

# *The Journey... Walk as Jesus Walked*

## Part 1 – The Amazing Harmony of the Gospels

December 13, 2009

*This morning we embark on a journey. It is a journey to learn all we can about Jesus Christ: the most important historical figure in all of recorded human history... not just to learn about Him, but live to like Him! His influence is undeniable and His impact unmistakable.*

I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history. – H.G. Wells

As the centuries pass, the evidence is accumulating that, measured by His effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet. – Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette

Jesus Christ: The meeting place of eternity and time, the blending of deity and humanity, the junction of heaven and earth. – Anonymous

### I. Getting started... Why do we have 4 gospels?

- A. **Point of View:** Each writer had a point of view and thus we have a balanced view of Jesus, not just one man's opinion.
- B. **Selective:** The writers were selective in what they wrote not all inclusive. Not everyone covers every event.
- C. **Magnitude:** The person of Jesus Christ deserves more than a book be written about him. No one book could contain his biography.

## II. An Overview of the Gospels

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
<b>Author's background</b>	Jewish tax collector	Cousin was Barnabas; Close to Peter	Greek doctor	Beloved disciple
<b>Written</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> (50-58 AD)	1 <sup>st</sup> (40-50 AD)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (59-61 AD)	4 <sup>th</sup> (80-98 AD)
<b>Jesus is...</b>	The Messiah and King	Suffering Servant	Perfect Man (Son of Man)	Eternal God
	Who Jesus was	What Jesus did	Whom Jesus sought	What Jesus said
	Lion of Judah	Ox	Man	Eagle
<b>Audience</b>	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Gentiles/ Christians
<b>Style of writer</b>	Teacher	Preacher	Investigator Historian	Theologian
<b>Emphasis on</b>	Parables (31)	Miracles (23)	Sermons (13)	Doctrines
<b>Key Words</b>	Fulfilled, Kingdom	Immediately, Authority, Power	Son of Man	Believe, Life Father/Son
<b>Distinctives</b>	Prophecy	Action	History	Deity
<b>Key verse</b>	Mt. 27:37	Mark 10:45	Luke 19:10	John 3:16
<b>Broad Division</b>	Synoptic Gospels (first 3 books) Humanity, Outward, Earthly			4 <sup>th</sup> Gospel: Deity, Inward Heavenly

### III. Did you know? Fast facts for fun...

#### A. Matthew

Written between 37-68 AD by a Jewish tax collector hired by Rome to collect taxes in Capernaum; also known as Levi. **Matthew was probably wealthy.** He hosted a **great feast** for Jesus. See Luke 5:27-32 and Matthew 9:9-13.

1. **Old Testament:** Matthew was written to Jews who were familiar with Old Testament prophecy. Jewish customs were not explained in this gospel. Matthew often mentioned the Law of Moses. **The OT is quoted 45 times; double that of any other 3 gospels.**

Matthew was written to convince Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The book opens with a genealogy to prove that Jesus was an heir to King David. Matthew's birth narrative contains five prophecies that were fulfilled.

2. **Arranged for memorization**

When Matthew was written, people often memorized scripture. Matthew arranged his material so that it was easy to remember. Groups of threes and of sevens are often used in Matthew. For example, there were 3 gifts (ch. 2), 3 temptations (ch. 4), 7 parables (ch. 13), and 7 woes (ch. 23).

3. **Handbook on the Kingdom**

Matthew is a handbook on the Kingdom. It contains five collections of teachings concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom's... Law: (5-7); Mission: (10); Mysteries: (13); Greatness: (18); Future: (24-25).

#### B. Mark

Written in 40-65 AD. **Probably the first one written.** Early Christian scholars believed that Peter influenced Mark's account. In scripture, Peter referred to Mark as "my son" (1st Peter 5:13). **According to Papias, "Mark, who became Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately, though not in order, all that he remembered of the things said or done by the Lord."** Papias.

*Exegesis of the Lord's Oracles via Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.39.15 (circa 140 A.D.). And Irenaeus wrote, "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also handed down to us in writing the things preached by Peter." Irenaeus. Adversus Haereses 3.1.1 (circa 180-199 A.D.).*

Mark traveled with his cousin Barnabas and with Paul. Peter and Paul favorably mentioned him. He was known as **Mark (Latin)** and **John (Hebrew)**.

1. **Miracles:** Mark shows that Jesus taught with authority, as affirmed by the miracles He performed. All but 4 chapters present at least 1 miracle.

**He used Roman time rather than Hebrew time.** And he translated some words into Latin.

2. **Fast-paced Gospel**

Mark is a compact, action-oriented gospel. Mark omits the birth and genealogy of Jesus, and moves straight into His baptism and ministry. The teaching passages in Mark seem condensed when compared to other gospels. Mark is the shortest gospel with only 678 verses and not quite 15,000 words.

3. **The Visual Gospel**

Mark has a modern, factual reporting style. He writes in the present tense, and often uses the word "immediately." Mark is a visual gospel, full of colorful descriptions. For example, when Jesus fed the 5000, the people sat on "green grass" (Mark 6:39).

