

The Biblical Symphony

The Bible is like a symphony in four parts:

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Re-Creation

The Story: Adam, Abraham . . . Jesus

Man's Failure & God's Promise

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

The Promise and Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

The Promise & Abraham’s Children

The Promise & Yahweh the Savior

The Promise & David

The Promise, the Prophets & Exile

The Promise & Messianic Expectations

- The Messiah would be a decedent of Abraham (2000 B.C.). In particular he would come through Abraham’s son Isaac and not Ishmael; Isaac’s son Jacob not Esau, and Jacob’s son Judah instead of any of the other 11 (Gen. 12:3; 17:19; Num. 24:17; Gen 49:10; Matt. 1:1-2).
- The Messiah would be an eternal King from David’s line (c. 1000 B.C., 2 Sam. 7:1-17; Matt. 1:1).
- The Messiah would be born of a virgin (700 B.C., Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23).

- The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (700 B.C., Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-7).
- The Messiah would suffer and die for the forgiveness of sins (700 B.C., Isaiah 53:5; Mark 10:45; Romans 5:8).

Introduction to the Bible

What is the Bible?

The answer is so obvious that we might miss the point of the question. The Bible, as we hold it is made up of 66 books—39 OT books, 27 NT books from Genesis to Revelation. The word “Bible” originates from latin, greek, and french terms that mean things similar to “book,” and is used synonymously with words like “Scripture” or “Word of God”. [Geisler writes, “The word *Bible* can rightfully claim to be the great-grandson of the Greek word *biblos*, which was the name given to the outer coat of a papyrus reed in Egypt during the eleventh century b.c. The plural form of *biblos* is *biblia*, and by the second century a.d. Christians were using this latter word to describe their writings. *Biblia* gave birth to the Latin word of the same spelling, *biblia*, which was in turn transliterated into the Old French *biblia* by the same process. The modern English word *Bible* is derived from the Old French, with the Anglicized ending. The word is thus the product of four stages of transliteration and transmission. The term Bible is often used synonymously with “Scripture” or “Word of God” Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1996). *A general introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded.) (21). Chicago: Moody Press.]

The Bible is the Word of God From a Christian perspective, we treat the Bible (correctly) as the Inspired word of God. The term “inspiration” is derived from 2 Timothy 3:16.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) — 16 All Scripture is **breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

To say that Scripture is “breathed out by God” is to equate it with the very words of God. Peter gives us a helpful description of the nature and process of Inspiration:

2 Peter 1:21 (ESV) — 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Geisler offers this helpful **definition of Inspiration**: “Inspiration is that mysterious process by which the divine causality worked through the human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative and inerrant writings.”¹

What do we mean by “Canon of Scripture”?

Arnold and Beyer write, “The word “canon” comes from the Hebrew word *qāneh* and the Greek word *kanōn*. Both words originally signified a reed or measuring stick. Just as a reed could serve as a measuring standard, so the biblical canon was a measuring standard for faith and practice. People could compare their lives to what the Bible required. Furthermore, the word ‘canon’ could denote a standard to which the biblical writings themselves must conform.”² Geisler writes, “From the literal “ruler,” the word was extended to mean a rule or standard for anything. In early Christian usage, it came to mean rule of faith, normative writings, or authoritative Scripture.”³

How did we get the Canon of Scripture as it is?

Precisely speaking, canonicity is determined by God. In other words, the reason there are only sixty-six books in the canon is that God inspired only that many. Only sixty-six books were found to have the stamp of divine authority, because God only stamped that many, or invested that number with authority for faith and practice. [Geisler, 211.]

A common misconception is that we got the canon of scripture via some meeting or council decision. It gives people a sense of arbitrariness or even scandal to consider that a group of men “chose” what would be in the Bible. While it is true that various councils took place to solidify an agreed upon canon, the people of God “chose” what they held to be God’s Word organically and under the influence of the Spirit on their own. Later councils only served to clarify for the Church what God had already done in the hearts of His people. As someone has said, the canon is ultimately a matter of trust in God who reveals Himself in Scripture. While there are sufficient evidential reasons to believe that the Bible as a whole is divine rather than human in origin, we must still recognize that our complete trust in Scripture results from a work of the Spirit more than any other factor. There is nothing about this that should make us uncomfortable. Human reason is not the ultimate test of reality, but rather what God reveals.

Recognition vs. Determination As Geisler puts it, this mistakes *recognition* of canonicity for *determination* of canonicity. *Determination* is something only God can do. Believers seek to discover and *recognize* what God has already *given* to be His Word.⁴

Jewish Criteria for Recognizing Canonization Geisler summarizes the Jewish perspective on what was to be considered and treated as Scripture

In brief, what were later called canonical writings were by the Jews considered

to be those **sacred** and **authoritative** writings of the Hebrew **prophets from Moses to Malachi**. So sacred were these holy writings that they were preserved by the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple. To touch these holy writings was to defile one's hands; to break them was to defile one's life. The Hebrew canon, then, was that collection of writings which, because they possessed divine inspiration and authority, were the norm or rule for the believer's faith and conduct.⁵

Christ Confirms OT Canonicity, and Promised NT Inspiration Carl F. H. Henry expertly reminds us that Christ Himself made a definitive contribution to our understanding and approach to what is Authoritative Scripture:

Jesus altered the prevailing Jewish view of Scripture in several ways: **(1)** he subjected the authority of tradition to the superior and normative authority of the Old Testament; **(2)** he emphasized that he himself fulfills the messianic promise of the inspired writings; **(3)** he claimed for himself an authority not below that of the Old Testament and definitively expounded the inner significance of the Law; **(4)** he inaugurated the new covenant escalating the Holy Spirit's moral power as an internal reality; **(5)** he committed his apostles to the enlargement and completion of the Old Testament canon through their proclamation of the Spirit-given interpretation of his life and work. At the same time he identified himself wholly with the revelational authority of Moses and the prophets—that is, with the Old Testament as an inspired literary canon insisting that Scripture has sacred, authoritative and permanent validity, and that the revealed truth of God is conveyed in its teachings.⁶

The Incorrect View	The Correct View
The Church Is Determiner of Canon	The Church Is Discoverer of Canon
The Church Is Mother of Canon	The Church Is Child of Canon
The Church Is Magistrate of Canon	The Church Is Minister of Canon
The Church Is Regulator of Canon	The Church Is Recognizer of Canon
The Church Is Judge of Canon	The Church Is Witness of Canon
The Church Is Master of Canon	The Church Is Servant of Canon

Certain Jewish and Christian Councils Contributed to Clarify the Canon After the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD, the city of Jamnia (modern Yavneh) became influential. It is not entirely clear what took place there, but a meeting in the city served to confirm what many already held to be sacred, inspired OT books.⁸ Later in the history of the Church various lists related were written and councils convened to codify what was to be

considered canonical. Again, it is important for us to remember that the process of human discovery must not be confused with the Divine process of inspiration!⁹

What is a “Testament” and why do we have two of them?

The Bible is divided into two major parts: The Old Testament, and the New Testament. The term “Testament” is not actually the best term to describe the content of the Old and the New. Geisler explains the origin of the term and its intended meaning:

The Hebrew word for testament is *berith*, meaning a “covenant, or compact, or arrangement between two parties.” The Greek word *diathēkē* is often translated “testament” in the King James Version. This is a poor translation, and is one of the corrections made in newer versions of the Bible that regularly translate it as “covenant.” The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), translates the Hebrew word *berith* as *diathēkē*, thus showing the derivation of the Greek term. The Old Testament was first called *the covenant* in Moses’ day (Ex. 24:8). Later, Jeremiah announced that God would make a new “covenant” with His people (Jer. 31:31–34), which Jesus claimed to do at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:28, cf. 1 Cor. 11:23–25; Heb. 8:6–8). Hence, it is for Christians that the former part of the Bible is called the “Old” Covenant (Testament), and the latter is called the *New Covenant*.¹⁰

Augustines statement regarding the relationship between the Testaments is very helpful: “the Old Testament revealed in the New, the New veiled in the Old.” A modern version, “The New is in the Old Contained, and the Old is in the New explained.”¹¹

In the Old Testament Christ is:	In the New Testament Christ is:
in shadow	in substance
in pictures	in person
in type	in truth
in ritual	in reality
latent	patent
prophesied	present
implicitly revealed	explicitly revealed

How We Should Study the Bible: Love, and Humility

Two Simple Hermeneutics: Love, Humility, Christ

1. Love: Let the God Speak!¹²

Many errors of interpretation would be avoided by a little more love on the part of the interpreter. Paul defines some of the kinds of behavior that flow from truly loving someone (in this case loving God by respecting the Scriptures):

1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (ESV) — **4** Love is **patient** and kind; love does not envy or boast; it **is not arrogant** **5** or rude. It **does not insist on its own way**; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **7** Love bears all things, **believes all things**, hopes all things, endures all things. **8** Love never ends. . .

