

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry 2
Week 6 – The Gospels

What is a gospel?

A unique literary genre

A counter-cultural announcement of “good news”

Why are there four?

“This four-way composite portrait of Jesus Christ is more than four biographies. Instead, these books present carefully selected material from Jesus’ life, each with a different theological emphasis. Taken together, the overall purpose of the Gospels is to show who Jesus Christ is – God’s Son, Israel’s Messiah, and the world’s Savior – so that people will come to Him in faith and receive eternal life.”¹

Are the Gospels a reliable source of history?

1.

None of the gospel authors claim to be exhaustive in his account of Christ's life (Jn. 20:30,31; 21:24,25).

- Matthew and Luke have birth narratives; Mark and John do not.
- Only Luke mentions events during Jesus’ childhood (see Luke 2).
- Some events/teachings that occurred during Jesus’ ministry can be found in all four gospels...
 - Jesus preaching in Galilee: Matt. 4:12-17; Mark 1:14,15; Luke 4:14,15; John 4:43-45
 - Jesus feeding the 5000: Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15;
 - Jesus entry into Jerusalem on a donkey: Matt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:28-44; Jn. 12:12-19
- ...but other events/teachings are only found in one gospel.
 - Jesus teaching on restoring the brother who sins (Matt. 18:15-20).
 - The parable of the seed that grows without the farmer’s help (Mark 4:26-29).

¹ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, *The Life of Christ Commentary* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1989) p. 7.

- The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).
- Jesus heals a man born blind (John 9:12)

2. The gospels are sometimes organized _____.

Mark	Luke
The Calling of the Disciples (1:16-20)	Introduction to Ministry in Capernaum (4:31-32)
Introduction to Ministry in Capernaum (1:21-22)	Casting out a Demon in the Synagogue (4:33-37)
Casting out a Demon in the Synagogue (1:23-28)	Healing Simon's Mother-in-Law (4:38-39)
Healing Simon's Mother-in-Law (1:29-31)	Healing the Multitudes (4:40-41)
Healing the Multitudes (1:32-34)	Trying to Visit Other Cities (4:42-44)
Trying to Visit Other Cities (1:35-39)	The Calling of the Disciples (5:1-11)
Cleansing the Leper (1:40-45)	Cleansing the Leper (5:12-16)

Why the variation in order?

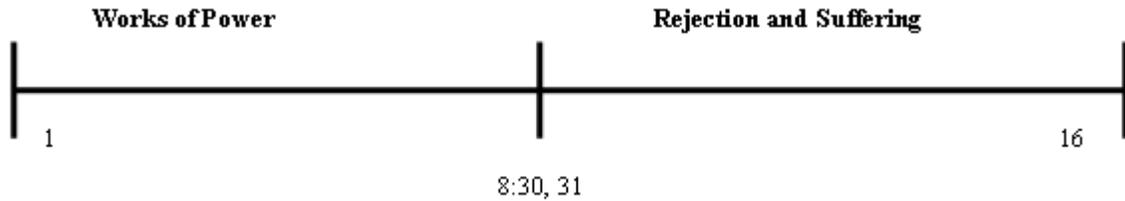
Overview of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (See “Overview of the Four Gospels” CHART)

Mark's Gospel

MARK'S READERS:

MAIN THEME(S):

STRUCTURE:



The first 8 chapters: Mostly action-packed narratives that focus on the power of Jesus and the amazement of the crowds

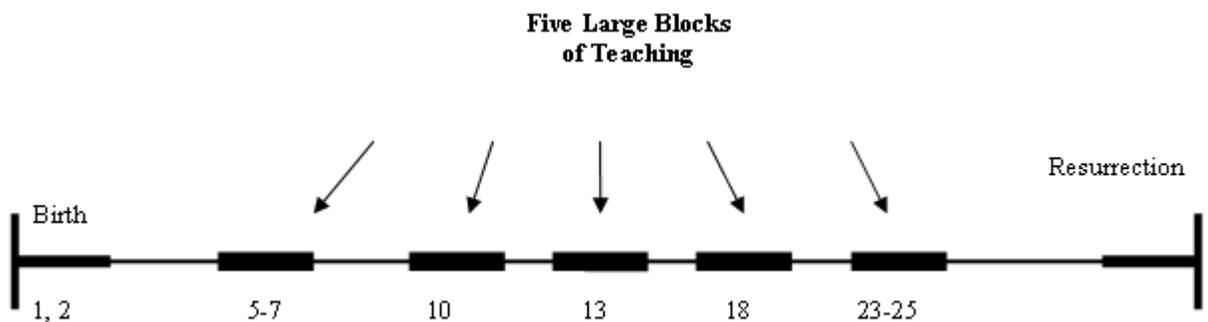
The last 8 chapters: A "slowing down" of the narrative focusing on Jesus' apparent weakness, rejection by the crowds, suffering and death.

