

# AROUND THE BIBLE IN 12 WEEKS

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## Lesson 5 – Gospels

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### New Testament – 27 books

5 books of history, 21 letters of doctrine (13 by Paul, 8 by others) and 1 book of prophecy.

### THE IMPACT OF THE GOSPELS

- √ The very “crux” of the Bible – the center of God’s special revelation to man
- √ The focus of OT prophecy and the basis of NT theology
- √ Transition from OT-distinctively Jewish to NT-distinctively Christian
- √ Transition from old covenant of LAW to new covenant of GRACE
- √ From central figure of MOSES to central figure of JESUS
- √ The account of God’s greatest miracle – GOD BECOMING MAN that we might know Him

### GOSPEL and SYNOPTICS

- √ “GOSPEL” means “good news.” And each of the gospels of the New Testament tell the “good news” of Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. There is but ONE GOSPEL; w/4 voices.
- √ Each author tells a similar story, but from a slightly different perspective
  - √ EVANGELIST is what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are called; EVANGEL = good tidings, so they are bringers of “good tidings” = GOSPEL
  - √ Matthew, Mark and Luke are called SYNOPTIC GOSPELS because, unlike John, they give a SYNOPSIS of Jesus’ life. “Synopsis” = “a collective view.”
  - √ These 3 synoptic gospels narrate Jesus’ ministry primarily in Galilee of northern Palestine – His homes in Nazareth & Capernaum
  - √ John’s gospel tells of Jesus’ ministry primarily in Judea of southern Palestine – mostly in Jerusalem
  - √ Whereas the Synoptics narrate His miracles, parables and teaching to the multitude, John presents His deeper and more abstract discourses, conversations and prayers. John relates miracles that are mostly not included by the other gospel writers. John also tells the story with many large gaps, focusing on a few specific events
  - √ The Synoptics portray JESUS IN ACTION; John portrays JESUS IN COMMUNION
  - √ The Synoptics’ purpose is RELATIONAL – to show Jesus’ relationship with man
  - √ John’s purpose is EVANGELICAL – to show Jesus as the bridge between God & man

### THE FOUR FACES OF JESUS

#### Turn to Ezekiel, chapter 1

In verse 5, Ezekiel sees a vision of 4 living beings with apparent human form  
In 1:12 he sees their 4 faces as being that of a man, a lion, a bull (or ox) and an eagle  
Then in 10:14-15 he sees the same vision, and says these are cherubim – angels

#### Now turn to Revelation 4:7 where John sees the same vision at God’s throne

John sees the same four faces that Ezekiel saw, but mentions them in a different order  
He sees faces of a LION a CALF (bull/ox) a MAN and an EAGLE  
Again, these are the cherubim who are at God’s throne

### THEIR 4 FACES REPRESENT THE 4 “FACES” of JESUS SHOWN IN THE 4 GOSPELS

- Matthew** – Jesus, the LION of Judah – Matthew showing Jesus to be KING
- Mark** – Jesus as the CALF or OX – Mark showing Jesus as the SERVANT
- Luke** – Jesus as the MAN – Luke showing Jesus to be the perfect MAN
- John** – Jesus as the EAGLE – John showing Jesus to be the soaring SAVIOR

### JESUS IN THE 4 GOSPEL ACCOUNTS

**KING** – Matthew portrays Jesus as KING, written primarily for the JEWS. Therefore, OT Scripture references abound. He is the son of David. His royal genealogy in Chapter 1 goes from Abraham to Joseph, his earthly father. The “Sermon on the Mount” in full is given uniquely in Matthew 5-7, which is the “Manifesto of the Kingdom.”

**SERVANT** – Mark portrays Jesus as SERVANT (no genealogy given), written primarily for the ROMANS. Therefore there is almost no OT Scripture reference. And ACTION and DEEDS are the norm with a minimum of teaching. The word “and” is used 1375 times in Mark, moving the ACTION along, making Mark the shortest gospel. Yet even so, Mark takes pains to give some of the most detailed descriptions in his accounts – something the Romans, who valued detail, would appreciate.

**SON OF MAN** – Luke portrays Jesus as perfect MAN, written primarily for the GREEKS. Since portraying the Son of Man, Luke’s recorded genealogy (3:23-38) goes from Jesus back through his human parent, Mary, all the way to

Adam. Greeks valued ORDER, so Luke's purpose is an orderly, complete account, making Luke the longest gospel. Greeks also valued artistic expression, and Luke includes four "songs" of praise, including Mary's "Magnificat" and the angels' "Glory to God" and Luke includes the most stories (parables) told by Jesus. To show Jesus as man we have the most complete accounts of His birth and youth. We also find the most detailed descriptions of his physical suffering.

