

# EAST AFRICA BIBLE COLLEGE

## The Gospels

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UPDATED MARCH 2020

# **The Gospels**

## East Africa Bible College

### **Introduction to the Gospels**

#### I. Course Introduction

- A. This course will examine each of the four Gospels in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- B. The notes will include a detailed introduction where you will learn about authorship, date of writing, place or writing, reasons for writing, and major themes.
- C. The notes will also include a detailed outline of each Gospel. Instructors will walk you through the outline teaching you from their own study about the significant issues found in the Gospels as you go through the outlines.
- D. Much of the background information you need for the study of the Gospels is found in the New Testament Survey course material including the following that you should review for this course:
  1. Major Jewish Sects
  2. The Historical Context
  3. Jesus in the New Testament
  4. Crucifixion
  5. The instructor may require you to bring the New Testament Survey notes for this course for further teaching.

#### II. What is a “Gospel”

- A. The word “Gospel” simply means “Good News.”
  1. The word is derived from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (euangelion) which also means “good news.”
  2. Christianity borrowed this word from the Greek military. It was a term used to describe the winning of a battle or victory in war. Kenneth Schenck writes this word carries the image “of a messenger bringing a report of victory. A battle is won, and a messenger is sent to report the news.”<sup>1</sup>
  3. Why are the Gospels good news?
    - i. John 6:63, 68
    - ii. John 14:6
    - iii. Luke 4:18-19; 7:22
- B. A literary definition of “Gospel” is a collection of narratives (stories) about Jesus including his notable sayings and deeds.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth L. Schenck, Gospel: Good News, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 343.

1. The Gospels are written in the style of ancient Greco-Roman biographies which were narratives written on one normal length scroll (about 10 meters).
  - i. These narratives did not cover the person's whole life (as modern biographies do) and were not always presented in chronological order (as modern biographies do). Narratives in ancient biographies were sometimes grouped by theme rather than chronology.
  - ii. Richard Burridge writes that ancient biographies "begin with a brief mention of the hero's ancestry, family or city, birth or an occasional anecdote about childhood; but usually the narrative moves rapidly on to the public debut later in life . . . Most ancient biographies treat the subject's death in great detail."<sup>2</sup>
2. Richard Burridge convincingly asserts that the four Gospels were written in this style. "Gospels are continuous prose narratives of the length of a single scroll, comprising stories, anecdotes, sayings and speeches within a relatively short space to depict their understanding of the character of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, their focus on Jesus' public ministry from his baptism to death, and on his words and deeds, his teaching and his ministry, is not very different from the content of other ancient biographies. The concentration of 15 to 20 percent devoted to the last week of Jesus' life, his death and resurrection . . ." certainly reflect that of other ancient Greco-Roman biographies.<sup>3</sup>
3. Luke's work did fill two scrolls but only one scroll was for the Gospel and the other scroll was for the Acts of the Apostles.

### III. The Synoptic Gospels and John

- A. The first three gospels in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are called the Synoptic Gospels.
- B. "Synoptic" literally means "seen together" and refers to the close similarities and agreement found in the writings of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These three Gospels share at least 40% of their material with the others (nearly or over half similar to one another). This is due to the shared use of sources and eyewitnesses.
- C. The content of John is very different from the first three Gospels because John sought to give additional stories and other perspectives near the end of his life and after the other Gospels has been distributed. John writes not to disagree with the Synoptic Gospels but to supplement them.

### IV. The Writing of the Gospels

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<sup>2</sup> Richard A. Burridge, *Gospel: Genre*, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 337-338.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 338.

- A. Immediately after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, messages and reports about him spread only by word of mouth. The primary means of hearing about Jesus was the oral teaching and preaching by the disciples and Apostles.
  - B. Jesus never wrote any document. The verbal retelling of Jesus' spoken teachings was the sole method of communicating his message. Unfortunately, no one followed Jesus around and wrote down his sayings as they traveled as Luke did with Paul.
  - C. The oral method of spreading the word about Jesus lasted for about 20 – 30 years before the first Gospel was written.
    - 1. Mark was most likely the first gospel to be written.
    - 2. Matthew and Luke were written after Mark and probably used Mark's Gospel as a source. They also used a source outside of Mark since both Matthew and Luke include stories that Mark does not.
    - 3. John was the last to write.
    - 4. In the Bible, Matthew was placed first in the New Testament because he includes the birth of Jesus in his Gospel. Mark did not include this information so even though he wrote first, he is included second so the New Testament can begin with the story of Jesus' birth.
  - D. The written Gospels began to appear in about 55 – 60 AD.
  - E. Other Gospels were written but considered unbiblical and inaccurate. Thus, they were not included in the Bible. If someone tries to teach from another Gospel not found in our Bible, we should reject that as the early church did.
  - F. The Gospels were written specifically to certain groups of people in certain geographical locations. (We will discuss this in more detail in the introduction of each Gospel.)
  - G. The Gospels did not include the authors' names but they were added later by early church fathers based on their first-hand knowledge and the traditional testimony or early leaders. Ultimately, the authors were not trying to promote themselves. They only wanted to promote Jesus.
- V. Why were the Gospels written?
- A. To preserve the body of oral material concerning Jesus passed on by the eye-witnesses through teaching and preaching.
  - B. To provide accurate accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus. (Luke 1:1-4)
  - C. To aid in the process of discipleship. (John 20:30-31)
  - D. To provide information and instruction to new believers.
  - E. To provide a standard by which the church would distinguish between accurate and inaccurate teaching and preaching concerning the message of Christ.

- F. Each book also has individual and specific reasons or purposes for writing which we will discuss in the introduction of each Gospel.

## VI. The Importance of the Gospels

- A. We recognize that the entire Bible is inspired and authoritative. No book is more important than the others. However, we also recognize the special nature of the Gospels.
- B. The Gospels contains the words and actions of the incarnate Jesus. (Incarnate simply means “in flesh.” We will discuss more about incarnation later.)
  - 1. The Old Testament looks forward to Jesus.
  - 2. The rest of the New Testament come as a result of Jesus.
  - 3. The Gospels explain what Jesus did and said.
  - 4. Red Letters: Many Bibles put the words of Jesus in red letters. This does not mean that the red letters are more important than the black letters. It does, however, help us clearly see the words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.
- C. The Gospels provide the context for New Covenant theology. Paul’s development of New Covenant theology was based on both his redeemed understanding of the Old Testament and his knowledge of the work and words of Jesus. The Gospels help us understand the mission and theology of Paul.

## VII. How the Read the Gospels

- A. A full study of how we should read and interpret the Gospels is found in the Biblical Interpretation course. However, here are a few reminders.
- B. Read in Context. Read in large sections, not only individual stories in isolation.
  - 1. When reading in the Gospels, we must look for the meaning of each individual story as well as the meaning of the larger sections where the stories are linked together. It is essential to study each story individually and as a part of the larger section.
  - 2. Scott Duvall and Daniel Hayes write, “We look at what is taught in each episode, and we look for what is taught by the way the episodes are lined together to form the larger story.”<sup>4</sup>
  - 3. Joel Green agrees that we must read the individual stories in the Gospels within the larger context and sections when he writes, “the significance of each of these accounts is incomplete when viewed on its own. Each must be read with reference to its narrative location . . . It will not do to read each ‘event’ in isolation.”<sup>5</sup>
- C. Look for the main idea in each story and each major section (grouping of stories).

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<sup>4</sup> J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 156.

<sup>5</sup> Joel B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 11.

1. Don't get distracted from the main message of the Gospels. Ask these questions to help find the central points:
  - i. What does this teach me about Jesus?
  - ii. What does Jesus teach in this story/section?
  - iii. What do I learn from the actions of Jesus here?
2. Also remember to ask the basic questions of any narrative:
  - i. Who are involved?
  - ii. What is happening?
  - iii. When is this happening?
  - iv. Where is this happening?
  - v. Why is this happening?
  - vi. How is this happening?

D. Look for connections

1. Ask what connects these stories, people, events, etc.
2. Consider why the author placed the stories, people, events together in one section.

# **The Gospels**

## East Africa Bible College

### **Introduction to the Gospel According to Matthew**

#### I. Authorship

A. The writer of this Gospel never gives us his name. Church history and tradition tells us that the author was Matthew.

B. Who was Matthew?

1. Little is known of this man.

- i. Matthew, like the other Gospel writers, rarely wrote about himself.
- ii. He focused primarily on Jesus and did not even address by name the original recipient of his Gospel (as the letters do).

2. Two Theories regarding the identity of Mathew

- i. Theory 1: This Matthew is the disciple named Matthew called by Jesus in Matthew 9:9-13 (or Levi in Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27).
  - a. It was not usual for one person to be referenced in Scripture with different names, such as Peter also being called Cephas or Simon. Matthew had another name, Levi.
  - b. He was the son of a man named Alphaeus (Mark 2:14). Since he also used the name “Levi” he could have been from a Levite family.
  - c. He was a Jew working for the Roman government. He would have been viewed as traitorous by some in his community and ceremonially unclean by the religious authorities for his close association with Gentiles.
  - d. He served as a tax collector. Most likely, he would have been educated and wealthy in local standards but disliked by his fellow Jews for the work he did and the money he took from them.
  - e. He was called by Jesus to be a disciple and responded immediately. Michael Wilkins writes, “Since tax collectors generally were fairly wealthy and were despised by the local populace, Matthew’s calling and response were completely out of the ordinary and required nothing short of a miraculous turnaround in the tax collector’s life.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 24.