Imagine an argument with your spouse, sibling or the like. One who has a truly loving attitude in such an argument genuinely tries to understand what the other person wants to communicate regardless of how they communicate it. Such a person must also be ready to embrace the personal consequences that may come from truly understanding what the other means to say. Understanding may lead to one “losing” the argument and having to repent of something he or she did, said, or even thought. ***Good Bible interpretation requires that we let the Bible speak with unguarded hearts and seek help from God’s Spirit to enable an attitude of repentance as we are confronted with the reality of God.***

2. Humility: Let it get to your heart!

Returning for a moment to 2 Timothy 3:16, we should consider the essential need for humility in truly hearing the Scriptures. Paul’s comments to Timothy were originally directed toward Timothy’s preaching/teaching ministry. If those who teach the Word of God should use it to profit people in the four areas mentioned (Teaching, Reproof, Correction, Training in Righteousness), then as readers / interpreters / listeners we should actively seek to have all of these things happen to us as we study God’s word. Let’s look at how we should “listen” to or receive God’s Word as we study:

- **Teaching:** Read with a readiness to have your doctrine defined, refined and expanded for the purpose of deepening your understanding of, appreciation of, enjoyment of, and affection for God.

- **Reproof:** Read with a readiness to have your own ideas about God, yourself, and the nature of reality in general corrected (i.e. to reprove your own inevitable errors in doctrine).
- **Correction:** Read with readiness for God to speak to you through His Word regarding sinful behaviors and attitudes that you need to repent of and have Him change in your life.
- **Training in Righteousness:** Read with readiness to receive instruction on how people who have been born again should live in Christ in a way that truly glorifies God.

This is the essence of the purest of Evangelical approaches to reading the Bible. Bruce Waltke offers a helpful, if overly simplified, breakdown the attitudes of Christians in relation to the Authority of Scripture:¹³

A. Liberal Theologians Stand *above* the Bible.

“Broadly speaking, ‘liberals’ detract from the authority of the Bible by making reason, which includes experience, the ground floor of theological reflection.”

B. Neoorthodox Theologians Stand *before* the Bible.

“These theologians stand *before* the Bible in the expectation that through preaching the words of the Bible will *become* the word of God as the Bible’s audience encounters them in the written ‘witness’ to Jesus Christ.”

C. Traditionalists Place Traditions/Confessions *alongside* the Bible.

“It is commonplace in Roman and Greek Orthodox Christianity, along with traditional Judaism, to affirm that revelation is comprehensible only through authoritative tradition of interpretation. These interpretations, however, though intended to maintain orthodoxy, many times nullify the Word of God, as Jesus complained (Mark 7:13).”
[Mark 7:13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.]

D. Fundamentalists Stand *on* the Bible

Waltke writes,

By “fundamentalists” I mean here those who presume the Bible does not stray from their standards of accuracy, especially in matters of science and historiography. They presume their interpretive horizon represents truth and that the biblical writers, though writing in an

ancient environment, will not stray from the “accuracy” of their modern horizon. But the ancient standards do not necessarily conform to modern standards. The only legitimate human standard by which the bible can be measured is the logic of noncontradiction. Paradox may be incomprehensible, but contradiction is “non-sense.” What I have in mind here is that fundamentalists do not “stand under” the Bible long enough to “understand” it. Sometimes they, thought well-intentioned, advertise “the Bible as it is for men as they are,” but they neglect the prior question of whether “men as they are are fit for the Bible as it is.”

E. Evangelicals Stand *under* the Bible.

“Evangelical” being the best of the imperfect terms available, Waltke proceeds to explain what it should describe when it’s at its best:

I accept the inerrancy of Scripture as to its Source and its infallibility as to its authority. My spiritual conviction is intellectually defensible. The finite mind is incapable of coming to infinite truth and moreover is depraved. To live wisely I need to inspired revelation of the divine reality by which I can judge the wisdom or the folly, the right or the wrong, of my thoughts and actions. But I dare not presume to understand how or what this revelation means before coming to it on its own terms. I must allow the Bible to dictate how it seeks to reveal God’s truth. I study how it writes history; I examine and lean to recognize the different forms of literature: poetry, narrative, prophecy, and so on. I consider the Bible utterly trustworthy, and I commit my life to it, but I do not presume to know beforehand the exact nature of its parts. With this posture, I continue to learn and allow myself to be taught and corrected by the Bible.

The Gospels

Is the Gospel true?

First answer this: are the Gospels true?

To answer this we have to first answer this questions; are the Gospels true? Some would object and say, “no, Christianity is a religious faith and thus it doesn’t matter whether the story is true. What matters is the belief system and the practice of the religion, and whether it is true for those who hold to it.”

This may work for some other religions to a certain extent, but for the Christian faith it does not work. There is one key reason: **Christianity is a religion that is based not only on the teachings of a person, but on the events of His life (slide).**

The events of Jesus’ life, especially His **virgin birth**, His ministry of **preaching** accompanied by **miracles**, His **crucifixion, death, burial** and **resurrection**, form the basis upon which one can trust in the Gospel. **The Gospel is first and foremost news (good news) that Jesus has died and raised in order to save us from God’s judgment for our sins.**

If you take away the events you lose the doctrine!

If the Gospels and epistle are wrong and He was not who we hold Him to be and He did not what we trust in Him to have done than we are wasting our time.

1 Corinthians 15:14-15 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

In the Gospels *We see the Real Jesus.*

History or Myth?

It is a mistake to dismiss the Gospels of hand as biased, myth-based documents—which is the conventional wisdom. This is based on a lot of misinformation, and it seems that hearing it over and over again has caused many in the Church to look at

the Gospels in the wrong light. There are a number of reasons that this view of the Gospels is incorrect:

No *time* for myths to form.

For over a hundred years it was a commonly held presupposition that the Gospels had to be the product of at least a century of people developing Myths and legends about Jesus.

There was about **35 years** (at most—I think more like 20 -25 years) from the resurrection to the likely time of the first written Gospel!

Many scholars believe that some of the **written sources** that came before the Gospels were written much sooner, about 20 years prior. This was of course based on oral tradition—memorized teaching, from Jesus Himself, some of which.

No room for myths to form because of the presence of living eyewitnesses—both opponents and believers[.Some of their Jewish opponents claimed that the resurrection was faked. Why? Because people knew about it and there was no better explanation. Another anti-Jesus Jewish source talks about Jesus in a negative way but recognizes Him as a miracle worker. See Blomberg (I think).] Both close observers and people within the culture. Paul talks about this in two places:

Acts 26:22-26 22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles." 24 And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind." 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. 26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he

appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

We have great manuscript evidence so we know what was in them. Over five thousand Manuscripts are available for the reconstruction of the New Testament

Were they corrupted? Yes. Mistakes came in as they were copied.

Were they restored? Yes.

Blomberg writes, “[Textual] critics have been able to reconstruct a highly reliable prototype of what the original Gospel writers undoubtedly wrote. Estimates suggest that from ninety-seven to ninety-nine per cent of the original text is securely recoverable. More than fifty-four percent of all the verses in the Gospels are entirely free of textual variants, and the vast majority of those which remain have no bearing on questions of historicity.”¹⁴

And I will add that they have no bearing on core Christian doctrine whatsoever! **Thus, even if you didn’t restore it, it would present the same Jesus.**

How can we know that they were written with integrity?

What assurances do we have that they did not simply invent sayings and put them in contexts to support their own ideas and vision for the early Church? We have good evidence to believe that they were careful not to do such things. When controversies arose (circumcision, speaking in tongues) they did not go back and put words in Jesus mouth.

Almost all of the Epistles were written before the 4 Gospels. With all of the controversies regarding things like circumcision etc., it would have benefited them greatly to have word directly from Jesus on the matter. In fact they did not invent such convenient sayings. Paul goes so far in 1 Cor 7 as to make it clear what he can say Jesus said on the matter and what he himself (though under the movement of the Spirit) came up with.

1 Corinthians 7:10-12 10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. 12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if

any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her.

The Gospels were written by *Cross-eyed men*.

Can you tell the same story in 4 ways and still have 4 accurate accounts?

“Ancient biographers and historians did not feel constrained to write from detached and so-called objective viewpoints. They did not give equal treatment to all periods of an individual’s life. They felt free to write in topical as well as chronological sequence. They were highly selective in the material they included, choosing that which reinforced the morals they wished to inculcate. In an era which knew neither quotation marks nor plagiarism, speakers’ words were abbreviated, explained, paraphrased and contemporized in whatever ways individual authors deemed beneficial for their audiences. All of these features occur in the Gospels, and **none of them detracts from the Evangelists’ integrity.**”(Blomberg) ¹⁵

The Gospels show a remarkably consistent portrait of Jesus, yet another reason people give for dismissing them is that they contain contradictions. You have about 4 major kinds of so-called contradictions that critics cite:¹⁶

1. Chronological differences. We shouldn’t assume that they Evangelists are presenting the story as chronological unless we are told, and even so we need to remember that it would not have been seen as disingenuous to present things out of order. Their main goal was to make a point, a theological point about Jesus and thus they felt free to organize their story for emphasis rather than hold them to a 21st century standard.

