

*From the Garden to Glory*

# **The Gospels**

## **According to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**

**Authors:** Matthew, also called Levi, one of the twelve apostles

Mark, also known as John Mark, a nephew of Barnabas

Luke, the beloved physician

John, one of the twelve apostles

**Written to:** Matthew's Gospel ~ primarily to the Jews

Mark's Gospel ~ primarily to the Roman or Gentile Christians

Luke's Gospel ~ to Theophilus, "Lover of God", thought to be Luke's former master who freed the physician from his duties after both became Christians

John's Gospel ~ to the world

**Timeline:** c. 4 B.C. - 30 A.D.

**Themes:** Matthew's Gospel ~ Christ the Messiah-King

Mark's Gospel ~ Christ the Servant

Luke's Gospel ~ The Humanity of Christ

John's Gospel ~ The Deity of Christ

**Purpose of writings:**

Matthew's Gospel ~ to prove that Jesus is the Messiah and fulfills the Old Testament prophecies

Mark's Gospel ~ to present Jesus as a Servant, showing more of what He did rather than what He said

Luke's Gospel ~ to give Theophilus and all Gentiles an orderly narrative of the life of Jesus as seen by eye-witnesses (Luke 1:1-4)

John's Gospel ~ so that all would know and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing in Him they might have life in His name (John 20:31)

### **Introduction:**

Gospel means "good news". The good news concerning Jesus Christ is given in four different accounts by four different men. Although there is just one Gospel, each account emphasizes something different about the Person of Jesus Christ. The overall theme and purpose of the four Gospels is simply to tell of Jesus' life and ministry as He walked this earth. He willingly went to the cross bearing the sins of the world to bring salvation to mankind. He rose from the grave, conquering sin and death and gives us new, abundant and eternal life.

The first three Gospels are called "Synoptic Gospels" because they give the same general view of Christ's life, recording, to some extent, the same things. On the other hand John's Gospel emphasizes more of Jesus' conversations and gives the things Jesus said rather than the things He did. John also includes many details not found in the other three Gospels. These unique accounts, such as Jesus washing the disciples' feet, His promise that He will prepare a place for us in heaven, He is the Vine and we the branches, and His prayer in John 17 have become precious to many.

As we begin our study of the Gospels consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Which is your favorite book of the Gospels? Why?
2. The Gospels each present the life and ministry of Jesus from a different perspective. Matthew presents Jesus as a King while Mark presents Him as a servant. Luke explores the humanity of our Lord

and John writes about His divinity. Which of these do you appreciate most at this point in your life? Why?

3. The word *gospel* is often translated *good news*. When did you first hear the good news about Jesus Christ?

### **The Birth, Infancy and Adolescence of Jesus**

Read Matthew 1:18-2:23 and Luke 1:26-2:52

1. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What do you learn about the character of the man who would be an earthly father to Jesus? Which of Joseph's character traits would you like the Lord to work into your life?
2. Luke 1:46-55 is often called *The Magnificent*. Read these verses slowly. Verse 49 says: *He who is mighty had done great things for me*. How has the mighty Lord done great things for *you*?
3. Summarize Luke 2:41-50. What was Jesus' response to His parents in verse 49? Even at an early age Jesus took His relationship with the Father seriously. How seriously do *you* take your relationship with the Father? In what way(s) are you being *about your Father's business* today?

### **Truths about John the Baptist**

Read Matthew 3:1-12 and John 1:6-28

1. As you read Matthew 3:1-12 make a note of everything you learn about John the Baptist and his message.

2. In Matthew 3:8 John told the people to *bear fruits worthy of repentance*. What does this mean? How do *you* do this?
3. Read John 1:19-23. Define humility. What do you learn about John's humility from these verses? How could you grow in the area of humility?

### **The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (c. A.D. 27)**

Read Matthew 3:13-17 and John 1:29-4:42

1. Read Matthew 3:13-17. What do you learn about Jesus from these verses?
2. Jesus' first miracle is recorded in John 2:1-11. Look at verse 9. The guests received the blessing of the wine, but the servants received the greater blessing of seeing the miracle. Share a time when you received a *greater blessing* by being a servant.
3. In John 2:13-22 Jesus' zeal for the temple was obvious in His desire for it to be pure and undefiled. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What are you doing to insure that *your* temple is kept pure?

### **The Galilean Ministry of Jesus (A.D. 27-29)**

Read Luke 4:14-6:49 and Matthew 18:1-35

1. Read Luke 4:14-15. Jesus returned to Galilee; find this region of Israel on a map. Verse 14 says that Jesus returned *in the power of*

*the Spirit*. What does this mean? When have you done something *in the power of the Spirit*? What were the results?

2. Meditate on Jesus' words in Luke 6:46-49. Describe the life of someone who builds her house on *the earth*. How does this life differ from the life of someone who builds her house on *the rock*? What are you doing today to make sure that *you* build *your house* on the rock?
  
3. Matthew 18 describes Jesus' instructions to His followers near the end of His Galilean ministry. Make a note of everything the Lord speaks to you about confronting a *sinning brother* and about *forgiveness*.
  - dealing with a sinning brother (Matthew 18:15-17)
  
  - forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35)

### **Conclusion of Jesus' Ministry (A.D. 29-30)**

Read Luke 10 and John 17

1. As you read the account of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 ask the Lord to speak to you. Is there a specific *neighbor* He is calling you to love as yourself today? If so, who is it and how will you do so?
  
2. Read about Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. How can you make each of the following a practice in your life? Be specific.
  - avoid being worried and troubled about many things
  
  - choose the good part

3. In John 17 Jesus prays for Himself, for His disciples and for all believers. What do you learn from His model prayer that could be applied to your own prayer life?

- prayer for Himself (John 17:1-5)
- prayer for His disciples (John 17:6-19)
- prayer for all believers (John 17:20-26)

### **Jesus' Final Week (Spring A.D. 30)**

Read Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19, 13:1-17, 19:17-42

1. The record of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is found in all four of the Gospels. Make a note of anything that is unique to each of these accounts:

- Matthew 21:1-9
- Mark 11:1-11
- Luke 19:28-44
- John 12:12-19

2. Read John 13:1-17. What do you learn about humility and service from this section of Scripture? How can you apply these lessons in your life?

3. The events of Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial are recorded in John 19:17-42. Sit quietly and read this passage slowly today. Record any new insights that you receive from the Lord.

## **The Resurrection Through the Ascension of Jesus**

Read John 20:1-21:25

1. Look at 20:1-18. Put yourself in Mary's place. What would you have thought when you saw that Jesus was not in the tomb?
2. In 20:21 Jesus commissioned the disciples: *As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.* Where is the Lord sending you today?
3. In 21:15-19 John described how Jesus restored Peter. Think about a time when the Lord restored you. Take some time today to thank Him for being a God who never gives up on us.

## **Summary**

As you conclude your study of the book of the Gospels consider the following questions and write your answer:

1. What is the most significant thing that you have learned from your study about the Lord, His character, or His attributes? How does this encourage you? Take a few moments to thank and praise the Lord for the things that you learned about Him.

2. What is the most important lesson or new insight that you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?