- f. Matthew was an eyewitness to much of the ministry and teaching of Jesus since he appears to begin his discipleship early in the Gospels.
- ii. Theory 2: This Matthew is a disciple of one of the Apostles and not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry.
  - a. If this theory is true, the Gospel writer Matthew did not appear in the Gospels as working alongside Jesus and was not an eyewitness. Rather, he worked with an eyewitness to record the stories and teachings of Jesus.
  - b. This is a minority view among Evangelical scholars. If this is true, however, it does not diminish the quality of the Gospel since Luke also wrote with authority without being an eyewitness (Luke doesn't appear until Acts 16).
- iii. In this class, we will assume that theory 1 is correct and that the Apostle Matthew was the author of this document. Michael Wilkins writes, "As a tax collector he would have been trained in secular scribal techniques [in order to do his job], and as a Galilean Jewish Christian he would have been able to interpret the life of Jesus from the perspective of the Old Testament expectations."<sup>7</sup>

### C. Early Church Records of Matthew

1. Papias, an early church leader at the end of the first century and beginning of the second century, testified that the Apostle Matthew was the author.
2. Irenaeus, another early church leader in the second century, also testified that the Apostle Matthew was the author.
3. Other early church traditions concerning Matthew do exist but verification is difficult:
  - i. Many believe that Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in Aramaic first and later in Greek (or it was translated into Greek).
  - ii. It was reported that Matthew later ministered in what is now Iran (Biblical Persia) until his death.
  - iii. Some traditions say he was martyred during his ministry in what we now call Iran (then called Persia or Babylon) but others say he died in Judea.

## II. Date of Writing

- A. Most likely between 63 – 72 AD (We cannot be certain about the exact date but this is a reasonable time period based on the evidence we have.)
- B. After the scattering of the church due to persecution in Jerusalem.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



- C. Matthew was almost certainly written after Mark and probably used Mark as a course for some of his gospel material. However, as Michael Wilkins points out, this gospel has been placed first in the order of New Testament books from the earliest days of the collection of Scripture in the church as “a natural bridge between the Old testament and the New Testament. Matthew demonstrates repeatedly that Old Testament hopes, prophecies, and promises have not been fulfilled in the person and ministry of Jesus.”<sup>8</sup>

### III. Place of Writing

- A. Most likely Antioch in Syria (this was a hub for the scattered Christians leaving Jerusalem).
- B. Even in the book of Acts, we see Antioch becoming a stronghold for the church outside Jerusalem and a center for world-wide ministry (see Acts 13).

### IV. Intended Recipients

- A. The contents of the book indicate that Matthew wrote for a Jewish audience.
  - 1. He wants to convince unbelieving Jews that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.
  - 2. He wants to convince believing Jews that the gospel is for the Gentiles and they must be included in the membership and mission of the church.
  - 3. He wants to teach all believers about the truths of Christ’s message.
- B. This Gospel may have been intended for use in the Antioch church as a teaching document and for preserving the oral traditions taught by the Apostles.
- C. It was also intended for teaching Christianity and discipleship in the greater Christian community.

### V. Reasons for Writing:

- A. To record a proper account of the life and teaching of Jesus.
- B. To describe the impact and effect that Jesus had (has) on those who meet him and believe in Him.
- C. To preserve information from the eyewitnesses. Even though Matthew was an eyewitness to much of Jesus’ ministry, he was not there for the birth and early accounts of his life (like baptism) but wanted those stories to be well documented.
- D. To teach believers and new converts. Craig Keener describes the Gospel as a possible “training manual for new Christians.”<sup>9</sup>

### VI. Matthew’s Themes and Emphasis:

- A. The Good News of the Kingdom
- B. Jesus as the Messiah or Christ
- C. Jesus as the fulfillment of OT prophecy
- D. Jesus as the supreme teacher and interpreter of Mosaic Law

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 45.

- E. Jesus as the provider of ethical standards for Christians.
- F. Jesus as the initiator of a new covenant.
- G. The Kingdom of Heaven
- H. Jesus as the Son of God
- I. Jesus as King

## VII. Major Issues in Matthew's Gospel

### A. The Birth Narrative of Jesus in Matthew - Matthew 1-2

#### 1. In Matthew's genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:1-17) served at least two purposes:

- i. To demonstrate that Jesus did come from the family of David and meets the prophetic requirements concerning the messiah:
  - a. 2 Samuel 7:8-16
  - b. Isaiah 11:1-10; 16:5
  - c. Jeremiah 33:14-17
- ii. To demonstrate that the ministry and Kingdom of Jesus will be inclusive of all people:
  - a. Matthew's genealogy was not only concerned with listing the Jewish male ancestors of Jesus. Matthew also included Gentile women in the genealogy which was unusual for normal genealogies but included for the purpose of demonstrating the mission of Jesus and the fulfilment of scripture (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; Isaiah 60:3).
  - b. The women included in Matthew's Genealogy were Tamar (Genesis 38), Rahab (Joshua 2), Ruth, and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11).
  - c. These women were gentiles and represented dark times or even sin in Israel yet they were included in Jesus' family tree by Matthew to communicate that Jesus is for everyone.

#### 2. Matthew is the only Gospel to focus on the angelic visit to Joseph.

#### 3. Matthew is also the only Gospel to mention the visit of the Magi.

- i. Craig Keener explains that the Magi "were pagan astrologers whose divinatory skills were widely respected in the Greco-Roman world."<sup>10</sup>
  - a. Astrologers seek to derive information from the movement of the stars and planets. This is also called "divination." This practice was forbidden in Deut. 18:10-11 and Isaiah 47:11-15.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 48-49.

- b. Astrologers often worked in the courts of ancient kings and emperors as advisors (for example see Daniel 2:1-2). Thus, the magi were probably not kings but they worked for kings.
- c. The Magi came from the east, most likely Persia where they would have been familiar with Jewish religion and prophecy since Jews were living there from the time of the Exile. Daniel also introduced the astrologers and kings of Persia to the God of Israel.
- d. Even though these astrologers were practicing pagan astrology, they recognized that something significant had happened when Jesus was born and they travelled to him to worship and submit.
- e. In this, we see Matthew describing the coming of Jesus as a event of significance also for the Gentiles. Jesus will draw all people unto him.

## B. The Five Major Discourses of Jesus in Matthew

### 1. The Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5-7

- i. This is the largest section of ethical teaching in the Gospels.
- ii. Here Jesus not only describes the ethics of the Kingdom of God but also demonstrates how the New Covenant fulfils (not destroys) and clarifies (not changes) the Old Covenant. We now view the Old Covenant Law through the lens of the New Covenant and make ethical decisions not according to the “letter of the law” but according to the heart of the lawgiver who is now fully revealed in Jesus (Colossians 2:9).
- iii. Howard Marshall writes that in Matthew “the law is both internalized and radicalized. It is not abolished but is to be seen as an embodiment of . . . two radical commandments that involve people’s motives as well as their outward behaviour and that prioritize moral behaviour over against the carrying out of ritual and ceremonial. Rather, then, the law is taken up into a new expression of the will of God as taught by Jesus.”<sup>11</sup>

### 2. The Mission of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 10)

- i. Here Jesus describes both the challenges and necessities of discipleship.
- ii. The primary means of proclaiming the Kingdom of God is by raising up and sending out disciples.

### 3. The Nature of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13)

- i. Here Jesus gives us seven parables to describe the nature and realities of the Kingdom of God:

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<sup>11</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 119.

- a. The parable of the sower and the seeds (a parable concerning the realities of evangelism)
  - b. The parable of the weeds (a parable describing the opposition and challenges that continue to exist among believers)
  - c. The parable of the mustard seed (a parable describing how God brings success from small beginnings)
  - d. The parable of the yeast (a parable describing the ultimate success of the kingdom of God)
  - e. The parable of the hidden treasure (a parable describing the commitment of believers to the Kingdom)
  - f. The parable of the pearl (a parable describing the value of the kingdom of God)
  - g. The parable of the net (a parable describing the ultimate results of either receiving or rejecting the Kingdom of God)
- ii. Michael Wilkins writes that in these parables Jesus “reveals to his disciples the secrets of the kingdom of God, making known that, during this age, the kingdom will exist in a hidden form. It will be an undercover kingdom, not the overpowering political, militaristic, and dominant cultural manifestation of God’s rule that many expected.”<sup>12</sup>
4. The Demonstration of God’s Love (both towards humanity and among humans) – Matthew 18
- i. Here Jesus describes how God loves us and how we should love one another. This love includes unwavering commitment, humility, and forgiveness.
  - ii. In this discourses Jesus uses a combination of parables, commands, and examples to communicate his message.
5. The End Times (Eschatology) – Matthew 23-25
- i. Jesus begins with the seven woes describing both the present and historical sin of Israel which has lived in a consistent pattern of disobedience to God and his covenant since their beginning.
  - ii. Jesus describes the coming destruction as a result of sin and the judgement of God. Jesus gives generic signs of the end of the age and the second coming but these signs are not intended to gives us specific dates. Rather he emphasizes that it could happen at any time.
  - iii. Next, Jesus gives two parables to describe how believers should live in the midst of these realities:

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 33.