2. Stories abbreviated to the point of appearing to contradict. This was a common practices in their day and was not considered to be misleading or incorrect. We can include here stories where in one account he heals two guys, but in another Gospel it was one. “The latter does not exclude the former.”

3. Same sayings, different contexts. This “reflects the common practice of creating composite speeches.”

4. One Gospel correcting another. Really, Matthew for example, simply makes something clear to avoid misinterpretation:

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father

and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

In the Gospels We see the World's Jesus.

Understanding the need for having **four Gospels** is as simple as understanding the needs of the **four groups** of people they were written to.

The Purpose of Matthew

“Recognizing that Matthew wrote to a **Jewish audience**, an early date for Matthew can be argued from the standpoint of need. It is reasonable to suggest that there were **20,000 Jews in Jerusalem who believed in Christ**. These believers would need an explanation concerning the Messiahship of Jesus, encouraging their faith from a Jewish standpoint and also confuting their opponents. The rapid growth of the number of Jewish believers constituted a **primary and immediate need for a gospel written distinctively to Jewish believers**.”(Enns)¹⁷

The Purpose of Mark

“The capstone of Mark’s emphasis of Jesus is his portrayal of **Christ as the Servant** who came to minister and give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).” Mark demonstrates that true discipleship is founded upon knowing Jesus as a Messiah who would **suffer in order to redeem**.

The Purpose of Luke

“A **Gentile audience** is undoubtedly in view as Luke’s audience. Because of Paul’s three missionary journeys there was a great need for a gospel distinct from the others, **aimed particularly for the Greek mind**. There is considerable evidence for a Greek audience. (1) The genealogy of **Jesus is traced to Adam**, the father of the entire human race, rather than to a Jewish patriarch... (3) Jewish **terminology**, such as “rabbi,” is avoided. (4) **Greek names** are substituted for Hebrew names (cf. Luke 6:16; 23:33).”¹⁸

Luke emphasizes Jesus **salvation for all the world**. “Admission to the Kingdom is open to Samaritans (9:51–6, 10:30–7, 17:11–19) and pagans (2:32, 3:6, 38, 4:25–7, 7:9, 10:1, 24:47) as well as to Jews (1:33, 2:10); to publicans, sinners and outcasts

(3:12, 5:27–32, 7:37–50, 19:2–10, 23:43) as well as to respectable people (7:36, 11:37, 14:1); to the poor (1:53, 2:7, 6:20, 7:22) as well as to the rich (19:2, 23:50); and to women as well as to men.” This stresses the purpose for Luke’s writing: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).¹⁹

The Purpose of John

“In contrast to [the other 3 Gospels], John wrote to a general audience. His gospel’s uniqueness is seen in that 92% of it is not found in the [the other 3 Gospels]. John includes the great discourses and events of the life of Christ not found elsewhere (6:22–71; 7:11–52; 8:21–59; 9:1–41; 10:1–21; 11:1–44; 12:20–50; 13:1–20; 14:1–16:33; 17:1–26). John employs certain words more than other writers: light (21 times), life (35 times), love (31 times), as well as others such as Son of God, believe, world, witness, and truth. John’s purpose in writing is stated in John 20:30–31—to incite belief in Jesus as the Christ. John therefore selected certain signs to demonstrate Jesus’ authority over a particular realm. By John’s careful selection of signs he presented the authority of Jesus as the Messiah, encouraging faith in Him (20:30–31).”

The point: The Gospel can be told in such a way that it speaks to the needs of every individual, leading them in different directions to the same place—to behold Christ as the one in whom and through whom they can have life!

In the Gospels We see the Resurrected Jesus.

A full ¼ to 1/3 of each of these Gospels is taken up with the account of the last week of Jesus life leading up to the resurrection!²⁰

1 John 1:1-4 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life- 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us- 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

What’s the point? The point is that they are writing with a view toward belief on the

part of the hearers! They are evangelists indeed!

Look at how Matthew ends His gospel—A commission to call others to believe.

Matthew 28:16-20 16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Look at how Mark ends His gospel—A declaration of resurrection.

Mark 16:6-8 6 And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Look at how Luke ends His gospel—An explanation of what to believe.

He opens the Bible to two guys on the Emmaus road.

Luke 24:30-32 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

Look at how John ends His gospel—An explanation of why he wrote, "so that you may believe."

John 20:30-31 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

One Jesus, One Savior

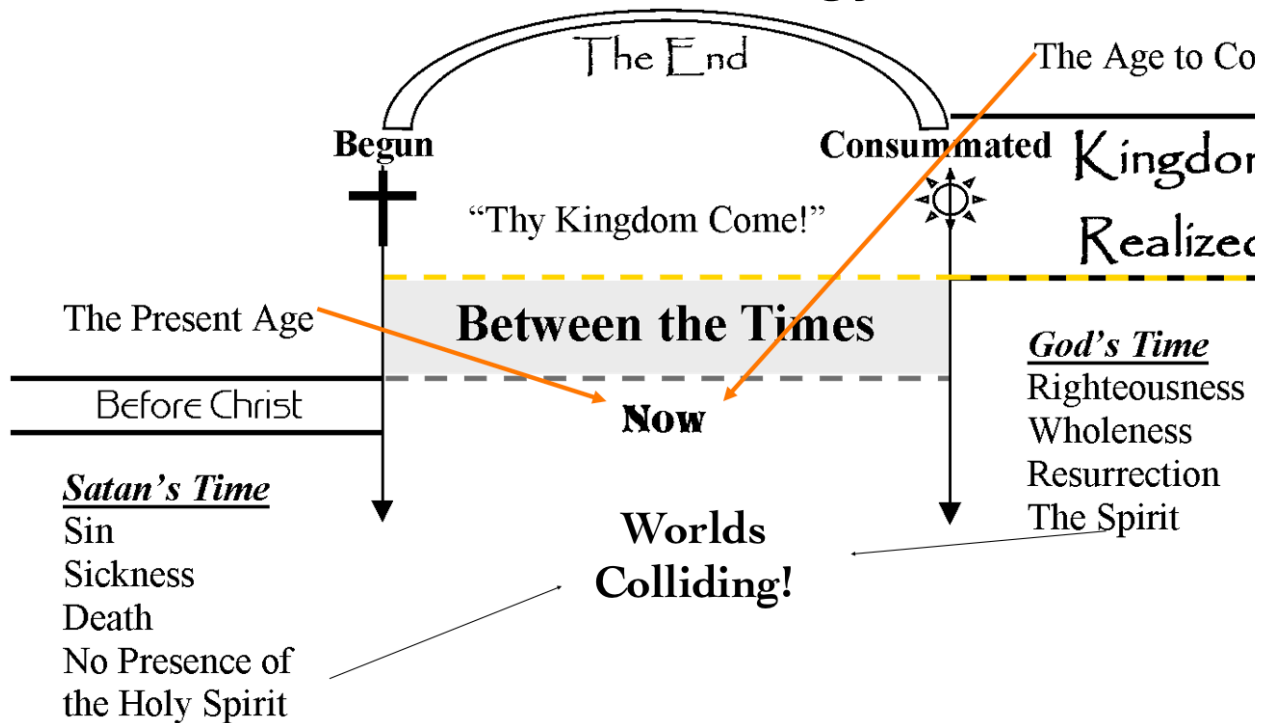
It is always easier to defame than it is to defend, so guard your mind against the talking points of those who hate the Bible! The reality of the scholarly findings has been

buried by the rants of fools who hardly ever take the time to look into it.

Jesus did not come so that you could merely know doctrines and stories, and their significance. Jesus came so that you could know Him! The Christ we experience in our hearts through prayer and worship can be heard speaking and seen doing miracles on the pages of Scripture. The more seriously you take it the more clearly you will see the one from whom John had a revelation of grace, truth and the Glory of the one true God! If Christ doesn't seem real to you, spend three years with Him as you move through the pages of the Gospels, talking to Him as you go!

Knowledge of Jesus promotes intimacy with Him. Reading, learning, meditating upon and loving the Gospels is our way to adore Christ! Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!

Basic New Testament Theology



Matthew's Gospels

Who was Matthew?

While the Gospel was originally anonymous, there is a strong tradition from the early Church that Matthew wrote this Gospel, and there is no compelling reason to doubt that. We know very little about Matthew. One thing we do know is that he was a tax collector before he followed Jesus.