**SON OF GOD** – John portrays Jesus as the Divine Son of God, written for "every man." His purpose is that everyone would "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (20:31)

His genealogy is as the Word "in the beginning" and there are numerous references to Jesus as being Divine. Jesus calls Himself by "I AM" on 7 occasions ("I am the bread," "I am the vine," etc.). Jesus is the evangelist to Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the blind man and many others, offering salvation through Himself.

#### **4 PURPOSEFUL PRESENTATIONS**

**Matthew**, presents our Lord's sayings and doings in **GROUPINGS**, rather than strictly chronological

**Mark** is chronological, but focuses on **ACTION** rather than **WORDS**.

**Luke** is true to his stated purpose in being thorough in **CHRONOLOGY** and **COMPLETENESS**.

**John** is true to his stated purpose in giving multiple **PROOFS** that Jesus is the Son of God that we might believe. He chooses not to offer a detailed synopsis of events, but rather specific narratives of miracle and teaching that demonstrate Jesus' divinity.

#### **"FRONT DOOR" AND "BACK DOOR" KEYS**

**Matthew begins** in the first verse, 1:1, with a kingly genealogy: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." No kingly genealogy would go through Him human mother, but through His earthly father – and so that's what we get.

**Matthew concludes** in the last 3 verses (28:18-20) with what we know as "The Great Commission," the king's final marching orders to his subjects.

**Mark begins** with the servant, John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Servant, Jesus Christ. There is no genealogy given, for one is interested in the pedigree of a servant.

**Mark concludes** in 16:20 with "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" – the servant still laboring with his disciples

**Luke begins** with the stated purpose of carefully giving consecutive account of the exact truth of Jesus' earthly life (1:1-4). The genealogy given in chapter 3 goes back through His human mother, Mary, to Adam, the first man.

**Luke concludes** in 24:50-51 saying that Jesus "lifted up his (human) hands" to bless the disciples and "parted from them" with his human, resurrected body – still a man, though glorified

**John begins** not with a human genealogy, but going back "in the beginning" when Jesus was with the Father as God Himself (1:1). He is revealed in these opening verses as "God," creator of all, "life" and "light of men" and the "Word" who "became flesh."

**John concludes** with the uniqueness of this man (21:25) "*And there were many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.*" – for He was not just man, but God incarnate.

#### **SOME UNIQUE TREASURES**

##### **In Matthew**

- The visit of the Magi to Bethlehem
- The Sermon on the Mount (in its full version)
- The "Great Commission"

##### **In Mark**

1. Jesus telling the wind "peace be still" to calm the storm
2. Jesus healing the Gentile blind man of Bethsaida by spitting on his eyes
3. Jesus crying "Abba, Father" in the garden of Gethsemane

##### **In Luke**

- The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and visit of the shepherds
- The parables of the "Good Samaritan" & "Prodigal Son"
- Jesus teaching on the road to Emmaus

##### **In John**

- The first miracle: turning the water to wine
- Jesus' visit to Nicodemus and "for God so loved the world..."
- The resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus
- The "Upper Room Discourse" and promise of the indwelling Spirit

#### 4 CHARACTERISTIC ENDINGS

Matthew ends with Jesus' RESURRECTION (the crowning proof of Messianic power)  
 Mark goes further and ends with Jesus' ASCENSION (the perfect reward of the servant)  
 Luke goes further and ends with the PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT (the inner need of mankind)  
 John goes further and ends with the PROMISE OF THE SECOND COMING (the Divine end)  
 STREAMLINED POWERPOINT SLIDES FOR THE ABOVE:

#### 27 NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

- √ 5 books of history (Gospels + Acts)
- √ 21 letters of doctrine
- 13 written by Paul
- 8 written by others (James, Peter, John, Jude)
- √ 1 book of prophecy (Revelation)

#### AN EASY WAY TO REMEMBER

9 KEY BOOKS: Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians  
 9 SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKS of Paul: Ephesians-Philemon  
 9 BOOKS by other authors: Hebrews-Revelation

#### THE IMPACT OF THE GOSPELS

- √ The centerpiece of the Bible – Jesus!
- √ The focus of OT prophecy – Jesus!
- √ The basis of NT theology and prophecy – Jesus!
- √ Transition from OT - distinctively Jewish to NT - distinctively Christian
- √ Transition from old covenant of LAW to new covenant of GRACE
- √ Transition from central figure of MOSES to central figure of JESUS
- √ The account of GOD BECOMING MAN that we might know Him