- a. First, the parable of the virgins teaches believers to always be ready for the coming of the Lord.
  - b. Second, the parable of the talents teaches believers to always be faithfully working until the coming of the Lord. We do not simply hide and wait for the end. We put our talents to work for the Kingdom.
  - iv. Finally, Jesus describes the ultimate end of the age in the parable of the sheep and the goats. God will ultimately separate those who accept him for eternal reward and send those who reject him into eternal destruction.
6. Jeannine Brown writes that these “discourses can be understood as providing progressive illumination of the nature and values of God’s kingdom as the story proceeds to its culmination.”<sup>13</sup>

### C. The Apostle Peter

- 1. Although Peter is an important figure in all four gospels, Peter is discussed with great prominence in Matthew.
- 2. Matthew includes five accounts involving Peter that no other gospel writer includes:
  - i. Matthew 14:28-31 – Peter walking on (and then sinking into) the water on the lake.
  - ii. Matthew 15:15 – Peter asking for explanation of parables because he did not understand.
  - iii. Matthew 16:17-19 – Peter as Rock
  - iv. Matthew 17:24-27 – Peter questioned about Jesus paying taxes.
  - v. Matthew 18:21 – Peter asking about forgiveness.
- 3. Michael Wilkins points out that Matthew “emphasizes Peter’s leadership role but also shows how Peter is an imperfect leader in the process of development, as Jesus prepares him for the early days of the church ahead.”<sup>14</sup>

### D. The Great Commission - Matthew 28:16-20

- 1. The last chapter of Matthew contains the clearest farewell message of Jesus known as the Great Commission. This is a both a message of challenge and hope for those who carry on the work of Jesus after his ascension (as we do today).
- 2. Michael Wilkins writes that Matthew seeks to remind the church of the “continuity between Jesus’ ministry of making disciples in his earthly ministry

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<sup>13</sup> Jeannine K. Brown, *Gospel of Matthew, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 574.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

and the ministry of making disciples to which the church has been called. This is Jesus' final command, and it uniquely charges his followers with an imperative that has impelled Christians throughout church history to look outward to all the peoples of the earth who have not yet heard and obeyed the gospel of the Kingdom of heaven.”<sup>15</sup>

3. The Gospel of Matthew begins by introducing Jesus as Immanuel - God with us (Matt. 1:23) and ends with the Great Commission promising that Jesus will be Immanuel - I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt 28:20). It was Matthew's concern that this truth be communicated with priority in his Gospel so that we go out in the realization that Jesus is always with us as we carry on his work in this world.

### **Outline of the Gospel According to Matthew**

**Note:** There is no one authoritative outline for any of the Biblical books. The authors did not provide outlines or diagrams for their writings. Each commentary, Bible study guide, and textbook will include a different outline. We can only make educated guesses using clues from the text as to the thought flow of the writers. The following outline is adapted from *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*.<sup>16</sup>

- I. The birth and childhood of Jesus - Mt 1:1-2:23
  - A. Genealogy of Christ - Mt 1:1-17
  - B. Birth of Christ - Mt 1:18-25
  - C. Visit of the Magi - Mt 2:1-12
  - D. Flight into Egypt and massacre of the infants - Mt 2:13-18
  - E. Residence at Nazareth - Mt 2:19-23
  
- II. The preparation for the ministry of Jesus - Mt 3:1-4:11
  - A. The forerunner of Christ - Mt 3:1-12
  - B. Baptism of Christ - Mt 3:13-17
  - C. Temptation of Christ - Mt 4:1-11
  
- III. The ministry of Jesus in Galilee - Mt 4:12-18:35
  - A. Residence at Capernaum - Mt 4:12-17
  - B. Call of four disciples - Mt 4:18-22

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Pfeiffer, Charles F. and Everett F. Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 930.

- C. General survey of the Galilean ministry - Mt 4:23-25
- D. Sermon on the mount - Mt 5:1-7:29
- E. Ten miracles and related events - Mt 8:1-9:38
- F. Mission of the twelve - Mt 10:1-42
- G. Christ's answer to John, and related discourse - Mt 11:1-30
- H. Opposition from the Pharisees - Mt 12:1-50
- I. A series of parables on the kingdom - Mt 13:1-58
- J. Withdrawal of Jesus following John's beheading - Mt 14:1-36
- K. Conflict with the Pharisees over tradition - Mt 15:1-20
- L. Withdrawal to Phoenecia and healing of a Canaanite woman's daughter - Mt 15:21-28
- M. Return to the Sea of Galilee and performing of miracles - Mt 15:29-38
- N. Renewed conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees - Mt 15:39-16:4
- O. Withdrawal to the region of Caesarea Philippi - Mt 16:5-17:23
- P. Instruction of the twelve at Capernaum - Mt 17:24-18:35

#### IV. The ministry of Jesus in Perea - Mt 19:1-20:16

- A. Teaching on divorce - Mt 19:1-12
- B. Blessing of the children - Mt 19:13-15
- C. Interview with the rich young man - Mt 19:16-30
- D. Parable of the laborers in the vineyard - Mt 20:1-16

#### V. The ministry of Jesus in Judea - Mt 20:17-34

- A. Another prediction of Christ's death and resurrection – Mt 20:17-19
- B. Ambitious request of Zebedee's sons - Mt 20:20-28
- C. Healing of two blind men - Mt 20:29-34

#### VI. The ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem - Mt 21:1-25:46

- A. Triumphal entry - Mt 21:1-11
- B. Cleansing the Temple - Mt 21:12-17
- C. Cursing of the barren fig tree - Mt 21:18-22
- D. Questioning of Jesus' authority and his parabolic answer - Mt 21:23-22:14
- E. Questioning of Jesus by various groups - Mt 22:15-46
- F. Jesus' public denunciation of the Pharisees - Mt 23:1-39
- G. Olivet Discourse - Mt 24:1-25:46

#### VII. The suffering of Jesus - Mt 26:1-27:66

- A. Plot against Jesus - Mt 26:1-16

- B. The final meal - Mt 26:17-30
- C. Prediction of Peter's denial - Mt 26:31-35
- D. Events in Gethsemane - Mt 26:36-56
- E. Events at the Jewish trials - Mt 26:57-27:2
- F. Remorse of Judas - Mt 27:3-10
- G. Events at the Roman trials - Mt 27:11-31
- H. The Crucifixion - Mt 27:32-56
- I. Burial - Mt 27:32-56

VIII. The resurrection of Jesus - Mt 28:1-20

- A. Discovery of the empty tomb - Mt 28:1-8
- B. Appearance of Jesus Christ - Mt 28:9,10
- C. Report of the soldiers - Mt 28:11-15
- D. The great commission - Mt 28:16-20



# **The Gospels**

## East Africa Bible College

### **Introduction to the Gospel According to Mark**

#### I. Author

A. The writer of this Gospel (and all the Gospels) never gives us his name.

1. Church history and tradition tells us that the author was John Mark.

- i. Papias, an early church leader at the end of the first century and beginning of the second century, testified that the Mark was the author.
- ii. Early church historian Eusebius wrote in the early fourth century that “Mark became Peter’s interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered.”<sup>17</sup>
- iii. Origen also wrote around 200 AD that Mark wrote this gospel in accordance with Peter’s instruction.

2. Robert Stein remarks that the references to Mark as the author were “early and widespread.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, his authorship seems likely.

B. John Mark (usually just called “Mark”) was a companion of both Paul and Peter. These Apostles probably helped him write his Gospel.

1. Colossians 4:10
- 2.1 Peter 5:13
3. Acts 13:13
4. Acts 15:36-40

C. Who was Mark?

1. Little is known of his life story but we do have some reliable information from the Bible and church history:

- i. The son of a wealthy family in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12-14). His family’s wealth would have provided Mark with a good education to prepare him for both writing and interpreting in the Greek language.
- ii. The cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10) and his ministry companion (Acts 15:36-39).
- iii. A close follower of and helper of Peter (1 Peter 5:13)
- iv. Traveled shortly with Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14) and later assisted Paul in Rome (2 Timothy 4:11).
- v. Mark, along with the other writers of the Gospels, rarely wrote about themselves but rather focused on Jesus.

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<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

2. There are some other early church traditions concerning Mark but verification is difficult:

- i. Some traditions identify Mark as the young man mentioned in Mark 14:13, 51-52 (this is only mentioned in Mark's Gospel).
- ii. Some traditions say that Mark's family's home was the setting for the events in the Upper Room in Acts 2.
- iii. The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt claims that Mark started their church in Alexandria around 20 years after the ascension of Jesus. After founding the church in Egypt, he returned to Jerusalem and then traveled to Rome to assist Paul and Peter.
- iv. According to Catholic tradition, Mark was sent to North Africa during Nero's persecution to spread the Gospel there. He is called by some to be the founder of Christianity in Africa. This tradition says that Mark died in 68 AD after being tied with a rope and dragged through the streets until he was dead by pagans who violently rejected the Gospel message.
- v. Despite this tradition, Mark's death is uncertain with some saying he was killed in Rome and others saying he was killed in Egypt.

## II. Date of Writing:

- A. Most likely between 61 – 65 AD. Mark could have even finished after Peter's death putting the final date of writing around 66 – 68 AD.
- B. This would be near the end of Paul and Peter's life. Perhaps Mark realized they would soon be dead and wanted to help record their teaching and the eyewitness reports of Peter.

## III. Place of Writing

- A. Most likely written in Rome
- B. Paul and Peter were both held in Roman prison for a time and killed there by Nero in the mid-60s and Mark is seen as being with or near them at that time.

## IV. Intended Recipients

- A. Mark does not mention for whom he originally wrote his Gospel.
- B. Church tradition and some internal evidence strongly support the churches in and around Rome and the greater Roman Empire as the original intended recipients. Robert Stein observes that Mark includes several terms in the Gospel that were definitely Roman in nature indicating that he expected his Gospel to be read first in Rome. <sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

- C. Mark seems to target Gentile believers with this Gospel. If Mark was indeed the founder of the Egyptian church, he may have intended for the believers in Alexandria to be early recipients of this Gospel as well.

V. Additional Information about the Writing of Mark

- A. This Gospel is the first and the shortest. It does not include the stories of Jesus birth and some other events found in Matthew and Luke.
- B. Mark may have been writing with speed in order to finish before the death of Paul and Peter. His Gospel was possibly used by Matthew and Luke as a source when they wrote their Gospels.