Matthew 9:9-13 9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. 10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

The Jews absolutely despised a tax collector as a traitor, since they worked for the pagan Romans. Even Jesus used tax collectors as the paradigm for a sinning Jew.

Matthew, who was paradigmatic of a sinner, now rights this Gospel to demonstrate that it is one's evaluation of and relationship to Jesus alone that determines whether or not they are truly a member with God's people!

Why did Matthew Write?

Matthew has a three-fold purpose:

- 1) Reveal the true nature of Jesus. This is done with the second part very much in mind.
- 2) Determine who the true people of God are, and
- 3) exhort them as to how they should live.

Revealing Jesus is the most important piece of the puzzle, because Matthew reveals that a person's identity is determined by their evaluation and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Those who embrace Him go through the narrow gate, and build upon

the rock. They call Him Lord because He is their Lord, and He in fact knows them!

Of course Jesus is the center of this Gospel, but the revelation of who Jesus is was extremely important to Matthew in calling the community to live as the true people of God. This is especially important for a Christian-Jewish community. They are fighting to maintain their identity as true Jews while having to deal with the fact that through faith in Christ God has fully embraced believing Gentiles as full-fledged disciples.

What did Matthew Write?

Matthew's Gospel can be divided into 7 distinct parts. It opens with the birth story, and ends with the climactic death and resurrection of Christ. At the heart of Matthew is 5 distinct sections, each one made up of a narrative followed by a discourse (e.g. the narrative of chapters 3-4 followed by the discourse of the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7).

Emphasis on Jesus as fulfilling prophecies:

"The narrator repeatedly notes that these events fulfill prophecy. Jesus is born to Joseph, a descendant of David (1:16, 20), in Bethlehem, David's hometown and the prophesied birthplace of the Davidic Messiah (1:23; Mic. 5:2). He will be called Jesus (Hebrew: Yeshua, or Joshua), meaning 'Yahweh saves' (1:21). His birth to a virgin fulfills Isaiah 7:14 and confirms that he is 'God with us' (Immanuel), the presence of God among his people (1:22-23).

Another kind of "Fulfillment":

Jesus follows a path that shows that He is serving as a representative of Israel as a whole:

- 2:13f—out of Egypt
- 3:13f—Jesus through the water
- 4:1f—Jesus tested in the wilderness
- 5:1—Jesus ascends a mountain to give the definitive interpretation of the law.

"Just as Israel emerged from Egypt in God's great act of salvation, so Jesus, the true Israel, emerges from Egypt to bring salvation to his people. Matthew is not saying that Hosea 11:1 originally referred to Jesus; rather he's saying that Jesus typologically fulfills the role of eschatological Israel."

Sermon on the Mount:

He is Moses like, and represents a sort of new Moses (supported by Matthew's 5 discourses).

- He does not abolish law, but fulfills it.
- He identifies the true intent of it, and thus raises the standards of Israel.
- (Poke around 5:17f if you want.)

Ministry of the Kingdom:

Matthew 4:23 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

Matthew 9:35 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

Matthew 11:1 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities

Represents the in-breaking of God’s rule. Where God is exercising dominion people are forgiven, healed and set free from demonic oppression.

Matthew’s message for us is spelled out in the Great Commission:²¹

Jesus speaks for God the Father—Thus, I am under His Authority! (28:18)

The resurrection has vindicated all of Jesus’ teaching and claims and elevates His authority to a universal level. Whereas in His ministry He functioned in submission to the Father, in His resurrection He has all authority in heaven and on earth!

It’s His planet!

Jesus delegates His authority to His disciples—Thus, He has appointed me a missionary! (28:19-20)

His disciples are his representatives until He returns. The passage is obviously meant to be taken to heart by all of Matthew’s readers. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth and He gives us the authority to proclaim His message on His behalf.

This is important and applicable for us on a number of levels:

1. **People of God:** Without any arrogance or pretension, but with humility, we need to recognize that we are **the true people of God—the Church**. We have

trusted in the truth. We have had a revelation of Jesus Christ in whom we have received salvation.

2. **Authority:** What right do we have in our culture to assume the responsibility to try to win people, and woo people to Jesus? **Our authority comes from Him!** There are many who are offended by the idea that we would dare to try to tell people about Jesus, but our authority comes from Him.

3. **Missionaries:** We must recognize that **Christ Himself commissions our role as missionaries** to our own culture and context.

Jesus expands the mission to the whole world—Thus, Salvation is for everyone! (28:19)

Before this the mission was clearly to the people of Israel. In the book of Acts we see God revealing to the Church in miraculous ways that the blood of Jesus makes someone a full-fledged member of His kingdom by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!

Jesus promises His presence—Thus, He is with me always! (28:20)

The fulfillment of all great OT hopes!

“The Gospel which began with the announcement that Jesus is Immanuel, ‘God with us’ (1:23), ends with the promise that he will be with his disciples till the end of the age (28:20).”(Strauss)²²

Matthew’s Portrait: Jesus the Messiah²³

1. Jesus is the Messiah, our promised King!

We’re used to hearing Jesus called the Christ (the Greek word for Messiah, which is Hebrew for “anointed one”), so much so that we think of it as more a part of His name than what it really is, His title.

What does this mean?

Jesus is the promised king who would be a descendant of David’s royal line. God made this promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:

2 Samuel 7:12-13 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body,

and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

We see the fulfillment of it referenced numerous times in Matthew.

- Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
- The genealogy ends with Jesus the Christ! (1:16-17)
- Matthew 1:20 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
- The wise men ask "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2)
- Matthew 2:3-6 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 "" And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.""
- Matthew uses the title "Son of David" 9 times (Mark and Luke only use it 3 each).

The Messianic Hope

We have discussed the messianic hopes of Israel in the first century—mixed expectations, all looking for God to intervene and restore their theocratic, Davidic kingdom.

The actual messianic ministry has certain surprising characteristics:

→ *He comes in humility.*²⁴

Matthew 21:4-5 4 This [the triumphal entry] took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

→ *His compassionate healing ministry is Messianic*

Matthew 9:27-31 27 And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." 28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." 31 But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

Matthew 11:2-6 2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

→ The main point:

Strauss writes, "**For Matthew, Jesus fulfills it all: all of God's promises and covenants, to Abraham, Moses, and David. He fulfills the eschatological role of Israel, of the Servant and of the Son of Man. He is the climax of salvation history, the inaugurator of God's reign.** . . . Jesus the Messiah does not fulfill just part of Scripture. He fulfills it all."²⁵

2. Jesus is Immanuel, our God!

We shouldn't think that because Jesus didn't do exactly what the Jews expected the Messiah to do means that He was somehow less than what they wanted. He in fact turned out to be infinitely more! Why? Because He is God!

Matthew 1:22-23 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

We'll resist the temptation to expound upon this since we will cover the deity of Jesus in depth in John's Gospel. For now, it is clear that Matthew assumes that Christ is God with us. Anything less is a serious aberration from the New Testament.

3. Jesus is the Son of God

Finally, we come to a title that seems to hold *both of these ideas together*.²⁶ At two points God the Father declares that Jesus is His Son:²⁷

At His Baptism: Matthew 3:16-17 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

At His Transfiguration: Matthew 17:1-5 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

What does it mean?

Clearly He is God's Son in a unique way.

Based on how and when the term is used in various contexts (most of which I haven't given here) it highlights two things about Jesus

- The Messianic—the human deliverer
- The Transcendent—the God with us theme.
- Thus, He is God's Son, sent to be with us as one who is powerful to deliver us from all our troubles!²⁸

Mark's Gospels

Who was Mark?

Another living picture of redemption: Last week we saw what Jesus could do with an outcast, scum-of-the-earth tax collector last week when God used Matthew to write the most Jewish of all Gospels even though he himself was once a hated member of the Jewish community. This week we see a guy who was famous for wussing out of one of Paul's missionary journeys write the Gospel about not wussing out for Jesus!

If you don't know what "wussing out" means I looked it up. It fits Mark: "an offensive term that deliberately insults somebody regarded as weak or ineffectual." Mark was related to Barnabas and was the son of a prominent, and seemingly wealthy woman in the early Church. In fact, the Jerusalem church met in her house. Paul & Barnabas eventually had to agree to disagree and separate because Barnabas insisted on bringing Mark along with him on another journey. [Acts 15:38-40 38 But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord] On an earlier trip Mark left prematurely. Paul wasn't going to risk someone who quit. Barnabas wasn't willing to give up on someone who had failed in their past. Who was right? Jesus! He fixed Mark, de-wussified him, and used him powerfully in the early church. Thank God for both tough love and tender love. Some people need both. Mark got both.

We see the impact of Jesus working through strong, godly men in Mark's life throughout the Epistles:

Colossians 4:10-11 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions- if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Philemon 1:23-24 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

2 Timothy 4:11 11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you,

for he is very useful to me for ministry.