4. **Gospel of Emotion**

Along with visual details, Mark recorded emotions and gestures. For example, Jesus was "moved with compassion" and "touched" a leper (Mark 1:41). The rich young ruler "ran" and "knelt" before Jesus who "loved" him (Mark 10:17-22).

## C. **Luke**

Written between 59-61 AD by a medical doctor who as the beloved physician/friend of the Apostle Paul (Col. 4:14). As befits a doctor, medical details are often introduced in this gospel (Luke 4:38, 5:12, 6:6, 9:39-42, 18:25, 22:44). Luke was probably a Greek. He was the only non-Jewish New Testament writer.

### 1. **Audience**

Luke wrote the third gospel and the book of Acts. Both were addressed to Theophilus "one who loves God." Jewish customs and places in Palestine are often explained in Luke.

### 2. **Educated Historian**

Luke was an educated physician and an inspired historian. Luke is often considered to have the best literary writing style of all New Testament authors. His account was compiled from eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus (see [Luke 1:2](#)).

### 3. **Chronological Gospel**

Luke's careful narrative was written "in consecutive order" so that his reader would know the "exact truth" about the life and teachings of Jesus ([Luke 1:1-4](#), [Acts 1:1-2](#)). Chronology was important to Luke. Events in Luke were often accompanied by datable references to historic figures ([Luke 1:5](#), [2:1-2](#), [3:1-2](#)).

### 4. **Women in Luke**

Luke paid special attention to women. The birth narrative was written from Mary's perspective. Women contributed monetarily to Christ's ministry ([Luke 8:1-3](#)). Women observed the crucifixion ([Luke 23:49](#)). Jesus first appeared to women when he was resurrected ([Luke 24:1-10](#)). 5 women are mentioned in his genealogy.

## 5. Gospel of Prayer

- Jesus prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21). He often prayed in secret (Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29). He gave thanks before eating (Luke 9:16, 22:17-19).
- Significant prayers in Luke include the "Lord's Prayer" and the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 11:1-4, 22:39-46).
- Two parables found only in Luke highlight the importance of persistent prayer (Luke 11:5-13, 18:1-8).

## 6. Did You Know?

- Luke is the **only gospel with a sequel** – the book of Acts. Luke wrote the longest gospel account. Luke's writings account for more than **25% of the New Testament**. It is the largest NT book with 1151 verses and over 25,000 words.
- Luke contains numerous references to the activity of the Holy Spirit.
- Luke has 18 parables that are found in no other gospel. For example, the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, and the Prodigal Son are only found in the book of Luke (See Luke 10:25-37, 15:4-7, 15:11-32). Has more parables (37) than any other gospel.

## D. John

Written in 80-98 AD and was likely the last to be written. John is the gospel of belief, and was written to show the world that Jesus was the Christ, the "Son of God." **Jesus was sent by the Father to give eternal life to believers.**

James and John were the sons of Zebedee and Salome. They were fishermen who were business partners with Peter and Andrew (Luke 5:10). John was one of the three who were selected to be with Jesus at the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In addition to the fourth gospel, John also wrote 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, as well as the Revelation.

1. **Audience**

This gospel was directed toward a Gentile, Christian audience.

2. **John's Purpose**

John's purpose for writing this gospel was expressly stated in John 20:31, "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

3. **The Different Gospel**

The gospel of John is very different from the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the synoptic gospels). Events recorded in the synoptic gospels were set principally in Galilee. By contrast, most of John's gospel was set in Judea.

While the teachings of Jesus in the synoptics came primarily in the form of sermons and parables; John presented His teachings within the context of conversations that Jesus had with others.

4. **Seven "I am" Claims**

Jesus made seven great "I am" claims in John. These are reminiscent of God's "I am" statement in Exodus 3:14. See John 6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, and 15:1.

5. **"Signs" in John**

Miracles in John are referred to as "signs." The signs are given to confirm the deity of Jesus. The seven principal signs from this gospel are in John 2:1-11, 4:46-51, 5:1-9, 6:1-14, 6:16-21, 9:1-7, and 11:1-46.

6. **Deity of Jesus**

- Emphasized the eternal nature and deity of Christ.
- Relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- Some of the deepest truths about God can be found in within the four chapters of the upper room discourse (John 14, 15, 16, and 17).
7. Some of the most **memorable events** in the life of Jesus are presented only in John. For example, only John recorded
    - The wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)
    - The woman at the well (4:1-42)
    - The raising of Lazarus (11:1-12:11).
  8. **The public ministry of Jesus lasted for approximately 3 ½ years. We know this because John recorded 3 Passovers during Christ's ministry** (John 2:13, 6:4, and 11:55). Hoehner, Harold W. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977.
  9. The mothers of John and Jesus may have been sisters (John 19:25).

#### IV. What was Luke's purpose in writing? Luke 1:1-4.

- A. He had researched his "subject".
  1. Compile an account
  2. Eyewitnesses handed them down
  3. Investigated everything carefully
- B. His purpose was apologetic not evangelistic. "So you might know the exact truth" (v. 4)
- C. Application: Do you know the truth about Jesus or are you living the truth?

#### Conclusion:

Despite our efforts to keep him out, God intrudes. The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: "a virgin's womb and an empty tomb". Jesus entered our world through a door marked, "No Entrance" and left through a door marked "No Exit." – Peter Larson