VI. Reasons for Writing

- A. To record a proper account of the life of Jesus.
- B. To describe the impact Jesus had (has) on those who encountered him.
- C. To strengthen believers in the city and empire of Rome facing severe persecution. Craig Keener writes, “Mark wrote to a community that needed to be reminded that God heard prayers and would work through their witness and faith; they also needed to be reminded that this might cost them their lives in persecution.”<sup>20</sup>
- D. To teach new believers what it means to be a disciple.

VII. Themes and Emphasis

- A. The Good News of the Kingdom
- B. Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man
- C. Jesus as the Messiah or Christ
- D. Jesus as a Servant
- E. The Messiah did not come as the people expected
- F. The Messianic Secret (This is the idea that Jesus did not want to announce exactly who he was to whole world until after his death and resurrection. Jesus would often say, “Do not tell anyone.” Now he says, “Tell everyone!”)
- G. The Way of the Cross (self-sacrifice) for Jesus and His Disciples
- H. The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

VIII. Major Issues in the Gospel of Mark

- A. The Last Week of Jesus’ Ministry on Earth
  - 1. Over a third (37%) of Mark’s Gospel is concerned with the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. Mark seems to be in a hurry to get the reader to that point and mentions the eventual death of Christ often and as early as chapter 2. The actual events of the “passion of Christ” begin in chapter 11 of Mark’s Gospel.

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<sup>20</sup> Keener, 133.

2. This is a priority for Mark because it describes the greatest and eternal impact of Jesus on the world and humanity. His death and resurrection is a foundation for the salvation message of Christianity.
3. Robert Stein writes, “It is obvious that Mark seeks to emphasize that Jesus’ death is part of the divine plan for his life. It is not a tragedy . . . on the contrary in the death of Jesus all things go exactly according to the divine plan. It is God’s plan, foretold centuries earlier in the Scriptures, that Jesus should die in order to be a ransom for many (10:45) and by his sacrificial death seal a new covenant that God is making with his people (14:24). Thus Jesus willingly accepts the cup given to him.”<sup>21</sup>

#### B. Materials Found Only in Mark

1. Mark 1:1 - Introductory Verse
2. Mark 3:20-21
  - i. Here Jesus' family tries to restrain him from ministry.
  - ii. This shows that even though Mary had angelic confirmation of Jesus’ identity, even her faith wavered.
3. Mark 4:26-29 - The Parable of the Seed Growing of Itself
4. Mark 7:31-37 - Jesus Heals a Deaf Man in Decapolis
5. Mark 8:22-26 - Jesus Gives Sight to the Blind Man of Bethsaida
6. Mark 14:51-52
  - i. Here a young man is described as running out of his clothes to escape the authorities when Jesus was arrested.
  - ii. See note above about Mark, some believe this was the Gospel writer.

#### C. The Failure of the Disciples

1. Mark is not unwilling to share about the failure of the disciples to understand and obey Jesus, even his own mentor Peter (Mark 8:33). Mark is not concerned about embarrassing the disciples, rather he wants to point to the mercy and grace of Jesus who is willing to work with people who often fail to live up to his standards. His love compels us to strive towards obedience but his love also forgives us when we fall.
2. Craig Keener writes that the readers would learn “through the failure of the disciples in Mark that if they had not yet achieved the radical lifestyle their Lord’s words demanded, he would still work with them patiently to help them get to that level of commitment.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stein, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Keener, 133.

3. Nicholas Perrin comments that the hope in Mark's gospel is found in the truth that "the way past human failure is the past of following Jesus."<sup>23</sup>

#### D. The Ending of Mark

1. Some modern translation end Mark's Gospel at Mark 16:8. These translations are not trying to take words out of the Bible (and often they do include the rest of the chapter in the footnotes). Rather, these modern translations are attempting to be faithful to the most reliable manuscripts which may not have been available to older translators. Indeed, Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in the older Greek manuscripts of Mark's Gospel. Stein writes that "the best two Greek [manuscripts] end at 16:8."<sup>24</sup>
2. Craig Keener writes, "The manuscript tradition and style suggest that these verses were probably an early addition to the Gospel of Mark." Reading and studying these verses, however, it not a mistake because, Keener continues, "most of the content of these verses is found elsewhere in the Gospels."<sup>25</sup> Thus, these verses are not opposed to the rest of the writing but were probably added by an editor or scribe after the original was distributed.

### **Outline of the Gospel According to Mark**

**Note:** The following outline is adapted from The NIV Application Commentary on Mark by David E. Garland.<sup>26</sup>

- I. Prologue (1:1-13)
  - A. Introduction (1:1)
  - B. The Ministry of John the Baptist (1:2-8)
  - C. Jesus' Baptism (1:9-11)
  - D. Testing in the Desert (1:12-13)
  
- II. Jesus Ministry in Galilean Region (1:14-8:21)
  - A. Jesus' Ministry within Galilee (1:14-3:6)
    1. Commencement of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (1:14-45)
    2. Controversies Settled by Jesus' Pronouncements (2:1-3:6)
  - B. Jesus' Ministry Around the Sea of Galilee and Rejection in Nazareth (3:7-6:6a)
    1. Summary Statement of Jesus' Ministry (3:7-12)

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<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Perrin, *Gospel of Mark, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 563.

<sup>24</sup> Stein, 734.

<sup>25</sup> Keener, 183.

<sup>26</sup> Garland, David E., *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 32-36.

2. Choosing Twelve Disciples (3:13-19)
3. Concern of Jesus' Family about Jesus (3:20-21)
4. Accusation that Jesus Works by the Power of Beelzebub (3:22-29)
5. Jesus' Statement about His Family (3:30-35)
6. Teaching by the Sea in Parables (4:1-34)
7. Jesus' Power Demonstrated on Both Sides of the Sea of Galilee (4:35-6:6a)
  1. Jesus Calming the Storm (4:35-41)
  2. Healing the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)
  3. Healing a Sick Woman and Raising Jairus' Daughter (5:21-43)
  4. Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (6:1-6a)

### III. Jesus' Ministry Expands Beyond Galilee (6:6b-8:21)

- A. Sending Out the Twelve (6:6b-13)
- B. Death of John the Baptist (6:14-29)
- C. Feeding the Five Thousand (6:30-44)
- D. Jesus Walking on Water (6:45-52)
- E. Jesus Healing the Sick (6:53-56)
- F. Controversy Over Traditions (7:1-23)
- G. Jesus Ministers in Gentile Territory (7:24-37)
- H. Feeding the Four Thousand (8:1-10)
- I. Demand for a Sign (8:11-13)
- J. Jesus Gives Warning About the Pharisees and Herodians (8:14-21)

### IV. On the Way to Jerusalem (8:22-10:52)

- A. Healing of the Blind Man at Bethsaida (8:22-26)
- B. Jesus' First Prediction of His Death and Resurrection (8:27-9:1)
- C. Transfiguration of Jesus (9:2-8)
- D. Instruction About the Coming of Elijah (9:9-13)
- E. Healing of the Boy with an Unclean Spirit (9:14-29)
- F. Jesus' Second Prediction of His Death and Resurrection (9:30-37)
- G. Collection of Sayings Related to Discipleship (9:38-50)
- H. Teaching About Divorce (10:1-12)
- I. Blessing the Children (10:13-16)
- J. Inviting a Rich Man to Follow (10:17-31)
- K. Jesus' Third Prediction of His Death and Resurrection and Teaching on Discipleship in Association with the Request of James and John (10:32-45)
- L. Healing of Blind Bartimaeus in Jericho (10:46-52)

- V. Confrontation and Death in Jerusalem (11:1-15:41)
  - A. Confrontation (11:1-13:37)
    - 1. Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)
    - 2. Prophet Action in the Temple and the Cursing of a Fig Tree (11:12-25)
    - 3. Controversies and Teachings in the Temple (11:26-12:44)
    - 4. Farewell Discourse and Teachings on the Temple's Destruction and the End Times (13:1-37)
  - B. The Passion of Jesus (14:1-15:41)
    - 1. Plot by the High Priests and Scribes to Kill Jesus (14:1-2)
    - 2. Anonymous Woman Anoints Jesus for Burial (14:3-9)
    - 3. Plot by Judas to Betray Jesus (14:10-11)
    - 4. The Last Supper (14:12-26)
    - 5. Warnings, Prayer, and Betrayal on the Mount of Olives (14:27-52)
    - 6. Jesus on Trial (14:53 – 15:15)
    - 7. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (15:16-41)
  
- VI. Burial and Resurrection (15:42-16:8)
  - A. Jesus Burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Witnessed by Female Followers (15:42-47)
  - B. Announcement of the Resurrection to the Women at the Tomb (16:1-8)
  
- VII. Prologue (16:9-20) [Note: This portion of the Gospel has questions surrounding its originality. It may have been added after the original writing and some Bible translations do not include it for that reason.]
  - A. Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (16:9)
  - B. The Testimony of Mary Magdalene Concerning Jesus (16:10-11)
  - C. Jesus Appears to the Disciples (16:12-14)
  - D. The Great Commission Given (16:15-18)
  - E. The Ascension of Jesus and Continuing Ministry of the Disciples (16:19-20)

# **The Gospels**

## East Africa Bible College

### **Introduction to the Gospel According to Luke**

#### I. Author

A. The writer of this Gospel never gives us his name.

1. Church history and reliable traditions unanimously tells us that the author was Luke, a disciple of Paul, who wrote with Paul's help and influence.
2. Even though Luke does not mention his name, he does indicate his presence in the book of Acts. Acts has several "we statements:"
  - i. Acts 16:10-17
  - ii. Acts 20:5-15
  - iii. Acts 21:1-18
  - iv. Acts 27:1-28:16

B. Who was Luke?

1. He was a very educated man. He wrote with a high standard of Greek and had the title of Doctor (Colossians 4:14).
2. He was not an original disciple of Christ but rather a disciple and devoted friend of Paul. Perhaps he was also Paul's personal physician.
3. He was an eyewitness to many of the events of Acts (especially after chapter 16) and met many eyewitnesses to incarnate Jesus while in Jerusalem with Paul in Acts 21-23.
4. A Gentile who honored the God of Israel –called "God-fearers" by the Jews.
  - i. God-fearers were Gentiles who had not converted to Judaism but who had a great understanding, love, and respect for Judaism
    - a. God-fearing Gentiles were mentioned in Acts 10, Acts 13:26, and Acts 17:4. These were among the first Gentiles to believe in Christ.
    - b. The Jews would not allow the God-fearers to fully participate in Jewish religious activities because they has not fully converted (including circumcision). They loved God but were not able to fully worship. Thus, when they heard that Jesus has made a way for them to fully enter into relationship with God, they were immediately ready to accept he Gospel.
    - c. Luke would be among those Gentiles who loved the God of Israel and responded quickly to the Gospel when preached by Paul, possibly in Troas.