#### GOSPEL and SYNOPTICS

- √ "GOSPEL" = "good news"
- √ ONE GOSPEL with 4 voices of "good news"
- √ Each author tells the same story  
 with different perspective and purpose
- √ Matthew, Mark and Luke give a synopsis of Jesus' life,  
 therefore they are called the SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

#### SYNOPTICS

A SYNOPSIS of life & ministry  
 Jesus primarily in GALILEE  
 Ministry for the MULTITUDE  
 Mostly SHARED events  
 Jesus in ACTION  
 RELATIONAL – Jesus with man

#### JOHN

SELECTED events of life & ministry  
 Jesus primarily in JUDEA  
 Intimate times with INDIVIDUALS  
 Mostly UNIQUE events  
 Jesus in INTROSPECTION  
 EVANGELICAL – Jesus, bridging God & man

#### THE FOUR FACES OF JESUS

Ezekiel 1:5, 10:14-15 and Revelation 4:7

**Matthew** – Jesus, the LION  
 Matthew showing Jesus to be **KING**

**Mark** – Jesus as the CALF or OX  
 Mark showing Jesus as the **SERVANT**

**Luke** – Jesus as the MAN  
 Luke showing Jesus to be the perfect **MAN**

**John** – Jesus as the EAGLE

John showing Jesus to be the savoring **SAVIOR**

### **JESUS AS KING IN MATTHEW**

- √ Written primarily for the JEW
- √ Therefore, OT Scripture references abound
- √ Jesus is the son of David, the king
- √ His royal genealogy (Ch. 1) from Abraham to Joseph (earthly father) - unique
- √ The kingly visit of the 3 magi (Ch. 2) - unique
- √ The "Manifesto of the Kingdom." (Ch. 5-7) – “Sermon on the Mount” - unique
- √ The "King’s Commission" (Ch. 28) – “Great Commission” - unique

### **JESUS AS SERVANT IN MARK**

- √ No genealogy given (a servant’s background is unimportant)
- √ Written primarily for the ROMAN
- √ Therefore, fewer OT Scripture references are used
- √ ACTION and DEEDS are the norm; a minimum of words
- √ Therefore “and” is used 1375 times, moving along the narrative
- √ This fast-moving narrative makes Mark the shortest gospel
- √ Yet Mark specializes in detailed descriptions – valued by Romans

### **JESUS AS PERFECT SON OF MAN IN LUKE**

- √ Written primarily for the GREEK
- √ Therefore, fewer OT Scripture references are used
- √ Therefore ORDER is valued – an orderly, complete account given (1:1-4)
- √ This makes Luke the longest gospel in words used (not chapters)
- √ Greeks valued ART – four “songs” (Zacharias, Mary, Simeon, angels)
- √ Greeks valued ART – therefore the most PARABLES told
- √ His human genealogy (3:23-38) through his human mother to Adam
- √ Uniquely tells of his human birth and youth
- √ Gives the most detailed account of Jesus’ human suffering

### **JESUS AS SON OF GOD IN JOHN**

- √ Written for every man – “whosoever”
- √ Written that everyone would believe in Jesus as the Son of God (20:31)
- √ His genealogy is as the WORD “in the beginning”
- √ Numerous references to Jesus as being Divine
- √ Jesus calls Himself “I AM” on 7 occasions
- √ Jesus is the EVANGELIST to Nicodemus, woman at the well, blind man, etc.

### **4 PURPOSEFUL PRESENTATIONS**

**Matthew** presents **GROUPINGS** of subjects, not strictly chronological

**Mark** focuses on **ACTION** rather than **WORDS**

**Luke** presents **CHRONOLOGY** and **COMPLETENESS**

**John** presents **PROOFS** of Jesus’ Deity in selected segments

### **“FRONT DOOR” AND “BACK DOOR” KEYS**

**Matthew** begins with a kingly genealogy: (1:1)

*“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”*

**Matthew concludes** with a kingly commission (28:18-20) –  
the king’s final marching orders to his subjects.

**Mark begins** with one servant (John) preparing for another (Jesus)  
1:2 *“Behold, I send My messenger before your face”*

**Mark concludes** with the servant still in labor  
16:20 *“And they went forth ..., the Lord working with them”*

#### **“FRONT DOOR” AND “BACK DOOR” KEYS**

**Luke begins** with the stated purpose of giving  
the exact truth of Jesus’ earthly life (1:1-4)

**Luke concludes** with Jesus lifting up “his (human) hands” to bless the disciples and “parted from them” with his human, resurrected body (24:50-51)

**John begins** “in the beginning” when Jesus “was God” with the Father (1:1).  
He is revealed as the “Word,” creator, “light,” “life,” and that he “became flesh”

**John concludes** with Jesus’ uniqueness  
21:25 *“And there were many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.”*

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