did This Can You Name The Next Gospel Remember Phil Hill Said We Should Have Tests At Learners Of That Would Be Too Easy I Think Luke Is Next Here Of Course To Put It Please

Tell Us He Doesn't The Scholars Later Tell Luke What The Sources Are But Luke Knew Better You'll Find Out In Heaven To Compile A Narrative He Says I Think That's A Bit Of A Dog Not Barking Or Maybe It's A Dog Barking Remember Matthew Does A Genealogy Luke You'll Recall In His Gospel Later On In The Beginning Adds One As Well Unlike Matthew Genealogy Luke Goes Back To Adam A Certain Sense The Ideal Father Of All Humanity But Narrative Might Be A Distant Parallel This Is Just Maybe You'll Correct Me On This One Narrative For Luke Might Be A Kind Of Distant Parallel For A Gentile What With Genealogy To A Jew Just Maybe Just

Maybe Hellenistic Sophisticates And Theophilus To whom Luke's Gospel Is Addressed If he Was An Individual I Assume He Was A Hellenistic Sophisticate Would Read A Poet Like Homer Or Virgil As The Very Narrative Meaning Of The World So Maybe Luke Is Again Creating A Kind Of Here I Go Again A Kind Of Meaning Space For A Gentile Reader You Live By Narratives You Know Homer And Virgil And The Great Playwrights You Hellenistic People You Sophisticated Ones You Need A Story Of The World That's What Had Especially In Homer As Divine Scripture So Luke Says I'll Tell You A Narrative About Jesus A Greater Narrative But He's A Bit Stepping Out Onto Their Playing Field Into Their Where It's Possible For Conversation To Happen Meaning Space The

New Testament Is Interesting To Note Luke Brings It To Our Attention Here Quite Clearly Have You Notice That The New Testament Is Composed Of Narrative And Roughly These Two Things Narrative And Treatise Notice that There Are Stories For Them The Rest Are Treatises If You Will Narrative And Treatise Is There A Connection Or A Bridge Between These Two Types Of Writing A Great New Testament Scholar Of Our Century I Can't pronounce These Guys Names Erntz Kaizimon I Think His Name Is He Said I Think This Is Quite Helpful That If You Take The Gospel Narratives And Translate Them Into A Theology Treatise He Says What You Have Are Paul's Epistles I Love That Before

Gospels Translated Into A Proposition Like Theological Treatise You Have Paul I Love It Kaizimon Was Not A Thorough Orthodox Believer But He Saw That Clearly You Know You Can Sort Of Highlight That In Very Simple Terms Maybe Too Simple But I Think It Makes The Point Jesus Touches A Leper And Heals Him Completely That's A Narrative How Do You Put That Into Theological Terms Salvation Is By Grace That's What The Narrative If You're A Leper You Cannot Do Anything For Yourself But Jesus Healed Him Salvation Came To That Leper By Grace See Narrative Becomes Theological Treatise Luke Luke Starts With The Narrative Again Matthew Talks At Leisure With The Synagogue Probably Mark Mark Mark Mark Is Preaching He's

[39 : 28] Echoing The Preaching Of Peter To Jews And Gentiles They Need To Hear About The Son Of God Then Luke Says To The Same Gentiles For The Most Part Predominantly I'm Sure Jews Would Want To Read It Too Listen Closely To The Jesus Narrative He Says Listen To A Traveling Teacher Traveling To Jerusalem At Leisure Teaching Look At Him Especially Luke Emphasizes This Doesn't He Jesus As A Man Of Prayer A Teacher Traveling A Man Of Prayer Many Have Written He Says Here Is What The Earliest Who Knew Him Remember There It Is Even This Opening Reads Like A Greek History Opening You Know There Are From Antiquity Writings That Start Much Like This And Their Histories In As Much As Many Have Undertaken To Compile A Narrative I Think Luke

In A Certain Sense Is Saying I Will Write A Narrative For You And He Saying By Implication Come Let Us Reason Together About Jesus Beautifully I Think So There's Matthew Mark And Luke And Now We Move On Quickly To John The best Known Opening Of The Four I Would Think In The Beginning Was The Word In The Beginning Was The Word John's Gospel This Is Well Known Right Right Right Off The Back Here Right Off The Bat Here Invokes And Is Meant To Evoke Genesis God By Speaking Created The World Without Effort Or Strain Remember Hearing A Hebrew Scholar Talk About The Almost Childlike Simplicity Of The Opening Of Genesis In Hebrew Without Effort Without Strain In Majestic Infinite Power Out Of Nothing He Created Everything Our God What A God That