How did he get like that?

1 Peter 5:13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.

- It is believed that Mark wrote his Gospel based largely on the preaching of Peter.
- It seems like Mark's dad may have passed when he was young. I can't prove it, but maybe Mark just needed a Jesus-obsessed father figure to straighten him out!

Why did Mark Write?

A few reasons seem to rise to the surface:

1. To record Peter's account of Jesus' life and ministry in order to preserve it as a historical record. After all, these guys were getting old and getting killed!
2. To set the record straight regarding the real Jesus. He was fully human, fully God, and the promised Messiah—the king promised from the line of David to bring with Him the kingdom of God.
3. The most prominent reason is to call the Christian community (in Rome) to “cross-bearing” discipleship. It is unclear when this Gospel was written.²⁹ Either late 50's or mid 60's. Either way it appears that he was writing to a community that was being persecuted! They needed to learn what serving Christ was all about in such a difficult context! They needed to see Jesus for who He was so that they could understand their own role in the world while suffering.

What did Mark Write?³⁰

Four part outline:

1. The Beginning of the Gospel: John the Baptist and the Temptation of Christ (1:1-13)
2. Jesus' Authoritative Kingdom Ministry (1:14-8:26)
3. The Suffering of the Son of God as Servant of the LORD (8:27-16:8)
4. The Resolution: The Resurrection Announced (16:1-8)

A few things:

1. The Beginning of the Gospel: John the Baptist and the Temptation of Christ (1:1-13)

He covers what took Matthew 4 chapters in 13 verses. We again see the theme of Jesus stepping into the role of Israel in baptism, wilderness and so on.

2. Jesus' Authoritative Kingdom Ministry (1:14-8:26)

Mark 1:14-15 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Jesus/the Kingdom has drawn near! Where this happens . . .

- There is freedom from demonic oppression
- There is healing of disease
- There is freedom from sin's power
- There is forgiveness for sin's slaves
- There is love for the unlovable
- There is grace for failure
- There is power for to live in the fullness of the Spirit

Chapter 4 presents this **mystery of the Kingdom**. Some people have it revealed to them and understand it while others don't. The parables both reveal and conceal the truth about Jesus and the kingdom. Those who get it seek and get more. Those who don't smile and walk away!

In **chapter 5** Jesus displays His **power over** "the sea, demons, death, and uncleanness."

Notice the Emphasis on faith:

- 4:40—trust Him in the storm.
- 5:34—woman with issue of blood gets healed.
- 5:36—daughter is dead already—Jesus doesn't think so!

- 6:6—no faith, no miracles in hometown.

Chapters 6: John dies, 5,000 fead, walks on water.

Chapter 7: Jesus confronts their outward (idolatrous) love for tradition and their inward love for sin:

Mark 7:1–8 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, 4 and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) 5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” 6 And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 8 You leave the **commandment of God** and hold to the **tradition of men.**”

Mark 7:14–23 And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: 15 There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” 17 And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, 19 since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For **from within, out of the heart of man**, come **evil thoughts**, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these **evil things** come from **within**, and they **defile a person.**”

3. The Suffering of the Son of God as Servant of the LORD (8:27-16:8)

The Messianic Secret

Why does Jesus repeatedly try to keep His identity as Messiah a secret in Mark's Gospel? There are two reasons:

- It is Mark's way of demonstrating how remarkable Jesus is. You can't keep Him a secret!
- Jesus wants to define Himself and the meaning of His Messiahship on His own terms, that is in light of the cross.
 - He is certainly not going to allow demons to define Him in distorted ways.
 - He is not going to allow the crowds to define Him as such and force their own understanding of the Messiah onto Jesus.
 - He is not even going to let His disciples define Him until they come to the understanding that the Messiah must suffer and die.

The Turning Point: The Confession of Peter and the Servant Messiah
(8:27-10:52) ³¹

Chapter 8:27ff

Look at 27 through 31 and a little further: Jesus again warns silence, but He does something new here. He begins to open their eyes to one important reality—verse 31.

What is the most devil-like thing anyone could do? Look at **verse 32!**

Only after the revelation of a suffering Messiah does Jesus engage in any real teaching in Mark.

Three cycles on Discipleship and Servant Leadership ³²

1st Passion Prediction—8:27ff

- Response: Peter rebukes Jesus (8:33)
- Jesus: Take up your cross! (8:34-38)

2nd Passion Prediction—9:30ff

- Response: They debate who is greatest (9:33-34)

- Jesus: First shall be last (9:35-37)

3rd Passion Prediction—10:32ff

- Response: Give us chief seats in the kingdom (10:35-41)
- Jesus: First shall be last (9:35-37)

The climax

- 10:45—the key verse in all of Mark!

More great stuff, we have to move on!!!

4. The Resolution: The Resurrection Announced (16:1-8)

Mark's Portrait: The Suffering Servant

Strauss writes, "Jesus the mighty Messiah and Son of God obediently suffers as the Servant of the Lord to pay the ransom price for sins, and as a model of suffering and sacrifice for his disciples to follow."³³

He is the Suffering Son of God (clearly a Messianic idea!)

- Isaiah 52:13-53:12

He is Our Ransom

- **Romans 3:21-26** 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

He is Our Model as Disciples

The disciples in Mark's Gospel in general provide us with a bad example. Jesus is the one we are given as our model for how to life.

- The disciples see Jesus as a means to power and position in this life.

- The disciples reject Jesus in His hour of suffering.
- The disciples (Peter) reject Jesus' mission in which He must suffer to save.

Jesus is the model servant

- **Jesus leads us to the cross**
 - **Mark 8:34-35** 34 And he called to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.
 - If you love life then lose it!
- **Jesus puts Himself last**
 - **Mark 9:35** 35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."
- **Jesus is servant of all**
 - **Mark 10:42-45** 42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Two Things Mark Teaches Us:

1. Pursue life in Christ even if it kills you, because that is the only way to truly live.

Mark's Gospel counters the common American evangelical approach to suffering and service. Many refuse any degree of suffering or sacrifice of any kind because they have bought the lie that comfort and security are the pathway to happiness.

2. Jesus offers the perfect example of how to face suffering—with an eye on the reward!

Luke-Acts

Who was Luke?

Another living picture of redemption:

- Polished and advanced literary skills, known as the beloved Physician.
- The only gentile author in the Bible!
- He was the only Gentile to write in the Bible.
- He was an educated man, a doctor, and an accomplished writer.
- We see in Acts is that Luke was a coworker in the Gospel with Paul. He not only wrote the book, but he's in it a lot of the time. There is what scholars often refer to as the "we" sections, where all of a sudden the author stops describing events in the 3rd person and moves to the 1st person singular we.
- He probably wrote in the early 60's.³⁴

Why did Luke Write?

Purpose:

- Mark Strauss writes, "Luke seeks to show that God's great plan of salvation has come to fulfillment in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Messiah, and continues to unfold as the Spirit-filled church takes the message of salvation from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth."³⁵

The Gospel in Particular:

- Teach believers about the historical foundation of their faith
- More concerned with historical details—Luke places Jesus in history as a savior for the whole world, not just a handful of Jews in Israel.

Jesus as a friend to sinners:

- Jesus ministered to the marginalized as a King. He Himself was not weak or incapable. He is the savior of the weak, the hurting, and the outcast. He is not one of them. He is our Lord and Savior, our Creator God and maker.

What did Luke Write?³⁶

Structure:

Luke-Acts is one story in two parts or volumes:

- Part 1—"how the good news of God's salvation for all people began, through the power of the Spirit, with Jesus in Galilee and in Jerusalem (Luke's Gospel)".
- Part 2—"how the good news of God's salvation through Jesus was, by the power of the spirit, carried by the apostles from Jerusalem to Rome (Acts).³⁷

Luke's Portrait Of Christ (Gospel): Merciful Savior

Jesus is the Prophet that you must listen to.

- Deuteronomy 18:15ff.
- Jesus declares God's word and performs miracles like Moses.
- Acts 3:22-26.

Jesus is a friend to sinners and a Savior for everyone who trusts in Him.

- We see the rejection of the self-righteous and the embrace of humble sinners:
- 7:36-50
 - Luke seems to emphasize the Pauline idea of faith more than Matthew and Mark (as I read it). The woman's actions add up to that here. This is a powerful picture of what true saving faith really is. She loved much (compare v.47 against v.49).
 - What did she see that the Pharisee didn't? Her sin. Adoration flows from appreciation. Appreciation flows from comprehension.
 - Comprehension of Christ's inherent beauty and worth
 - Comprehension of our sinfulness and lack.
 - He didn't love much because he didn't see his need for forgiveness.

Jesus is Christ the Lord.