- ii. Luke is the only Gentile writer in the Bible. He also wrote Acts as a continuation of his Gospel.

5. Luke was possibly a Roman citizen or at least someone very familiar with Roman/Greek culture. He understood the political and social conditions of the Roman Empire very well.

6. Based on the Biblical record, we can determine the following timeline of Luke's ministry:

- i. He Joined Paul in Troas during Paul's second missionary journey at a critical point as Paul determines to venture into Europe rather than Asia at the leading of the Spirit and via a dream given by God (Acts 16).
- ii. He was an eyewitness to much of the events of the second missionary journey including the ministry in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and possibly Athens in Acts 16-17. Eyewitness in Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea in Acts 18.
- iii. He accompanied Paul back to Paul's sending church in Antioch and heard Paul's report to them in Acts 18.
- iv. He was with Paul for most or all of the third missionary journey to Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia in Greece, Troas, and Miletus in Acts 18-20.
- v. He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and met James and "all the elders" in Acts 21. While in Jerusalem, he possibly did additional research at this point for the writing of the Gospel of Luke and the first part of Acts.
- vi. He Remained near to Paul during his imprisonment and accompanied Paul to Rome.

7. Luke's Later Life and Death

- i. According to church tradition, Luke was of Greek descent from either modern-day Syria or Turkey.
- ii. History tells us he never married and died at the age of 84 in Greece, near the city of Thebes where he was serving the church. The circumstances of his death are unknown but his tomb still stands in Thebes.

II. Date of Writing:

- A. Most likely written between 64 – 70 AD.

- B. Luke and Acts were written together. Luke was written first followed by Acts. It also seems that these were written before or shortly after the death of Paul and after the writing of Mark.

### III. Place of Writing

- A. Rome
- B. Written while Paul was in prison in Rome. Luke was with him much of that time.

### IV. Intended Recipients:

- A. Theophilus is mentioned as the recipient of this book in Luke 1:3

1. The name Theophilus means “Lover of God” or “Love of God” and comes from the combination of two Greek words:

- i. θεος (theos) meaning God
- ii. φιλεω (phileo) meaning love

2. Who was Theophilus? While the exact identity of Theophilus remains unknown, three suggestions have been offered by Biblical scholars:

- i. A person of high-ranking authority who had converted to Christianity and perhaps sponsoring Luke’s writing through financial assistance. This is why Luke calls him “most excellent.”
- ii. A name used to represent Greek converts to Christianity (lovers of God, God-fearers)
- iii. A potential convert in a place of authority, possibly a judicial official connected to Paul’s trial in Rome.

3. Although we do not know with certainty who Theophilus was, Joel Green is confident that “Theophilus was a real person.”<sup>27</sup>

- B. It is also certain that Luke wrote for a wider audience, possibly churches planted by Paul with an emphasis on reaching Gentile converts.

### V. Reasons for Writing:

- A. To record an accurate account of the life of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4).
- B. To preserve information from the eyewitnesses (Luke 1:2).
- C. To teach believers and new converts about the person and teachings of Jesus (Luke 1:3).
- D. Joel Green also sees Luke-Acts together as a greater purpose of describing “the community of God’s people [the church], and centered on the invitation to participate in God’s project [mission].”<sup>28</sup>
- E. Green continues that Luke wrote to “strengthen the Christian movement in the face of opposition by (1) ensuring them in their interpretation and experience of the redemptive

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<sup>27</sup> Joel B. Green, *Gospel of Luke, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 549.

<sup>28</sup> Green, 22.

purpose and faithfulness of God and by (2) calling them to continued faithfulness and witness in God's salvific project."<sup>29</sup>

## VI. Themes and Emphasis:

- A. The Good News of the Kingdom
- B. Jesus as personally interested in the concerns of the poor, weak, and outcast.
- C. Jesus as the example of compassionate and loving.
- D. The Holy Spirit
- E. The importance of prayer
- F. The service of women in the Kingdom of God
- G. Jesus as Saviour (Messiah or Christ) and the Salvation He offers.
- H. The importance of Gentiles to God and His Kingdom

## VII. Major Issues in the Gospel of Luke

### A. A Different Genealogy

1. Careful readers will immediately notice that the genealogy of Jesus presented in Luke 3:23-38 is different from the one presented in Matthew 1.

- i. There are many similarities between the two genealogies but also some noticeable differences in the number of people and names of people listed after King David (Luke 3:23-31 and Matthew 1:6-16.)
- ii. Other differences include:
  - a. Matthew starts with Abraham while Luke starts with Jesus. Matthew's genealogy is written in the Jewish style (starting with the oldest ancestor) while Luke's genealogy is written in the Greco-Romans style (starting with the focus descendent).
  - b. Matthew's genealogy does not go beyond Abraham while Luke goes all the way back to Adam.

2. In attempting to reconcile the differences between Matthew and Luke, we must recognize several points:

- i. The early church did not see a problem here. They did not try to change one or take out the other. The early church preserved both.
- ii. Matthew makes it clear in Matthew 1:17 that he is working withing a pattern of 14 generational increments. Luke is not binding himself to that pattern. Thus, Matthew skips some generations (which was not uncommon among ancient genealogies). Matthew shows a willingness to skip generations even in the opening line of his Gospel when he wrote, "Jesus, son of David." Jesus was not literally a son of David but this "son of" really means "descendant of."

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

- iii. Multiple names were used by the same Jewish person. Some examples include: Peter was called Cephas and Simon, Paul was also called Saul, Mark was also called John.
3. Possible explanations for the genealogical differences:
- i. Matthew may be focusing on the family line of Joseph while Luke is focusing on Mary's family. Thus, after Joseph, Luke switches to Mary's family who father was Heli and so forth.
  - ii. Keener writes that perhaps Matthew "spiritualizes the genealogy rather than following it literally" as Luke tried to do.<sup>30</sup>
  - iii. Matthew may be using the names of family heads rather than the actual direct ancestors of Jesus.
  - iv. David Bauer suggests that Matthew's concern was "with function over against literal procreation" and thus his genealogy would be more symbolic/spiritual than literal.<sup>31</sup>

#### B. Other Differences Between the Gospels

1. Occasionally you will find other minor differences in the Gospel accounts of different stories. These differences are not evidence of a deficiency in the Bible. Rather, they reflect the various viewpoints of the authors.
2. Each author of the Gospels writes from his perspective not as a competitor or alternative to the others but as a supplement to the others.
3. Even today, good investigators consult with more than one witness when they are available. Each witness testifies from his or her perspective. The investigator doesn't choose which version to believe. He synthesizes the information to see the larger, whole picture.
4. We do the same in the Gospels. For example, in Luke 8:26-39, Luke tells the story of Jesus finding one demon possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes who is possessed by a legion of demons. However, in Matthew 8:28-34, Matthew reports that there were two demon possessed men there. This is not a contradiction. Luke does not deny that two were there. Rather, he focuses on the one who had the most severe case. Matthew focused on the pair so when we read Matthew we know one of them was possessed by legion (as reported by Luke). When we read Luke, we know that the one man possessed by legion also came to Jesus with another demon possessed man (as reported by Matthew).
5. When we encounter these difference in the Gospels, we must not see it as a contradiction. We study deeper at find how each story supplements the other.

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<sup>30</sup> Keener, 197.

<sup>31</sup> David R. Bauer, *Genealogy, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 301.

### C. Gentiles

1. Even though Mark and Matthew focus on Gentile inclusion in the Kingdom of God (especially in Matthew's birth narrative), both are writing to a predominantly Jewish audience. Luke, however, is writing to a predominantly Gentile audience.
  - i. Matthew wrote to convince the Jews that Gentiles should be included
  - ii. Luke wrote to convince the Gentiles that they should worship the God of the Jews (and the whole world).
2. This focus on Luke becomes clear in Acts but the Gospel prepares the reader to expect and accept Gentile inclusion in the Kingdom of God. Luke prepares the reader by pointing out that Jesus specifically reached out to and lifted up those rejected by Jewish society. Kelly Iverson writes, "Luke draws attention to the reception of Jesus' message by those on the margins of society. The poor, sinners, tax collectors and women are of notable concern and illustrate God's compassion for the marginalized and oppressed (Luke 5:27-28; 6:20; 7:36-50; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 18:9-14; 19:1-10). The gospel is not restricted by gender, ethnicity or class; it is available to all people, especially those deemed outsiders by traditional Jewish standards."<sup>32</sup>
3. Luke does not neglect the Jewish believer, however. Paul's love for the Jews was also expressed through his disciple, Luke. In fact, Luke makes sure to communicate that "the advent of Jesus is deeply rooted in the ancient covenant, and his mission is fully congruent with God's intent"<sup>33</sup> as far back at Genesis 12. The Gentile mission is not new but has been anticipated since the Jewish people were established as God's people. In reaching Gentiles, Jesus is fulfilling the purpose for which the Jews were chosen.