One Now Appears According To John He Appears To Humans As Word That Creating Word That Created All Things In Serene Majesty Now That Word Is Here As Word In Person If You Will The Other Gospels Tell Of A Strange Entrance Don't They Matthew And Luke Famously Talk Of Shepherds Wise Men Angels And An Angry King Prophecies Fulfilled Mary And Joseph And Of All Things A Census In Luke It's A Crowded Canvas Here's Here's A Fact I Think That You Can Take From Comparing The Four Gospels And Their Openings I Think It's A Use A Usable Fact But I Don't Know I Wouldn't Insist On You'll Tell Me Again In The Conversation Time Mark Skips The Birth Stories You'll Recall John

Goes To The Ultimate Question Of Origin Doesn't He Did The Earliest Rememberings Of Jesus In A Certain Sense Reluctantly Remember Some Things Perhaps The Virgin Birth Falls Into This Category Paul Apparently Never Mentioned It This Might Be A Kind Of A Thing That Was Reluctantly Remembered By The Early Christians Maybe It Was Too Easy For Pagan People To Misunderstand It As It Lives In Its Jewish Israel Setting The Gospels Do After All They Remember What You Might Call Strange Facts And These Things Might Be Seen As Quite Useful Again I Don't Know Useful For What You Might I Don't Know Here's A Few Of The Facts Remembered In The Gospels That Are Strangely Remembered Jesus

Submitting To John's Baptism Is Remembered In The Synoptic Gospels It's Remembered In John Too Of Course A Baptism Which Is Clearly Called A Baptism For The Forgiveness Of Sins The Christians Want To Remember This About Jesus Saying Things Like Why Do You Call Me Good No One's Good But God Why Do The Christians Remember Jesus Saying That Jesus Cry From The Cross Why Have You Forsaken Me Kind Of A Jesus Do You Worship God God Abandoned Him And Controversially But A Point Brought Out Brilliantly By Tom Wright Women The Christians Remember Quite Clearly And Record That The First To See Jesus On The Morning Of The Resurrection Were Indeed Women Do you See The Point In The Ancient World Women Weren't Allowed To Be In Courts Of Law Their Witness Was Regarded As Having Little If Any Value And The Christians Say That These Women Met

[44 : 30] Jesus On The Resurrection Morning At Tomb A Light Probably Quite Dim And They Saw Angels There Pagans Were Not Impressed With These Stories A Second Century Writer Named Celsus Quoted By A Church Father Named Origen Said The Christians Are Telling Us That Jesus Rose From The Dead And The First People Who Met Him Were A Bunch Of Hysterical Women What A Dumb Story For The Christians To Make Up And To Remember The Reason They Weren't Making Up Stories If They Made Up Stories They Would Have Made Up Different Kinds Of Stories Filled With Proof Narratives But They Didn't They Saw A Bunch Of Women Were There At The Grave Early In The Morning And They Saw A Vision Of Angels Who Told Them That They They They Were They They They They They Things I Think There's A Slight Touch Of Reluctance In Remember Their Virgin Birth It Happened The Christians Knew

That But It Wouldn't Have Sold Easily In The Pagan World Or If You Did Sell It In The Pagan World They Would Misunderstand It All Sorts Of Supernatural Things Happened To People In Their Beginnings In The Ancient World It Was A Weird World To Live In These Things Remembered And Treasured By The People Who Came To Confess Jesus As Their Lord And Savior As Here In John's Gospel It's Made So Clear That He Is God And Yet They Remember That In The Days Of His Flesh He Said Things Which Seem In Tension With This Confession That's A Sign These Little Details Are Signs Of The Profound Integrity Of The Gospels They Remember Things Even That Seem To Be In Tension With The Confession Of The Communities That Are Producing These Gospels They're Remarkable The Word Became Flesh There Is A I'll Call It A Useful Fact I'll Quote That Economist One More Time It

Seems As If In The Gospels When We Look At Them Together And And Severally We Have A Kind Of Pattern Of From The Time This One Just Donned On Me The Other Day I Don't I Think This Is Met A Kind Of Detail That's In The New Testament It's Waiting To Be Uncovered It's Taught This From Lesser To The Greater Theme All The Time In The Gospels And In The Entire New Testament You Know Grains Of Mustard Seed Can Move Mountains Little Things Lesser Things Can Have Mighty Impacts So Paul Will Tell Us Things Like Let Your Speech Be Always Gracious Seasoned With Salt That's For Us To Remember Today Let Our Speech Be Gracious Seasoned With Salt But John And Therefore John Will Say And God's Speech Became Flesh And

Was Gracious Full Of Grace And Truth From The Lesser A Little Ethical Admonition Has This Reference Behind It Fulfilling Its Meaning As The Very Work Of God His Speech Became Flesh And Was Gracious With Us From The Lesser To The Greater This Kind Of Pattern It's Sort Of Sitting There In The Gospels Even In Their Beginnings Waiting To Happen Talk About Genealogy A Proclamation Let's Talk About A Narrative And Then It Sort Of Unfolds Into God In Our Midst From Lesser To Greater I Think That Pattern Is Here Maybe It's Not Maybe I'm Imagining Things Maybe I'm Mr.