- He is referred to as the Messiah (or Christ), "Son of God, Savior, and Lord", all of which point to the idea that He is God's agent sent to perform deliverance for God's people in fulfillment of God's promises.³⁸

Portrait of Christ in Acts: Our Risen Lord

Jesus, the Risen Lord Saves

Jesus, the Risen Lord Fills

- It is Jesus who commands them to wait and be filled for the mission.
- Jesus is the one who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, the Risen Lord Heals

- Peter gets filled and preaches first. What does he do next? He heals a guy.

Jesus, the Risen Lord is Coming Again

- It is clear that the early church understood their existence in light of the fact that the world as we know it will not always go on as it is. One day

Jesus will return and reward those who believe and judge those who rejected Him.

Major Themes in Luke-Acts:³⁹

Promise-Fulfillment.

Strauss writes, “The central theme running throughout Luke-Acts is that the coming of Jesus the Messiah heralds the dawn of the new age—the age of salvation. What was promised by the Old Testament prophets is now being fulfilled. Through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection forgiveness of sins is now offered to all people.”⁴⁰

Luke 4:16-19 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

The age of the Spirit.

The Spirit in the Birth and Early Childhood Narratives

- To Mary 1:35f
- Elizabeth 1:39-45
- The Magnificent (Mary’s Song) 1:46 (implied filling?)
- Zechariah’s Prophecy 1:67f.
- Simeon 2:25f. Especially 27f.

The Spirit Empowers Jesus

- See Luke 3:21-22; 4:1; 4:14-19

The Spirit Empowers the Disciples

In Luke

- The 12 in Luke 9, and the 72 in Luke 10 (no mention of the Spirit, but obviously they are empowered to do Kingdom work)

In Acts

- Peter in Acts c. 4:8

- The place shook Acts 4:27f
- The deacons in Acts 6:3
- Stephen in Acts 6:8f and 7:54f.
- Barnabas in Acts 11:22f.

Spirit Baptism and Filling in Luke-Acts

Texts

- John the Baptist's Testimony of Jesus' near future
 - 3:15-17 (He will baptize you)
- **Acts 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- **Acts 8:17-18** 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given . . .
- **Acts 9:17** So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."
- **Acts 10:44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.
- **Acts 11:15-16** 15 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'
- **Acts 19:5-7** 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all.

- *Conclusion: Filling issues in Prophetic Speech and Gospel Preaching*

Contrast with Regeneration

- **John 20:21-22** 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
- Paul in Titus 3 etc.

A Gospel for All Nations

- Luke's genealogy goes back to Adam highlighting Jesus' relevance for all, not just Jews.
- The outline of Acts bears this out.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- God Establishes the Spirit-Filled Church in Jerusalem (1-8)
- The Gospel Spreads throughout Judea and Samaria (8:4-12:25)
- The Gospel Spreads to the Ends of the Earth (13:1-28:31)
- Perhaps more important we see a theology develop in which one does not need to become Jewish in order to become a Christian.

A gospel for the outcasts

- This is especially so in Luke's Gospel where Jesus shows great concern for the outcast, the poor, and sinners.
- Strauss writes, "The message throughout is that God loves the lost, those who with a contrite and humble heart will return to him. Repeatedly Jesus' parables reveal the great reversal of fortunes that the kingdom of God will bring: The rich, proud, and mighty will be humbled, while the poor, humble, and oppressed will be exalted (12:13-21; 14:15-24; 16:19-31)." [Strauss, p. 320.]
- The Good Samaritan 10:25-37

A gospel for women.

- Strauss writes, "This Gospel also crosses gender barriers, for women play a more prominent role in Luke than in the other Gospels. The Birth narrative is told from the perspective of women (Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna). Women support Jesus' ministry financially (8:1-3). Mary sits at Jesus' feet, learning from him as a disciple (10:38-42). In contrast to the low status of women in Palestinian society. Jesus lifts them up to full participation in the kingdom of God. The gospel of Jesus is for all people."⁴¹

Missional Church: The Church in Acts had . . .

Passion to win lost souls to Christ.

- Usually we are told to have a passion for the lost because we feel bad that they are going to hell, or that their lives lack Jesus. Good reason.
- Primary reason? So that the risen Christ would be worshiped, and glorified through the salvation of undeserving sinners! I think this is what we see.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Power to win lost souls to Christ.

Acts 4:27-31 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

A Plan to win lost souls to Christ.

- The missionaries' journeys were a church-planting campaign!
- What was the plan? Paul went around planting churches. He founded Christian communities—groups of people who believed in Jesus and trained leaders to care for them when he left.
- A good number of the Epistles are written to churches that we see Paul founding in Acts. His corresponds to them calling them to be faithful to what he taught them.
- Acts 17: Paul confronts pagans in a way that is clear and understandable.

A Prayerful disposition. (That's an understatement.)

- You think, "Oh no! I don't pray. I better do that because I feel bad and I should do that." I guarantee that you will not change if that is your reaction.
- Your problem is that you think of prayerfulness as the result of developing the discipline to pray regularly. You're only about %10 right! A prayerful disposition is birthed out of hunger with humility.
 - Deep unquenchable hunger for God. A sense of quiet desperation for

more of Him.

- Profound humility about your own abilities apart from Him! A sense of desperation that it won't happen without Him? (A real sense of your sinfulness and spiritual poverty.) *What won't happen?* Anything!!!!!! Name what you need God to do from changing your heart, to overcoming sin, to winning your friend to Jesus. You can't do any of it!

A Preoccupation with Jesus

- Many who experience revival make the fatal error of becoming enamored with the manifestation of the Spirit. The early Church recognized that the Spirit came to exalt Christ not Himself.
- In chapter 2, what did people hear when tongues came? The mighty works of God. The Gospel.
- An example: In chapter 3 a beggar is healed at the Beautiful gate.
 - Connect verse 8 with verse 10.
 - In verse 11—not by their piety!
 - In chapter 4 they are arrested by the priests and questioned about it. See 4:7ff. Not a manifestation of how powerful they were in the Spirit (though they were), but of the power of Jesus.
 - We know that it is accurate to say that this was a demonstration of the Spirit's power working through them, but they didn't speak of it in those terms. They talked about the name of Jesus (v. 10).
- I don't want to overstate it as if it were wrong to speak of the work and manifestation of the Spirit. It is good for us to recognize what the work and manifestation of the Spirit are for, the glorification of Christ.

A word about being filled with the Spirit:

Would you feel comfortable with saying that you are filled with the Holy Spirit? Even better, would you feel comfortable pursuing an experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

A try at why I think some people never seek filling:

- They have a problem with the doctrine.
 - Don't like the idea of the Baptism being in some way distinct from Regeneration
 - Don't like the classical Pentecostal doctrine of tongues being the initial physical evidence
- These are valid questions, however . . .
 - You still have to ask whether you have had anything like what the early Christians did—prophecy, miracles, a tangible experience with the Holy Spirit. You need to be filled.
 - If you're wondering whether or not there is such a thing as a baptism in the Holy Spirit you probably haven't had it.
 - If you aren't' sure about whether tongues are for everybody, you still can't say that being filled with the Spirit isn't for everybody and you must seek

Christ for that.

- Get your goal straight:
 - Not a Pentecostal Merit Badge. There is nothing to prove to anyone.
 - Receiving the baptism of the Spirit is about Christ, not the Spirit.
 - In other word, your goal should be the glorification of Christ.

John 16:12–15 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

A final Word: Don't tolerate an absence of God's presence and power in your life
Feeling cold toward God, cold toward His word, cold toward God's people, cold toward prayer is not an acceptable way to feel. How does one deal with their emotions? They do heart work in the presence of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Emotions and dispositions (such as joy) are commanded by God and thus we must obey. Presenting ourselves to God for Him to aid and complete the necessary heart-work in the presence off God is our only recourse.

An absence of power and effectiveness in serving God is not to be tolerated. Same cure—prayerful heart-work.

John's Gospel

Who was John and His Audience?

Kostenberger in ESV Study Bible:

The Gospel of John was written by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, a Palestinian Jew and a member of Jesus' inner apostolic circle during his earthly ministry. John's original audience consisted of **both Jews and Gentiles** living in the larger Greco-Roman world in Ephesus and beyond toward the close of the first century a.d. He frequently explains Jewish customs and Palestinian geography and translates Aramaic terms into Greek (see note on 1:38), thus showing awareness of non-Jewish readers. He also presents Jesus as the Word become flesh against the backdrop of Greek thought that included Stoicism and early Gnosticism. But John also shows awareness of Jewish readers as he demonstrates Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, the fulfillment of many OT themes, and the Son of God who was sent by God the Father to reveal the only true God and to provide redemption for humanity.