### D. Salvation

1. Salvation, for Luke, is a central theme. His theology of salvation is more fully explained in Act but the Gospel lays the foundation for his understanding of how sinners find redemption. The key element is Jesus.
2. Joel Green writes that for Luke, salvation and discipleship "is fundamentally an invitation for persons to align themselves with Jesus, and thus, with God. . . Jesus, as Son of God, is God's representative, whose life is characterized by obedience to God and who interprets for others (if they will only listen!) God's nature and plan and the contours of appropriate response to God."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Kelly R. Iverson, *Gentiles, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green, Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 306.

<sup>33</sup> Green, 23.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

3. Green continues that in Luke, “the disciples find that ‘following Jesus’ is mostly about being ‘with’ Jesus – learning from him, becoming socialized anew according to the new world order his ministry serves, propagates, and anticipates – all in preparation for their role as witnesses in the Acts of the Apostles.”<sup>35</sup>
4. Finally, Green observes that for Luke, Salvation “embraces life in the present, restoring the integrity of human life, revitalizing human communities, setting the cosmos in order, and commissioning the community of God’s people to put God’s grace into practice among themselves and toward ever-widening circles of others.”<sup>36</sup>

#### E. Material Found only in Luke

1. Details about the Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem- Luke 2:1–20
2. Presentation of Jesus in temple- Luke 2:21–38
3. Jesus' Childhood visit to Jerusalem- Luke 2:41–52
4. John’s reply to questions- Luke 3:10–14
5. Good news to the poor- Luke 4:14–23, 25–30
6. Miraculous catch of fish- Luke 5:1–11
7. Raising of widow’s son at Nain- Luke 7:11–17
8. Parable of two debtors- Luke 7:40–43
9. Female Followers of Jesus- Luke 8:1–3
10. Rejection of Jesus by Samaritan village- Luke 9:51–56
11. Return of the seventy- Luke 10:17–20
12. Parable of good Samaritan- Luke 10:29–37
13. Mary and Martha Welcome Jesus- Luke 10:38–42
14. Parable of the friend at midnight- Luke 11:5–8
15. Parable of the rich fool- Luke 12:13–21
16. Parable of the severe and light beatings- Luke 12:47–48
17. Parable of the barren tree- Luke 13:1–9
18. Healing of the crippled woman- Luke 13:10–17
19. Healing of the man with dropsy- Luke 14:1–6
20. Two parables for guests and hosts- Luke 14:7–14
21. Counting the cost (two parables) - Luke 14:28–33
22. Parable of the lost coin- Luke 15:8–10
23. Parable of the prodigal son- Luke 15:11–32
24. Parable of the shrewd manager- Luke 16:1–12
25. Parable of the rich man and Lazarus- Luke 16:19–31

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 24-25.

26. Cleansing of the ten lepers- Luke 17:11–19
27. Parable of the widow and judge- Luke 18:1–8
28. Parable of the Pharisee and the collector- Luke 18:9–14
29. Story of Zacchaeus- Luke 19:1–10
30. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem- Luke 19:41–44
31. Two swords- Luke 22:35–38
32. Jesus stands before Herod- Luke 23:6–12
33. Certain Sayings associated with Jesus' death- Luke 23:28–31, 34, 43, 46
34. Jesus appears on road to Emmaus and to other disciples- Luke 24:13–49
35. Jesus' ascension- Luke 24:50–53

### **Outline of the Gospel According to Luke**

**Note:** The following outline is adapted from the work of Dennis Bratcher.<sup>37</sup>

- I. Preface (1:1-4)
- II. Infancy narratives: John the Baptist and Jesus (1:5-2:52)
- III. Preparation for Jesus' ministry (3:1-4:13)
  - A. The Baptist's preaching and imprisonment (3:1-20)
  - B. Jesus: Baptism, genealogy, and temptation (3:21-4:13)
- IV. Jesus' ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
  - A. Proclamation and rejection at Nazareth (4:14-30)
  - B. Healings and calling of Peter (4:31-5:16)
  - C. Controversies with Jewish authorities (5:17-6:11)
  - D. Teaching: Sermon on the Plain (6:12-49)
  - E. Healings: Testimony to Jesus (7:1-50)
  - F. Galilean women disciples (8:1-3)
  - G. Parables: Hearing and doing the word (8:4-21)
  - H. Miracles: Jesus power (8:22-9:6)
  - I. Jesus identity, passion prediction and transfiguration (9:7-36)
  - J. Exorcism, passion prediction and instruction of disciples (9:49-50)
- V. Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)

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<sup>37</sup> Bratcher, Dennis, CRI/Voice Institute, Copyright © 2016 CRI/Voice, Institute.

- A. Departure: Rejection in Samaria (9:51-56)
  - B. Disciples and their mission (9:57-10:24)
  - C. Parables and sayings of Jesus (10:25-13:21)
  - D. Rejection of Jesus: warning about Herod, departure from Galilee (13:22-35)
  - E. Sayings and parables of Jesus (14:1-18:14)
  - F. Conditions of discipleship, passion prediction (18:15-19:27)
- VI. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
- A. Entry, lament over Jerusalem and cleansing of the temple (19:28-46)
  - B. Reaction to Jesus: Hostility and acceptance (19:47-48)
  - C. Teaching: Controversies with authorities(20:1-21:4)
  - D. Teaching: Fate of Jerusalem, persecutions, end time (21:5-38)
- VII. Crucifixion of Jesus (22:1-23:56a)
- A. Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (22:1-6)
  - B. The Last Supper (22:7-38)
  - C. Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives (22:39-46)
  - D. Jesus is Betrayed, Arrested, and Denied (22:47-62)
  - E. Jesus is Mocked and Tried (22:63-71)
  - F. Jesus on Trial Before Herod and Pilate (23:1-22)
  - G. Jesus Sentenced by Pilate to Die by Crucifixion (23:23-32)
  - H. Jesus is Crucified (23:33-43)
  - I. Jesus Died (23:44-49)
  - J. Jesus is Placed in the Tomb (23:50-56a)
- VIII. The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus (23:56b – 24:53)
- A. The empty tomb (23:56b-24:12)
  - B. Appearance on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35)
  - C. Appearance commissioning the disciples (24:36-49)
  - D. Jesus is taken up into heaven (24:50-53)



# The Gospels

## East Africa Bible College

### Introduction to the Gospel of John

#### I. Author

A. The writer of this Gospel never gives his name but does refer to himself in John 21:24.

B. The author refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

1. This is mentioned in John 13:23, 19:26-27, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20

2. This is not intended to say that Jesus loved his disciple more than the others.

Rather, the experience of the love of Jesus in the life of this disciple impacted him so greatly that he based his identity on being loved by Jesus. It was not a statement of superiority but amazement: Jesus loved even me.

3. Gary Burge has suggested that this is “the name given to John by his followers” and not a title he generated for himself.<sup>38</sup>

C. Who was this disciple?

1. The context of the author’s self-disclosure indicates that he is one of the twelve original Apostles because the author writes from within events only known or seen to the original Apostles.

i. The author names the following disciples in his writing so we are confident they are not the author: Peter, Philip, Thomas, Judas Iscariot, Judas (son of James), Nathanael, and James.

ii. The author does not name Andrew, Matthew (Levi), Simon the Zealot, James (son of Alphaeus), John (son of Zebedee). Thus, one may be the author.

a. Matthew is credited with writing another Gospel so he is most likely not the author of this Gospel also.

b. Andrew is not named but is referenced and most likely not the author.

c. Simeon and James remain obscure and have never been suggested throughout church history as the authors.

d. This only leaves John, the son of Zebedee. This John is not mentioned by name at all in the Gospel but this points to him being the author. As Leon Morris points out, “It is not easy to think of a reason why an early Christian, other than John himself, should have completely omitted all mention of such a prominent Apostle.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John* (Downers Grove: Zondervan, 2000), 373.

<sup>39</sup> Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 11.

2. The “disciple who Jesus loved” is frequently seen with Peter in the Gospel. This companion of Peter is named in Acts by Luke as John (see Acts 3:1-11; 4:3-23; Acts 8:14-25).

3. John uses the title “the disciple whom Jesus loved” rather than his name because he did not want to put much emphasis on himself. Rather, he was mostly concerned with presenting Jesus (see John 3:30). John’s name was not important for the message, what was important was that Jesus loved him and all who believe.

#### D. Church history is also very clear that the author was John.

1. Irenaeus, a church father and historian, was informed by Polycarp, a disciple of John, that John was the author.

2. Irenaeus writes that Polycarp testified that “John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned back on his breast, published the Gospel while he was resident at Ephesus in Asia.”<sup>40</sup>

#### E. Who was John?

##### 1. Family

- i. Son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21)
- ii. Brother of James, another Apostle of Jesus (Matthew 10:2)
- iii. His mother was active in the ministry of Jesus
  - a. She followed Jesus along with her sons
  - b. She asked Jesus for special seats of honor for sons (Matt 20:20)
  - c. She Remained by Jesus side until death on the cross (Matt 27:56)

##### 2. Early Life

- i. John lived near the Sea of Galilee in the region of Galilee (Mark 1) north of Jerusalem and Samaria. Galilee was primarily a farming and fishing region. It produced food for the surrounding regions including Judea and Jerusalem.
- ii. John likely had little formal education (Acts 4:13). The Greek in his writings is very simple and easy to read indicating he operated an elementary level in this language.
- iii. John worked in the family business as a fisherman (Mk 1:19)
- iv. John was possibly an early disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35)
- v. John had the nickname “Son of Thunder” (Mk 3:17) along with his brother James.
- vi. He was known to the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem (John 18:15-16) but we are not sure why. It is possibly due to his earlier connection to John the Baptist.