Holmes Gone Over The Top Here Here Here Here Are Useful Facts The Church Confesses Jesus As Very Man And Very God We Should Treasure That Confession The Gospels Have That In Them He's Discussable In Genealogies And Narratives As Proclamation And He's God They All Say In Different Ways John Puts It On Display Most Clearly So Teach Matthew Mark Luke And John They Describe It Seems To Me Hope You Felt Something Of This This Morning A Kind Of Cumulative Power Here Is A Kind Of Lordly Word For Us It Comes To Us It Comes To Us Indeed In A Kind Of Gentle Approachable Form But It Unfolds Into Kind Of A Glorious Subtlety If You Will The Gospels It More I Look At Them Why They Seem Like They Divine They

[49 : 22] They're Human And Yet They're Divine There's Something Beautiful About Them Only God Could Have Put This Kind Of Thing Together God The Spirit So We May See The Gospels See The Whole Bible As On A Kind Of Witness Stand And It Will Talk To Us It Will Respond To Questions It's Testimony Is Most Reasonable Isn't It Again Genealogy Matthew Proclamation In Mark Luke Wants To Talk About Narrative And Then Again In John A Lordly Word Lordly A Lordly Word Which Challenges Us As We Inquire We Begin Innocently Enough If you Will Just As Inquirers Someone Said Look Into The New

Testament Long Enough And In Faith And In Repentance You Won't Just You Won't See A Reflection Of Yourself You'll See God And He'll Be Saying To You're A Sinner Repent A Lordly Word Will Come To You I've Come To Save You Repent There's A Kind Of Depth Of Subtle Perspective Here Which Defies Easy Summary I've Tried It But It Defies It Really And Then Again It Opens Out Into Propositions In The Rest Of The New Testament Propositions Of Glory It Will Speak To You As We Sort Of Draw To A Close Here It Will Speak To You As In A Court Room Your Justification Is At Stake Here As You Read The New Testament In Christ We Find Justification And God Will Speak Of Matthew

Would Have Loved This Theme Matt It Was God Will Speak To Us Here Of His Covenant With His People And How It's All Brought To Its Glorious Perfection In The Mystery Of Jesus Christ As Paul Would Say In Christ And God Will Speak To Us Here Of A Narrative That Goes Somewhere It's A Meaningful Story It Actually Goes Off Into Nothing Less Than A Perfect Future Eschatology If You Will Big Words We Learn At Church And It's All There For Us In Christ Court Room Covenant And A Perfect Future And Eschatological Glory Waiting For You It's A Lot We Say A Lot At Learn Is Exchange And It's Sort Of This Is Our Last Our Last Gathering For A Season So I Hope This Is Appropriate Not

Just To As An Ending Not Just To This Little Talk But Also To Another Season Of Coming Here To Learn Which I Hope I Speak for You If I May Say So We May Doubt We May Doubt On Occasion There Is Doubt In The Gospels And It Shows Up At The Strangest Times John The Baptist Famously Doubted Didn't He At One Point In His Ministry When He Was In Jail He Doubted Jesus Oh This This Point To The Bishop Of Durham Tom Wright He Movingly Talks Of The Resurrection Scene Late In Matthew The Eleven You Know The Story They Were Commanded To Meet With Jesus In Galilee And There They Meet The Resurrected Jesus And They Worship Him And Then There's A Staggering Little Detail To Be Seen

And Remembered Here Matthew Says Think About This Little Detail And Ponder It For A Long Time I'm Still Trying To Take It In Matthew Says Remember The Eleven Are In The Presence Of The Resurrected Jesus In His Glorious Body And Matthew Says Some Doubted Some Doubted They Were In His Presence Looking At Him And They Doubted What Does That Mean It's Almost As If The Good News Is A Kind Of Dizzying Thing You Can Hardly Believe It Even When You See It Some Doubted I Don't Believe I'm Looking At Him Resurrected Jesus Jesus Very Man And Very God Openly Now Displayed To Them In The Body That We Are Going To Be Given At The End Of All Things To Inhabit The New Heavens