John's Message

John gives the reader a clear statement as to his purpose in writing: "these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." The Gospel opens with a **prologue** containing some of the clearest, strongest language used to describe Jesus as God and creator in the New Testament (1:1-18). It establishes a framework of understanding for all that follows. The body of the Gospel is in two parts. First, **the Book of Signs** (1:19-12:50). **Seven** signs, **seven** sayings (I am's), and **seven** witnesses reveal Jesus to be the promised Messiah sent from the Father on mission that whoever "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (3:16)."

In the second major part, **the Book of Glory** (13:1-20:31) leads us to the Cross. In it Jesus prepares His disciples for life without Him (sort of). The eternal life that He promised begins now when one "knows" Him by faith. His Spirit takes His place on earth to empower His disciples in their mission. They (we) are to continue the work of His Messianic mission in proclaiming Life through faith in Him. In order for this to take place Jesus offers Himself as an atoning sacrifice for sin. He demonstrates His victory

over sin and death, raising from the dead and commissioning His disciples to preach the Good News. The book closes with an **Epilogue** related to the roles of Peter and John after Christ departs (21:1-25).

John's Purpose

John gives the reader a clear statement as to his purpose in writing: “these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” The nature of John's Gospel shows that while it indeed is a great tool for Gospelization, it is primarily through the transformed, Christ-enthralled lives of his believing readers that this will be accomplished. We turn to it so that we too will be able to say with John, “we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace (1:14,16).”

Kostenberger clarifies how the stated purpose of the Gospel relates to the reality of how the Gospel would be beneficial for the purpose of evangelism:

The purpose statement in 20:30–31 makes it appear that John wrote with an evangelistic intent. However, his depth of teaching shows that he wanted readers not only to come to initial saving faith in Jesus but also to grow into a rich, well-informed faith. John's central contention is that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah and Son of God, and that by believing in him people may have eternal life. To this end, he marshals the evidence of several selected messianic signs performed by Jesus and of a series of witnesses to Jesus—including the Scriptures, John the Baptist, Jesus himself, God the Father, Jesus' works, the Spirit, and John himself. It is also likely that John sought to present Jesus as the new temple and center of worship for God's people, a concept that would be especially forceful if the date of composition (as seems likely) was subsequent to a.d. 70 (the time of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple).

(Some) Major Themes in John's Gospel

The Signs

We have already encountered numerous miracles in the synoptic Gospels. The “signs” (σημεῖον) in John's Gospel have a different function from the miracles in the

other Gospels “which point to the in-breaking of the kingdom of God and Jesus’ authority as its inaugurator (Matt.12:28; Luke 11:20). [Strauss., 303.]

Strauss writes that the signs

. . . play a key role in Jesus’ self-revelation. Seven appear in the Gospel proper, and one (the miraculous catch of fish) in the epilogue. The signs are often interpreted by Jesus’ teaching. Jesus feeds the five thousand and then gives a discourse on the break of life (chap. 6). Similarly, he raises Lazarus from the dead after identifying himself as the resurrection and the life (11:25-26)

Each sign reveals Jesus’ identity and mission and calls forth a decision from the hearers.

After the first sign, John explains the purpose and effect of the first of the signs:

John 2:11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Kostenburger writes,

The emphasis on the excellent quality of the wine produced by Jesus coheres with John’s customary emphasis on the extraordinary nature of Jesus’ works. Thus, Jesus will raise the temple that was built forty-six years ago in only three days (2:20). He not only cures the royal official’s son but does so long-distance, a highly unusual way of working miracles (4:50–53). He does not merely heal a lame man, but one who has been an invalid for thirty-eight years (5:5). He feeds the crowds from a supply of only five small barley loaves and two small fish, when it would have taken eight months’ wages just for each person even to have one bite (6:7, 9). Jesus does not merely give sight to a man gone blind, but one who has been blind from birth (9:2). And he does not merely raise a dead man, but one who has been dead for four days (11:17), one day past the day when his spirit left him, according to contemporary Jewish belief, and his corpse exudes a stench (11:39).

Eternal Life

- **John 3:16–21** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but

whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

- **John 4:7–15** A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” 11 The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”
- **John 17:1–5** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

The Deity of Jesus (Part 1): “the Word (Logos) became flesh”

John 1:1–3 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 3 πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν

John 1:1–3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him,

and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1. In the beginning was the Word: Jesus is Eternal and Uncreate.

John takes a familiar phrase to readers of the LXX and completes it with a bold claim.

Verse 14 makes it clear that he is writing here about Jesus, so why does he not just say, "In the beginning was Jesus?" Because he is here not talking about Jesus as He was on earth in His brief ministry. He is trying to open our eyes to the true nature of the one who came! Even talking about Him as one who came is remarkable! We can't properly speak of any other person as "coming" to earth! If we wanted to be particularly accurate we can only say they were born. Not so with Jesus! John refers to Him as the Word in part to help us think about Jesus before He took on human flesh and became a man and was called Jesus. This Jesus existed prior to all of that, in fact He existed prior to all created things! He is the eternal "Word"!

2. The Word was with God: Jesus is distinct from God the Father.

He does something that is fairly common in the NT, which generally reserves the title *God* for who we would know as *God the Father*. In fact that is one of the reasons that the New Testament rarely simply says something that we would be comfortable saying, such as "Jesus is God."

To their ears this would have been **confusing** and made it sound as if Jesus was the Father! *This would blur the very distinction between the two that John is attempting to make here!*

The point is that the Word (of course identified later as Jesus in verse 14) is **distinct from the Father!** He is not Him, but is **with Him** in relationship before the universe began.

This shows two things:

- First, **distinction**.
- Second, **active relationship**. It is not so much a physical location as an active disposition.

What were they doing?

John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me,

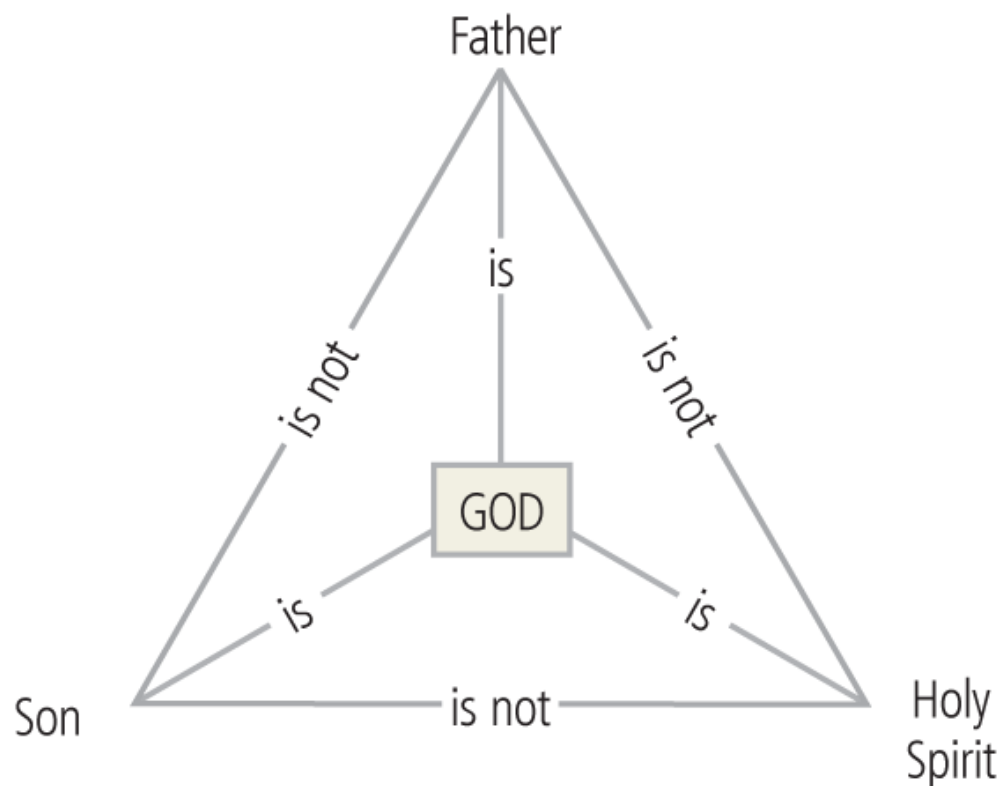
may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

3. The Word Was God: Jesus is God.

The word "God" is used here to explain the essence of who Jesus is. God isn't used as a name, but as a description.

Kostenberger puts it this way: "Jesus "shared the essence of the Father, though they differed in person" (Wallace 1996: 269). Everything that can be said about God also can be said about the Word (Morris 1995: 68; Wallace 1996: 735)."

Shield of Faith:



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Why call Him the "Word"?

ESV Study Bible: The term "the Word" (Gk. Logos) conveys the notion of divine self-expression or speech and has a rich **OT background**. God's Word is effective: God speaks, and things come into being (Gen. 1:3, 9; Ps. 33:6; 107:20; Isa. 55:10–11), and by speech he relates personally to his people (e.g., Gen. 15:1). John also shows how this concept of "the Word" is superior to a **Greek philosophical concept of "Word"** (logos) as an impersonal principle of Reason that gave order to the universe.

