

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ PROBLEMATICS : Text/Tradition ; Scholarship/Dating ; Language/Concepts...
- ❖ CVSP FOCUS: '*Humanities*'- the exploration of human existence, including *new perspectives* on the *Divine (God), Nature, the Human Being (Man), Society, History, Knowledge, Values (good/evil), Excellence (virtue and vice), Freedom/Slavery...*

I. TEXTS: THE 27 BOOKS OF THE NEW COVENANT

- GOSPELS ("good news"): *Synoptics* (Mt, Mk, Lk) and *John*
- ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (Luke): account of the *early community*
- EPISTLES: *letters from leaders* (Peter, Paul, John...)
- APOCALYPSE or REVELATION (John): culmination ('*last things*')
 - *The book of a people*: presentation and interpretation of historical events in Palestine and other parts of the *Roman Empire* in the first century CE (the *dating challenge*: BC to...?)

II. THE CENTRAL EVENTS

- Birth-Infancy-Acts-Arrest-Torture-Crucifixion of *Jesus of Nazareth*
- Birth of *the new community* and its expansion from Palestine to Rome

III. THE CENTRAL EVENTS INTERPRETED

- ❖ *Their claim*: historical density (Luke 11-4; 1John 1:1-4; 2Peter 1:16...)
- ❖ *Interpretation = on-going appropriation and expression* of *implications* of the events
- JESUS: *Messiah* (Psalm 2:2); *Son of God* (Ps 2:7); *Son of Man* (Daniel 7:13-14); *Suffering Servant [redeemer]* (Isaiah 42:1-9, and *esp.* 52:13 to end of 53); *Savior* (*Jesus = YHWH saves*) (Matthew 1:21); *New Adam* (1Cor 15:44-49); *Logos* (John 1)
 - Problematics:
 - *Scripture* (written Word of God) as *medium* for God's *revelation* in the form of a *Person* : LOGOS / Word of God (Luke 24:27 and John 5:39)
 - *Language* : *Greek* (Logos) but informed with *radically different (monotheistic) meaning*; applies to all main concepts of the New Testament
- RESURRECTION - ASCENSION - PENTECOST (Acts 1-2)
 - The *claim* that this is *fulfillment* of Hebrew Scriptures' *promises* for the *messianic age* (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-28; Isaiah 44:3; Joel 3:1-2 // Acts 1-2 ; John 1:33, and 7:37-39, and 14: 13-21...)
- PAUL : *conversion* from Pharisee / persecutor to major leader (Acts 9 and 22)
 - ❖ Paul's exposition of the gospel (Romans 1:18-32)
 - *the human condition* : slavery, alienation (John 8:34,36)
 - *the cause* : 'sin' = conscious rejection of God (John 9:41)
 - *universal dominion of sin* : human solidarity - *all* men have sinned; *no man* is *guilty* for *another's* sins, *but* all men have to live in *one world* which has been corrupted by sin : *later expressed as 'original sin'* (1 John 1:8-10)
 - *the remedy*: *God's love* revealed concretely in the historical person of *Jesus* ; 'Savior' who *reconciles* man and God (2 Cor 5:14 -21)
 - *Salvation by faith*
 - '*faith*' is the *right relationship* man should have *with God*: relying on God for salvation, not on own '*works*', opens man up to *receiving God's power (love).salvation*
 - *not* because *the Law* is *deficient* (Romans 7:12-14)
 - because *man*, weakened by sin, *cannot live* it (7:14 -25)
 - also, it is the *perfect remedy* for man's basic problem : *pride*
 - "*no man can boast*": *equality* of all men before God (1Cor 1: 29)
 - the place of '*works*': the *fruit* not the *cause* ; '*works*' are *proof* of *genuine* '*faith*'. [the "*meaning*" of *the Law* : Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18...]
 - *view of evil* : power of evil too strong for man : need God ('Savior')
 - *view of man*: interdependence (*humility*) not independence (*pride*) brings fulfillment