Matthew's Gospel

MATTHEW'S READERS:

MAIN THEME(S):

STRUCTURE: Comparing Matthew with Mark, we notice that Matthew incorporates larger blocks of Jesus' teachings than Mark does. (see 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1)



Luke's Gospel

LUKE'S READERS:

MAIN THEME(S):

Luke 19:10* arguably provides a one-verse summary of the entire Gospel: "For the Son of Man came to **seek and to save what was lost.**"

There is abundant evidence that "Jesus is Savior of the lost" is a central theme in Luke:

- The Greek words for Savior and salvation (*soter*, *soteria*, *soterion*) occur eight times in Luke, nine times in Acts, and nowhere else in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
- Luke also emphasizes God's desire to seek and save everyone, especially outcasts and outsiders. Jesus is the Savior of all: every race (Gentiles, Samaritans, Jews), both genders, all economic classes, and people of high and low social status.

1. Samaritans and Gentiles (10:25-37; 17:11-19; 14:15-24). Only Luke records the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-27) and the story of the ten lepers who were cleansed, with only the Samaritan leper returning to give thanks (17:11-19).

2. Women. Luke has far more women in his account than do the other Gospels.

The birth narratives are told from the perspectives of Elizabeth and Mary (chaps. 1-2).

The prophetess Anna appears alongside her male counterpart Simeon (2:25-38).

Jesus affirms the notoriously sinful woman who anoints him with oil despite the complaints of his pharisaic host (7:36-50).

He praises Mary's (Martha's sister) devotion to his teaching, against the cultural norms of the day (10:38-42).

And only Luke describes Jesus' itinerant ministry as being funded in part by the contributions of several well-to-do women who traveled with him (8:1-3).

3. The Poor.

In Matthew, Jesus blesses "the poor in spirit," in Luke he blesses "you who are poor" (6:20).

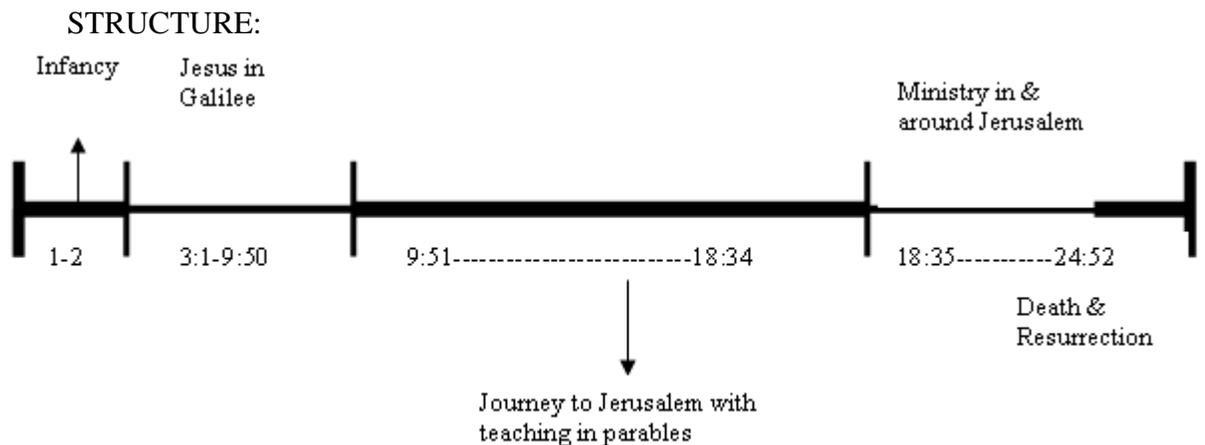
Jesus was anointed by God "to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

The various teachings in 14:7-24 all demonstrate God's concern for the sick and dispossessed who are unable to help themselves or return favors.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus vindicates the poor beggar at the expense of his counterpart wallowing in luxury (16:19-31).