[54 : 23] And The New Earth And It's So Much In Continuity With Our Body But So Different That Some Doubted So As We Read The Gospels Sometimes We Will Doubt But Don't Cultivate Doubt That's Your Unbelief At Work That's Not Intellectual Honesty That's An Agenda Ridden Doubt An Agenda Ladened Doubt Some People Cultivate Doubt In The Name Of Intellectual Honesty They're Not They're Just Cultivating What They Want To Believe Or Not To Believe Don't Cultivate Doubt Use It With Intellectual Integrity To Plunge Deeper Into These Mysteries Some Doubted There It Is The Gospels Contain These Useful Facts For Our Benefit I Hope We Find Useful Facts In Just Staring At How The Gospels Begin We Can't End Just There We Must Remember That There's A Judge As We Said At The Court Room

But He Makes Common Cause With The One Who's Accused Our Judge Will Justify Us He Enters And Honors Covenant With Us He Becomes The Story Of Our Lives Our Narrative And As Such He Is Our Wisdom And He Is Our Goodness Our Righteousness And Even For Good Measure He Throws In A Perfect Future Not Bad For That Oh What A Judge We've Got Here In This Court Room Let Us Not Doubt It's True This Is Gospel Truth As Mark Let's It Be Known Right Away So We'll Stand In This Courtroom As Justified And We Will Stand There In Resurrection Joy And We Won't Doubt Anymore We'll Be In Resurrection Bodies Ourselves And That's Good News So Let Me Say A Word Of Prayer Lord We Thank You For The Four Gospels We Thank You

For Every Little Moment In Them We Pray That You Will Give Us Pious Minds And Hearts And Clear Minds To Read Mark Learn Inwardly Digest For Our Benefit And For Your Glory And We Thank You For This Place Where We've Gathered For The Past Few Months And We Pray That You'll Bring Us Back Here Safely In The Fall Amen Please Formulate Your Questions And Robert Sir I I Am A Little Unfortunate As To Whether You Are A Reconstructor Travesty Yesterday I Was Reading A People Drawing And Paul

Says That Our Leaders Are Appointed By God And If We Just Follow Him He Won't Be In Any Trouble And I Found That Hard To Swallow Up To The History Of The 20th Century And What We Had The 21st But Then I Wondering If You Would Suggest That I Say To Myself Well You Were Talking About Kings And Queens And Despots Now That We Done People Elect Our Own Leaders This Doesn't Apply Church But I Don't Think We Can Really Take That Kind Of Strategic Stance When We Read And So I Don't Know What To Do With A Text Like That About The March Specifically You're Talking About The Way It Has Echoes Of Anti Imperial Stance

Well For Sardis It Comes It Surfaces More Clearly In Other Places In Acts Especially The Christians Were Teaching About Another King One Jesus So It Was Heard As Having A Political Overtone Right Away All I Can Say Is My Best Answer Is That Over The Centuries The Gospel Has Tended To Make All Earthly Power Penultimate Once You Amount There's An Invisible Divine King All Other Kingship By Implication Strongly Is Judged By That Greater Kingship So So the Story of The Old Testament Is Israel Wants Kings And God Says Two Things To Her I'd Rather Not But If You Insist I Will But You're Going To Have Trouble With Earthly Kings And The History Of Political Science Is Let's Study The Trouble We've Had With Kings And With Slash Parliaments

[59 : 24] And Assemblies Whatever Some Are Very Vicious And There's A Spectrum Some Are Quite Nice Or At We Tend To Think Some Are Definitely Better Than Others So That's The Best I Can Say The Gospel Is Salt And Light When It Gets Half A Chance And It Makes Penultimate Things Which Have A Tendency To Exalt Themselves Into The Ultimate Authority But It's A Good Question That Discussion Goes On All The Time Doesn't It Oliver O'Donovan Has A Huge Book About Christianity And Politics About How It's Been Understood Over The Centuries I Recommended Good Sir Yes Yeah The Thing You Mentioned In Mark Is That The Kingdom Of God Is Arised Abonding And This Is Announced To The People Yes And An Important Statement Mark Yes And Also His Gospel Seems To Be Driving Back

To The Palace Of Darkness And The Healings Are Part Of That Too Thank You Yes Yes There's A When The King The True King Arrives He's Not Recognized Except By Evil In Mark That's Very Often Noted Yeah That's Right We Don't Recognize Easily The Truth Amongst Us That's Just I Was Going To Start With An Angelo I Love The Angelo I Hope You've Heard It I Think I First Heard It From Gordon Fee A Harvard Who Studies Fish Would That Be A Zoologist Or Biologist Or Both And He Was Brilliant At Seeing Things That He Studied And His Graduate Students One Day Said How Do You Do It How Do You Keep Coming Up With These New Insights So He Took Them To A Fish Bowl