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<sup>40</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 24.

### 3. Calling

- i. John was called by Jesus along with his brother James to be a disciple (Mark 1:20; Luke 5:10)
- ii. He was later designated by Jesus (along with his brother) to be an Apostle (Matthew 10:2; Luke 6:14)

### 4. Personal Descriptions

- i. An Elder (2 John 1 and 3 John 1)
- ii. A brother and companion in suffering (Revelation 1:9)
- iii. A servant of Jesus (Revelation 1:9)
- iv. The disciple whom Jesus loved (Gospel of John)

## F. Ministry of John

1. He was a member in what has been called “Jesus’ inner circle.”
  - i. Although Jesus had 12 Apostles and many other disciples and followers, he often called out Peter, James, and John for special events or experiences. These three is known as the “inner circle.”
  - ii. See Matthew 17:1 and Luke 8:51 for examples of this.
2. He learned from Jesus and was an eye-witness to the life of Jesus.
3. He was with Jesus for many important events in Jesus’ ministry (for example: Matthew 26:37; Luke 9:38)
4. He was among the first to see the evidence of Jesus’ resurrection (John 20:8)
5. He participated in the upper room experience and received the initial post-resurrection outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1-2).
6. He traveled and ministered with Peter in Jerusalem and Samaria for a period of time after Jesus ascension (Acts 3, 4, 8).
7. He experienced persecution for preaching the Gospel (Ac 3-4).
8. He was named by Paul as one of the “pillars of the church” (Galatians 2:9).
9. John wrote five Biblical Books including:
  - i. The Gospel of John
  - ii. 1, 2, and 3 John (known as the Letters of John)
  - iii. The Book of Revelation

## G. Later Life and Death of John

1. Reliable church traditions indicate that John ministered largely in Asia Minor, possibly using Ephesus as a base from where he taught and preached, planted churches, and disciplined believers in the region.
2. John was exiled by Roman authorities to the Island of Patmos for preaching the gospel (Revelation 1:9). The gospel message was designated by Roman authorities to be incompatible with Roman law and culture. It was deemed

illegal and harmful to the state. As a result of his ministry, John was put in a labour prison where prisoners worked in the salt mines until death. Some reports say that John was later released due to his very old age.

3. It is believed that John was the only original Apostle who died a natural death and not by persecution and martyrdom.
4. John likely died around the age of 94, near the end of the first century AD.
5. He was first buried outside Ephesus but later his remains were removed and carried to Rome by the Catholic church. The original burial place in Ephesus is still preserved today.
6. There are many other less reliable traditions concerning John. A few are below:
  - i. Some traditions claim that John went to Egypt for ministry after Acts 8.
  - ii. Tertullian wrote that the Romans first tried to kill John by boiling him in oil but when he was placed in the vat, he was not harmed. This miracle caused many to believe in Jesus.
  - iii. The Catholic tradition says that John took care of Jesus' mother until she died. They believe she traveled with him to Ephesus and also died there.

## II. Date of Writing:

- A. While the date is unknown, John mostly likely wrote his Gospel between 70 - 90 AD.
- B. He was the last to write. He wanted to ensure that his eye witness testimony was preserved and passed down correctly.

## III. Place of Writing:

- A. Ephesus
- B. Paul had established a strong work in Ephesus (Acts 18-19) and it served as the center of Christian ministry for the whole region of Asia Minor (modern-day western Turkey). John went there to help lead the work around the time of Paul and Peter's death. He most likely wrote the Gospel of John from there.

## IV. Intended Recipients:

- A. The Church(es) of Ephesus and Asia Minor
- B. Jewish and Gentiles Believers at large
- C. The Whole Church

## V. Reasons for Writing:

- A. To record the account of the life of Jesus as John witnessed.
- B. To address the concerns of the Jewish believers after Roman persecution (or both Jews and Christians) and the destruction of Jerusalem. Andreas Köstenberger writes that John considered this time "to be an opportunity to present Jesus as filling the void left" when the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Köstenberger, 28.

- C. Possibly to defend Christianity against the attacks of unbelieving Jews. Even though some pharisees did come to Christ (Acts 15:5), Craig Keener writes that early Christians faced conflicts with unbelieving Pharisees who even wrote “a standard prayer that cursed sectarians [including] Jewish Christians. John’s antagonism toward the Pharisees in his Gospel suggests that their opposition is somehow related to the opponents his readers face in their own communities. . . . John writes his Gospel to encourage these Jewish Christians that their faith in Jesus is genuinely Jewish and that it is their opponents who have misrepresented biblical Judaism.”<sup>42</sup>
- D. Possibly to combat some dangerous heresies and misunderstandings that had arisen in the church about Jesus and the New Covenant.
  - 1. Leon Morris writes that possibly “John’s aims was to combat false teaching of a docetic type. The Docetists were men who held that the Christ never really became incarnate. Everything was ‘seeming.’”<sup>43</sup> Although the Docetists sect didn’t fully form until the second century, it’s clear the roots of Docetism were found in the first century (when John wrote) and were most likely being confronted by John’s gospel.
  - 2. Reliable church history teaches that John’s Gospel was used as early as 175 AD to defend true Christianity against heretical teaching.
- E. To convert and teach Jews and Gentiles. He possibly wanted this Gospel to be a tool for evangelism. Some even describe John 20:30-31 as the Gospel’s purpose statement.

#### VI. Themes and Emphasis:

- A. God as “the one who sent” Jesus.
- B. Jesus as Messiah and Son of God
- C. The Preexistence of Jesus (John 1:1, 1:14, 8:58, 12:41, 17:5)
- D. Jesus as “I Am” – the Old Testament name for God - Yahweh (John 6:35-51, 8:12, 9:5, 10:7-9, 10:11-14, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1)
- E. The deity and humanity of Jesus
- F. The identity and role of the Holy Spirit as a helper to Christians
- G. Salvation through the crucifixion and death of Jesus
- H. Eternal life for believers

#### VII. Literary Themes

- A. Light and Darkness (to describe salvation and condemnation/unsaved)
- B. Day and Night (to describe believers and unbelievers)

#### VIII. John and the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke):

- A. John’s Gospel is very different from the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke)

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<sup>42</sup> Keener, 261.

<sup>43</sup> Morris, 36.

1. The Synoptic Gospels include the following issues and characteristics that John does not include:

- i. Certain literary devices
  - a. Narratives, stories, and parables.
  - b. Proverbs
- ii. Teaching on the “Kingdom of God”
- iii. Teaching on Eschatology (the end times).
- iv. The Sermon on the Mount (including the Lord’s Prayer)
- v. Jesus’ Baptism and Temptation by Satan
- vi. The bread and the wine at the Last Supper
- vii. The Transfiguration
- viii. Exorcisms and other demonic activity
- ix. Events in the Garden of Gethsemane

2. The Gospel of John includes aspects of Jesus’ teaching and ministry not seen in the synoptic Gospels:

- i. Certain literary devices
  - a. Analogies: speeches or sermons using an extended metaphor (see an example in John 15)
  - b. Longer conversations/discourses: speeches and longer messages rather than short parables or teachings (the synoptics also have discourses but John includes the longest portions in the Gospels).
- ii. Teaching on “Eternal Life” and being “born again.”
- iii. Extended accounts of Jesus with John the Baptist, Jesus in the Upper Room, and the betrayal of Jesus by Judas.

B. Why is John different from the synoptic Gospels?

1. John likely intended his Gospel to be a supplement to the other Gospels.

- i. This was even stated by a first century Bishop named Clement of Alexandria.
- ii. John 20:30-31 and John 21:25 suggest that other works of Jesus had been recorded but John wanted to add to what was available in written form. He did not desire to compete with the synoptic Gospels. He did not consider the synoptic Gospels as wrong or bad. Rather, he wanted to include what they did not include so we could have more of the story.

- iii. Leon Morris suggests that John “felt that there were certain aspects of the ministry of Jesus which [the Synoptics] had not dealt with or had not dealt with adequately. So he wrote to supplement them.”<sup>44</sup>
2. John presupposed that his readers have read another Gospel and was positive about those other writings:
- i. These texts indicate that John knew his original readers had knowledge of the life of Jesus, possibly through the synoptic gospels:
    - a. John 1:40
    - b. John 3:24
    - c. John 4:44
    - d. John 11:1-2
    - e. John 6:67, 71
  - ii. Andreas Köstenberger writes, “Arguably, John’s Gospel contains traces of acquaintance with the synoptic tradition (if not the actual written gospels) with which John expects his readers to be familiar.”<sup>45</sup>
3. John had a different perspective, like each of the Gospel writers.
- i. John focused on the theological message of Jesus. Köstenberger writes, “John is more overtly interested in the theological underpinnings of Jesus’ person and work than are the synoptics.”<sup>46</sup>
  - ii. John also had the perspective of the inner circle. Morris observes, “All in all the information supplied by this Gospel gives good reason for us to hold that its author knew the facts at first hand and wrote of what he knew and had seen.”<sup>47</sup>
4. Köstenberger writes, “John and the Synoptics should be regarded as independent witnesses to the same Jesus in whom the gospel centers, complementary portraits . . . of one and the same person and history.”<sup>48</sup>

## IX. Historical Context of John’s Gospel

- A. John wrote during a time of great Christian scattering and persecution by both Jews and Gentiles.
- B. John wrote after the Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD which was a major defeat and source of distress for the Jews.
- C. John wrote even while there was still tension between Jews and Gentiles. The trouble that we see in Acts 15 was still alive in some communities.

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<sup>44</sup> Morris, 49-50.

<sup>45</sup> Köstenberger, 36.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>47</sup> Morris, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Köstenberger, 37.