IV. CONCRETE RESULTS INTERPRETED

- NEW MAN
 - Marx, Fanon, Nietzsche...(*the quest for a new humanity*)
 - *already emerged*: a *gift*, not the end of a long journey
 - the process: *metanoia* : repentance, conversion : “new beginning”, “little child”
 - *New Birth* : divine input (John 3:1-8 and 2 Cor 5:17)
 - *Children of God* (John 1:12-13 ; Romans 8:14-17...)
 - *God in Man (Holy Spirit)* : the *power* of *Love* to *live* the *Law*
 - Paul’s own *conversion (existential, not a theory)*
 - not *perfection* but a *new phase* for *Man*
 - *love* is the *remedy* for the *fear* and *selfishness* that *enslaves humanity* (1 John 4:18)

- NEW SOCIETY
 - “one does not put new wine in old wineskins”: *radical reform*
 - *Universal membership*: “new man”: “*no* more *distinctions* between Jew and Greek , slave and free, male and female...” (Galatians 3:28)
 - *program* : *continue work started* by God in Jesus (2 Cor 5:14-21)
 - reconciliation and incarnation of God’s love in *historical existence* : a *concrete* task, not an *abstract* doctrine : build *new society*
 - *new way of life: committed love*
 - “*overwhelmed by love*” (2Cor 5:14 ; 1 John 4:17-21)
 - 1Cor 13 : a *definition* of Love
 - John 13:34-35: *the New Commandment*: “Love one another *just as I* have loved you...*by this* love you have one another, *everyone will know that you are my disciples.*”
 - Acts 4:32-35 and 2:44-45 : “The faithful all lived together and owned *everything in common*. They sold their goods and possessions and *shared* out the proceeds among themselves, *according to* what each one *needed.*”
 - Luke 6:36 ff : “*do not judge...*”
 - 1Cor 5:13: “but *of those* who are *outside* (the new community), God is the judge.”
 - John 13:1-20 : *leadership is service*: Jesus washes the feet of his disciples
 - *Love = committed service*, desire the fulfillment of others : not based on mere feeling or attraction, but *recognition of unconditional value of other humans*
 - *Body of Christ* (1Cor 12)
 - ‘*body*’ = *organic* interrelationship
 - *differentiation* in terms of *function* only : *equality* of all in intrinsic value and worth
 - *extension* of Christ in *History*

V. RELATING TO HEBREW AND GREEK (1Cor 1:17-25)

- Hebrew ‘historical’ *expectations* : *new* understanding
- Greek search for *Wisdom (Sophia)* as *self-fulfillment / intellectual development* :
 - *human fulfillment* now seen through a *concrete way of loving* (1Cor 1-4 ; 1Cor 8: 1-3)

VI. A WAY OF LIVING , NOT AN ABSTRACT DOCTRINE (Galatians 5...)

- ‘*flesh*’ vs. ‘*spirit*’ - a matter of *personal relationships* (covenant) and atmosphere *transformation*
 - power struggle, fear, mistrust, jealousy, bad faith... (‘*self-indulgence*’)
 - solidarity, mutual commitment, service-love, trust, concern, transparency... (‘*spirit*’)
- ‘*spiritual*’ means *concrete* actions, attitudes, experience, motivated by *love*, **NOT** ‘insubstantial’, ‘esoteric’, ‘mystical’, ‘divorced from reality’...
- *existential* vs. *theoretical* attitude to *life issues* such as suffering, God, knowledge, evil, freedom...

❖ *Life, Joy, and Newness* (John 10:10 and Revelation 21:5)

Luke 15:11-32. Parable of the prodigal son

¹¹ And he said, "There was a man who had two sons; ¹² and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; ²³ and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. ²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

❖ Luke 20:9-16. Parable of the wicked tenants

⁹ And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, that they should give him some of the fruit of the vineyard; but the tenants beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant; him also they beat and treated shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third; this one they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will respect him.' ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' ¹⁵ And they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants, and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "God forbid!"

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