And There Was A Goldfish And He Said Look At The Fish Look At The Fish Look At The Fish That That That's How You You Gotta Look Christians Read Too Quickly Sometimes We Overlay It With Our Theological The Things We Already Know Evangelicals Are Bad At This We Already Know What It Means And We Overlay It With Our Theology So We Become Believers In A Holy Tradition As Much As Some Other Traditions Do Rather Than Allowing What's There To Really Speak To Us By Way Of Saying I Tempted To Look At The Fish Today How Does Each One Start Look At It And Keep Looking Until Allow It To Speak It Will Speak It Has Things To Say Put It On The Witness stand It Will Speak to I I I'm Here For A Reason That Was The Lame Effort Must Be More Questions If There Are No Questions The

Speaker Has To Conclude Either It's Beneath Question Or In Vanity It's Above Question Betty Your Statement That Speech Must Is Is There Not A Time I Mean The Salt Is The Purifies Speech Right Yeah And Makes It Holy But Jesus You Know In Temple I Know He Was Ten But He Spoke In A Harsh Way He Doubt The Money Changes And What Was Going On Today We Tend To Want To Speak Out Knowing What's Going On In Our Own Church Situation And Holding Back Is Very Difficult Don't

You Not For Me Betty But For You No I Hear You Maybe May I Say Maybe We Read A Thing Like Paul There Let Your Speech Be Always Gracious And We Overlay It With I Don't Want To Be Too Casual But A Kind Of 19th Century Courtesy Code That We've All Imbibed That May Not Be In Paul's Mind At All Doesn't Mean It Doesn't Always Mean Speech That Doesn't Jar It Means Take Responsibility For It And May It Be The Best Thing That That Person Needs To Hear Right Now So On Occasion That May Be Severe Speech So Peter Our Lord Could Say To His Friend Peter Get Behind Me Satan He Wasn't That How Severe Can You Get He Loved Peter As He Said That But Peter Needed To Hear That That That's

[64 : 26] A Good Model For Learners Exchange But I Yeah But That To Take Responsibility For It I Guess Is The Word There Betty Thank You For That Clarification Was That Was That Gracious Thank You For That Seasoned With Salt Comment Betty Bill You Now Your Wife Your Wife Is Put Up So That Even God Came Down To Earth And Walked It As A Man And We Missed It Even

Even If We're In The Church That's The Greatest Tragedy Isn't That I Mean Here In The Beginning Was The Word And As You Say John Talks About The Godship Of Jesus But There's The Tragedy The Idea That God Did Come Down Or The Fact That God Did Come Down Walk The Earth As A Man And We Miss It If They're Not Careful It's A Good Evangelical Trust Especially Into The Lives Of Other Religions But It's A Worrying Thing You Can Go To Church All Our Lives And Still Miss It Yes I I That's Good Comment Would You Agree With This In Response That It's A It's A Very Important Thing To Say That

But It's A Secondary Thing To Say Because The First Thing That The Gospel Does Is It Justifies God He Lived Up To His Promises To Abraham He Lived Up To His Promises To Israel He Has Shown That He Has A Plan To Renew The Creation He Answers His Critics Who Give Hard Speeches At Him So God Justifies Himself By This Drama To Begin With The Fact That We Go To Heaven When We Die Is A Truth Of The Gospel But Much Overrated In Our Tradition Tom Wright Would Say And I Think He's Right I Think He's Correct About That We're Always We Get It Right And Go To Heaven We Should Rejoice That God Has Justified Himself To Begin With He Has Shown That He Was Faithful To Abraham When He Said Through You I'll Bless The Nations

We're We're Proof That That Promised Abraham Was True And God Has Seen To It That It Came About We're Gentiles For The Most Part Hearing About The Messiah Of Israel And We've Heard About The Future That God Has For The World So That's The Good News To Begin With Not That We're Going To Heaven When We Die But There You Go Tom Wright He's A Bishop Bishops Don't Get It Wrong Very Often Do They Am I A Bit Naive But This Is The Last One A For A Season I'm Sure Somebody Here Should Say To Betty And Bill Is Always That It Was Such Short Notice I Don't Think We We Have To Put Off That Jag Wire Until Next Year The

Legal Fund Has To Be Paid Off Then The Jaguar I Made The Right Decision Thank Thank