## X. Major Issues in the Gospel of John:

### A. The Introduction

1. John's introduction to his gospel is quite unique among the gospels.
2. While Matthew and Luke describe the birth of Jesus and Mark begins with the ministry of Jesus, John take us back to before creation to show that Jesus has always been there as God, the Son with God, the Father. Jesus is an eternal being who existed with the God the Father and the Holy Spirit before his birth.
3. The opening of John resembles the opening of Genesis.
  - i. Gary Burge writes, "The initial allusion to Genesis 1 cannot be missed. This is a Gospel that will record the re-creation of men and women, the giving of life in darkness where there is no hope. This parallels the through of Genesis 1, in which God breathes life into the nostrils of Adam and provides new possibilities for the world."<sup>49</sup>
  - ii. Most Jewish children memorized portions of the Torah including Genesis so John would have drawn on his memory of Scripture to inform his writing of Scripture.

### B. Incarnation (John 1)

1. The Literal Definition of Incarnation: To be embodied in flesh or to take on flesh.
2. Definition of Incarnation in Christianity: The belief that the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, became flesh when He was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary.
3. This is what John is referring to when he says "the Word became flesh." This was the method by which Jesus came into our world to live as humanity without ceasing to be God. Thus, Jesus was not created in the womb of Mary. He existed from eternity past; he has always been.

### C. Salvation

1. John writes much about the theology of salvation in this Gospel including being "born again" by the Spirit (John 3:3-7) and having "eternal life" (John 5:24; 6:54)
2. The method of salvation ("how can I be saved?") is described in John very clearly. See the following passages for examples:
  - i. John 3:16-17
  - ii. John 5:24
  - iii. John 10:1-18
  - iv. John 14:6

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<sup>49</sup> Burge, 54.



#### D. Identity of Jesus

1. Köstenberger writes that in John's Gospel, "all of Jesus' 'works' point to the essence of who Jesus – Christ, the Son of God."<sup>50</sup>
2. John sought to make clear that Jesus was one person who was both fully human and fully divine.
  - i. The theological term for this is "hypostatic union."
  - ii. There are some who seek to emphasize the humanity of Jesus while neglecting or even denying the deity of Jesus. Others would seek to emphasize the deity of Jesus while neglecting or even denying his humanity. John wanted to affirm that Jesus was both fully human and fully God.
  - iii. It is necessary that for us to understand that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human. If Jesus was only divine and not fully or any human, he would not be able to die as a genuine sacrifice for sin on the cross (since God cannot die). If Jesus was only a human and not fully or any divine, he would not be able to apply the work accomplished at the cross to all people for eternity.
3. Preexistence – the belief that Jesus existed from eternity past as God, the Son before he was born in the flesh through Mary.
  - i. John sought to make this point from the first chapter – John 1:1, 14.
  - ii. The eternity of Jesus is an undeniable attribute of his deity.
  - iii. Gary Burge writes that John makes "an absolute affirmation about the eternal existence of the Word. [He] did not come into being nor was there ever a time when 'the Word was not.'"<sup>51</sup>
4. Humanity – John also emphasized the reality of Jesus' humanity. For example:
  - i. Jesus became tired and thirsty (John 4:6-7; 19:28)
  - ii. Jesus had normal human emotions (John 2:13-16; 11:33-35)
  - iii. Jesus dies (John 19:30)
5. Word (Logos) – John 1
  - i. Why does John call Jesus the "word?"
  - ii. Logos had special meaning for both the Greeks and the Jews
    - a. For the Greeks
      - 1) This word is associated with Greek philosophy and describes the ultimate principle in the universe. Even though the Greeks had many gods and goddesses, many

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<sup>50</sup> Köstenberger, 37.

<sup>51</sup> Burge, 55.

recognized that there was some force that existed above their gods which could be considered as the ultimate force or power in the universe. They believe this force existed but could not identify it so they just called it Logos.

2) Köstenberger observed that “Logos” was considered by certain Greeks to be the “rational principle governing the universe. This principle was though to pervade the entire universe and was indeed the only god recognized by the Stoics.”<sup>52</sup>

3) By calling Jesus the “Word” or “Logos” John is describing Jesus as that ultimate being of the universe, the greatest of all that exists.

b. For the Jews

1) In the beginning God created the world with his word (Genesis 1-2). With his words, God spoke everything into existence. God’s word was also spoken specifically to Israel in various ways ever since (Hebrews 1:1-4). Jesus, however, is the greatest “Word” to have come to God’s creation.

2) That Jesus is the “Word” from God means that Jesus conveys the message, character, nature, and will of God to all people.

3) Jesus is the greatest form of special revelation.

E. The Seven “I AM” statements in John

1. These statements connect Jesus to the Old Testament name for God (Exodus 3:14).

2. These statements are also metaphors used by Jesus to describe himself:

i. “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51) – Bread (food) sustains life, Jesus sustains life.

ii. “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) – A light dispels darkness, Jesus dispels darkness.

iii. “I am the door of the sheep.” (John 10:7,9) - The door provides entry and protection for the sheep, Jesus provides entry into the Kingdom of God and protection for those in that Kingdom.

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<sup>52</sup> Köstenberger, 51.

- iv. “I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) - Resurrection reverses death, Jesus reverses death.
- v. “I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11, 14) – A shepherd cares for the sheep, Jesus cares for his people.
- vi. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) – Jesus is the path to God (way), the source of information about God (truth), and the result of God’s intervention (life).
- vii. “I am the true vine.” (John 15:1, 5) – A vine nourishes the connected branches, Jesus nourishes those connected to him.

### **Outline of the Gospel According to John**

**Note:** The following outline is adapted from the *NIV Application Commentary* on John by Gary Burge.<sup>53</sup>

- I. Prologue (1:1-18)
- II. Jesus and John the Baptist (1:19-51)
- III. Jesus and the Jewish Institutions (2:1-4:54)
  - A. At Cana: A Wedding Feast (2:1-12)
  - B. In Jerusalem: The Temple (2:13-25)
  - C. In Jerusalem: A Pharisee and Salvation (3:1-21)
  - D. Judea: John the Baptist on Jesus (3:22-36)
  - E. In Samaria: A Woman and Worship (4:1-42)
  - F. Galilee: Healing at Cana (4:43-54)
- IV. Jesus and the Jewish Religious Observances and Beliefs (5:1-10:42)
  - A. Sabbath (5:1-47)
  - B. Passover (6:1-71)
  - C. Festival of Tabernacles (7:1-52)
  - D. Judgment and Redemption of Adulterous Woman (7:53-8:11) [debatable passage]
  - E. A Discourse on Light (8:12-30)
  - F. Children of Abraham (8:31-47)
  - G. The Claims of Jesus about Himself (8:48-59)
  - H. A Conflict Between Light and Blindness (9:1-41)
  - I. The Good Shepherd (10:1-21)
  - J. Jesus Questioned at the Feast of Dedication (or Hanukkah) (10:22-39)
  - K. Jesus Returns to John the Baptist (10:40-42)

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<sup>53</sup>Burge, 41-45.

- V. Foreshadowing of Jesus' Death and Resurrection (11:1-12:50)
  - A. Lazarus: From Life to Death and Back to Life (11:1-44)
  - B. Jewish Leaders Plot to Kill Jesus (11:45-57)
  - C. Jesus Anointed for Burial (12:1-11)
  - D. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19)
  - E. Jesus Predicts His Death (12:20-36)
  - F. Jesus Addressed the Unbelief of the Jews (12:37-50)
- VI. Jesus Celebrates Passover and Prepares for the Cross (13:1-17:26)
  - A. The Passover Meal (13:1-30)
    - 1. Jesus Washes the Disciple's Feet (13:1-20)
    - 2. The Betrayal by Judas is Predicted (13:21-30)
  - B. The Farewell Discourse (13:31-17:26)
    - 1. Jesus Departure and Provision (13:31-14:31)
    - 2. The True Vine (15:1-17)
    - 3. The Disciples and the World (15:18-16:33)
      - 1. The Hatred of the World (15:18-16:4)
      - 2. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Disciples (16:5-33)
    - 4. The Prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)
      - 1. Jesus Prays for Himself (17:1-5)
      - 2. Jesus Prays for His Disciples (17:6-19)
      - 3. Jesus Prays for All Believers (17:20-26)
- VII. The Suffering and Death of Jesus (18:1-19:42)
  - A. Jesus Arrested and Placed on Trial (18:1-19:16)
    - 1. The Arrest in the Garden (18:1-11)
    - 2. The Jewish Trial (18:12-27)
      - 1. Questioned at the House of Annas (18:12-14, 19-24)
      - 2. Peter's Three Denials (18:15-18, 24-27)
    - 3. The Roman Trial (18:28-19:16)
      - 1. Jesus Questioned by Pilate (18:28-38a)
      - 2. Jesus or Barabbas? (18:38b-40)
      - 3. Jesus is Beaten and Mocked (19:1-3)
      - 4. Freedom or Death? (19:4-6)
      - 5. Further Questioning and Sentencing by Pilate (19:7-16)
  - B. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (19:17-37)
    - 1. Jesus Carries His Cross to Golgotha and is Crucified (19:17-18)
    - 2. Charge Prepared Against Jesus and Soldiers Take Clothes (19:19-24)
    - 3. Jesus Address Mary and John from the Cross (19:25-27)

4. The Last Words and Death (19:28-30)

5. The Confirmation of Death (19:31-37)

C. The Burial of Jesus (19:38-42)

VIII. The Resurrection of Jesus (20:1-29)

A. Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John Find the Empty Tomb (20:1-9)

B. Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (20:10-18)

C. Jesus Appears to the Disciples (20:19-31)

IX. Epilogue (21:1-25)

A. The Miraculous Catch of Fish (21:1-14)

B. Jesus Reinstates Peter (21:15-23)

C. Final Comments (21:24-25)