4. Tax collectors and sinners (5:30, 7:34, and 15:1).

Not only does Luke use the phrase, "tax collectors and sinners," to characterize those who gathered around Jesus to hear him and were welcomed by him, but Luke alone tells two stories in which tax collectors were heroes - the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (18:9-14) and the conversion of Zaccheus (19:1-10).

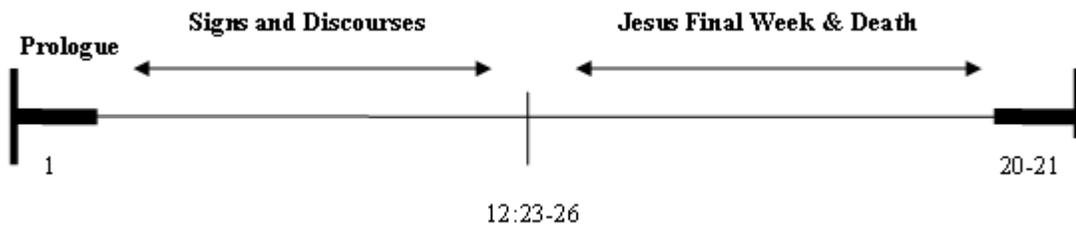


John's Gospel

JOHN'S READERS: John was written to seekers, some of whom were Greek (note his translation of Hebrew words), and some of whom may have been Jewish (note how he shows Jesus fulfilling many Old Testament festivals).

For John's purpose statement, see 20:31. He's writing to non-Christians to help them have faith. John is also eager to tell readers that he was an eyewitness of the events he describes (19:35 & 21:24).

STRUCTURE:



The Synoptic Gospels

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the “synoptic” (literally: “see together”) gospels because they are very similar in their basic narrative framework. On one level, they corroborate each other because of their similarity. Yet critics raise three objections:

1. “Borrowing material from other synoptic gospels or sources undercuts the claim that they are divinely inspired.” **RESOLUTION:**

2. “Discrepancies between synoptic gospels’ accounts of the same event undercuts the claim that they are divinely inspired.” **RESOLUTION:**

- Ancient people were not as concerned in chronological or geographical details as we are.

Gadarenes (Mt. 8:28) and Gerasenes (Mk. 5:1) refer to two cities in the same region.

Luke refers to the new site of Jericho (Lk. 18:35), while Matthew and Mark refer to old Jericho (Mt. 20:29; Mk. 10:46).

- The authors sometimes arranged their material topically, not chronologically.
- Jesus was an itinerate speaker who often repeated actions and teaching in various places.

The sermon on mount (Mt. 5-7) and the sermon on the level place (Lk. 6) are probably different discourses.

Jesus cleansed the Temple twice: once at beginning of His ministry (Jn. 2) and once at the end (Mt., Mk., Lk.).

- The authors used great selectivity in their accounts, and greatly compressed what they reported.

There are 2 Garasene demonics (Mt. 8; Lk. 8), but Mark focuses on one of them (Mk. 5).

There are 2 blind men healed (Mt. 20; Lk. 18), but Mark focuses on one of them (Mk. 10).

- The authors had to translate, interpret and condense Jesus' words.

3. "John's gospel is so different from the synoptic gospels that this undercuts the claim that it is divinely inspired."

RESOLUTION: As seen above, all of the gospels are highly selective. One of John's purposes for his (later) gospel seems to have been to record aspects of Jesus' public ministry that the (earlier) synoptic authors had omitted. There is no inherent contradiction between divine inspiration and this intent.

The challenge to us: becoming disciples of Christ²

"DISCIPLE"

1. A disciple is involved in _____ a continual basis.

(John 8:31,32*) "If you abide in My word, *then you are truly disciples of Mine*; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

² This section is adapted from chapter 2 of Waylon Moore, *Multiplying Disciples* (Tampa, Florida: Missions Unlimited, 1981), pp. 21-25.

2. A disciple _____.

(John 13:34,35) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 *"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

3. A disciple abides daily in a _____ union with Christ.

John 15:4,5 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing . . . 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so prove to be My disciples.*"

4. A disciple commits _____ to Christ.

(Luke 14:33) "So therefore, no one of you *can be My disciple* who does not give up all his own possessions."

Making an irrevocable commitment to Christ as Lord is essential for biblical discipleship, and this commitment must be renewed daily.

Memory Verses

Luke 19:10 – Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

John 8:31,32 – Disciples of Jesus abide in His words, learn the truth, and are made free by it.

Assignment

Complete inductive paragraph study of Titus 1:5-9.