I would put it even stronger! He is attempting to give greek thinking individuals a *re-envisioned understanding of the universe by taking over a term they were familiar with and filling it with personal, worship-able meaning! Not an impersonal principle of reason, but Jesus the Christ who came and taught, loved, lived and died for His people!*

The Word became Flesh

Contrary to much theological error in his day, John uses the most raw term he could have chosen to express the humanity of Jesus. Carson points out that the terminology used would have been unambiguously confrontational to the dualism of the day!

Carson: "If the Evangelist had said only that the eternal Word assumed manhood or adopted the form of a body, the reader steeped in the popular dualism of the hellenistic world might have missed the point. But John is unambiguous, almost shocking in the expressions he uses (cf. especially Barth, pp. 85ff.): the Word became flesh."

The Deity of Jesus (Part 2): Jesus as “I Am”

Exodus 3:14 and ambiguous nature of God’s self-revelation as “I Am”.

- Points to God as present, in particular He is present to save and deliver (Exodus 6). Isaiah associates the title with the word “Savior”.
- Still, no predicate!

7 “I Am” Statements

1. Jesus is the Bread of Life (6:25-35)

- Believe and live

2. Jesus is the Light of the World (8:12; 9:5)

- Believe and follow and live

3. Jesus is the Door (10:7)

- Believe and enter life (pasture, instead of death and destruction in verse 10)—we flourish in Him who is the entry way into life.

4. Jesus is the Good Shepherd (10:11, 14)

- Carson writes, “Many people in the industrialized West are inclined to think of shepherds as sentimental beings, perhaps somewhat effeminate,

with their arms full of cuddly lambs, and the English adjective ‘good’ does nothing to dissuade us from these misconceptions. But the shepherd’s job was tiring, manly and sometimes dangerous.”⁴² In other words, Jesus is giving us yet another reason to believe that He is tough and saves us by His unmatched strength and ability as a deliverer and protector!

- We enter His fold by faith and remain there under His care.

5. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life (11:25)

- He doesn’t just bring it. He is it. It does not happen outside of Him.

6. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6)

- Notice what He uses to comfort them. He doesn’t tell them the details about their lives—That everything will be alright. He tells rather them that they will be with Him! That is their great comfort.

7. Jesus is the True Vine (15:1)

- Verse 7 and 16 make it clear that abiding is related to prayer! It is not a mere mental state of belief, but a life of prayer that leads to fruitfulness!
- For all of the turns the passage takes, the point is that they need to depend upon Jesus, and we find that it is through prayer.

Another significant “I Am” Statement

Perhaps more striking are the statements in which the phrase “I am” is not attached to a predicate. These include 4:26; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5-8. We will briefly consider two of the most notable. [Frame points out that it is common for English translations to supply the word “he” at the end of these statements, but that while justifiable for the purpose of grammar, this tends to hide the obvious reference to Exodus 3:14. For example, 4:26 reads, “λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς: ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι.” Jesus response could be rigidly translated is as follows: “I am, the one speaking to you.” Footnote on p. 41.] In John 18 when Jesus confronted the soldiers who had come to arrest Him, he asked, “Whom do you seek?” When they answered, “Jesus of Nazareth,” He simply responded, “I am He (ἐγὼ εἰμι, ego eimi, simply I am in Greek),” the Greek is identical to the Septuagint translation of Exodus 3:14. We may object that Jesus was simply responding with a common phrase that was certainly justified by the context of the conversation. The text however gives us an indication that there was something more to it. “When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground (8:6).”

John 8:58 is another exceptional example. Jesus had stunned a crowd of listeners by

claiming that keeping His word would lead to eternal life. He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” The crowd responds harshly, leading Jesus to make a claim that demonstrates Him to either be Yahweh, or one of the most conceited, delusional preachers of all time!

John 8:52-58 The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” 54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ 55 But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” 57 So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

This is remarkable! Not only does He say something that goes beyond anything that any prophet has ever claimed, He does it emphatically starting with one of His signature, “Truly, truly,” statements. He goes on to claim 1) that He existed before Abraham. This, in and of itself seems to be an apparent claim to eternal existence, and thus deity. Notice that He does not say, “I was”, but “I am,” which is of course in the present tense. This seems to indicate ongoing existence, eternal existence. To claim to have existed prior to Abraham (who had been dead for about 1900 years at this point) would be enough, but Jesus takes it further by adding, “I am” to the end of the sentence. This seems to definitively answer their question from verse 53. The reaction of the Jews in verse 59 assures us that they took His statement in a similar fashion to the way we are here. “So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple (v.59).” They apparently did not see anything subtle or nuanced about what Jesus was claiming. They could only respond with belief or violence! They rejected His claim, and chose violence.

Frame concludes, “Christ is not just God in some general sense, but actually the covenant Lord, Yahweh.”

John’s Portrait: The Son Who Reveals the Father⁴³

Jesus is equal in every way to God the Father

- John 5:18 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
- He shares His attributes: Creator (1:3), giver and sustainer of life (5:16-18), will raise the dead (5:21), and will serve as final judge (5:22). He demonstrates omniscience (1:48).⁴⁴
- Ontological equality—He is one with the Father. Everything that the Father is, He is also.

John 5:18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John 1:1–2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

- Functional subordination—He yet functions in complete submission to the Father in His ministry.

John 6:38–39 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

John 8:28–29 So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”

Jesus purpose was to reveal the Father

- John 8:28-29 28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."
- Purpose is to “reveal the Father and bring others into relationship with Him.”⁴⁵

Jesus alone provides access to the Father

- **John 14:6** 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Some things we learn from John:

Life is entered through Jesus alone!

- Pick a verse. That is what this Gospel is about.

Life is sustained through Jesus alone!

- The Spirit of God was sent to be a dynamic reality in our life. Throughout 14-16 we see Jesus making the point that it is better for Him to leave so that the Spirit can indwell and do even greater things as a result of His work.
- See John 15 to talk about the vine.

¹ Ibid., 39.

² Ibid, 22.

³ Geisler, 204.

⁴ Ibid., 210.

⁵ Ibid, 206–207. Emphasis added.

⁶ Quoted in Geisler, 207–208.

⁷ Geisler, 220.

⁸ Ibid, 23.

⁹ For a detailed treatment of the history of and issues related to canonization see “The Canon of Scripture” in the ESV Study Bible, or Part 2 of Norman Geisler’s book, “A General Introduction to the Bible.”

¹⁰ Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1996). *A general introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded.) (21–22). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹¹ Both quoted in Geisler, 22.

¹² I own this insight to my former professor Dr. Sean McDonough.

¹³ *An Old Testament Theology*, pp. 73-77.

¹⁴ Blomberg, p. 292.

¹⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, “Gospels (Historical Reliability)”, in the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight (Downers Grove; InterVarsity Press, 1992)., p. 294. Emphasis mine.

¹⁶ From Blomberg, 295ff, and quotes that follow below. He gives them a good treatment and deals with a few more than me.

¹⁷ Enns, Paul P.: *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, Ill. : Moody Press, 1997, c1989, S. 83, also all quotes that follow in this section.

¹⁸ Enns

¹⁹ Enns

²⁰ Got that stat from Blomberg I think.

²¹ Strauss, p. 239.

²² Strauss, p. 239.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 239.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 240.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 239.

²⁷ There are more, but these are interesting.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 242.

²⁹ Strauss., 204.

³⁰ The following outline is a big mess of notes from sometimes non-cited sources. The core outline, including the wording of it is quoted from Carson, Moo, and Morris' "An Introduction to the New Testament", blended with the outline of Strauss in "Four Portraits, One Jesus ". Occasionally things were reworded or expanded based on Gordon Fee's work in "How to Read the Bible for All its Worth". In addition I worked through the relevant section in Strauss' book on the Gospels and added notes. This is reflected in the "Summary" and "Notes" which are added at the end of section.

³¹ Straus., p.183.

³² *Strauss, figure 7.5, p. 185.*

³³ Mark Strauss, Four Portraits, One Jesus, (Zondervan, 2007), p. 172.

³⁴ Acts, p. 219 in the Zondervan Illustrated Bible backgrounds Commentary.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The following outline is a big mess of notes from sometimes non-cited sources including Strauss' "Four Portraits, One Jesus " and Fee's "How to Read the Bible for All its Worth".

³⁷ Gordon Fee, How to Read the Bible Book by Book, pg. 287.

³⁸ Ibid., 282.

³⁹ From Strauss in Zondervan Pictorial Commentary, 319f.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² John, in the Pillar NT Commentary, D. A. Carson, p. 386.

⁴³ Strait from Strauss, p. 328.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 328.