



Jesus & the Gospels

The Gospels capture the extraordinary life of Jesus Christ – Messiah, Saviour and LORD. Now this same Jesus calls to us: 'Come, follow me!'

Session 6

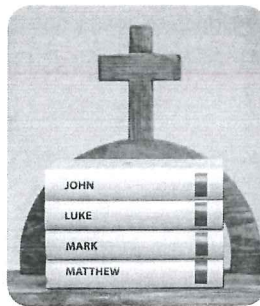
Gospel

A two-part Old English word, 'godspel', meaning 'good news', which translates the Greek word 'euangelion'

These [things] 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.

John 20.31

Introducing the Gospels



- The four Gospels give different portraits of Jesus Christ
- They focus on his public ministry and especially his final weeks
- They were intended for different audiences

MY NOTES 

MATTHEW

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1.1

- Written for a Jewish audience
- Quotes the Old Testament over 100 times
- Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah
- As a descendant of Abraham, Jesus fulfils Old Testament promises

- Authored by John (Jewish) Mark (Roman) – friend of apostle Peter
- The shortest and probably the earliest Gospel (c. AD 64)
- Mark presents Jesus to the Roman Empire

MARK

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark 1.1

LUKE

It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account ... that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Luke 1.3-4

- Luke was a medical doctor who researched eyewitness evidence
- The only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament
- Traces Jesus' lineage right back to Adam
- A Gospel for the marginalised – children, women, Gentiles and the poor

- John echoes the opening line of Genesis
- In Jesus, God has come to bring new creation
- Jesus is God incarnate (literally 'in-the-flesh') – John 1.14
- Jesus used God's signature name, I AM (John 8.58)

JOHN

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

John 1.1-2, NIV

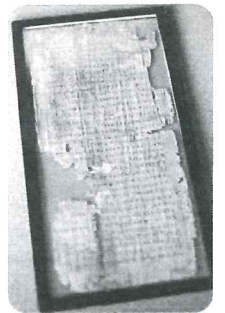
Are the Gospels reliable?

The Gospels relied on eyewitness evidence

- Written within the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries
- They include specific details – names, dates, locations

What about differences between the Gospels?

- Differences indicate that the writers did not falsely collude on their stories
- The variety is a sign of authenticity



4th-century fragment of John's Gospel

Are the Gospel manuscripts reliable?

Author	When written	Earliest copy	Time span	No of copies
Caesar	100-44 BC	AD 900	1000 years	10
Plato	427-347 BC	AD 900	1200 years	7
Aristotle	384-322 BC	AD 1100	1400 years	49
Gospels	AD 55-95	AD 130	35-70 years	5200*

* manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts

How to interpret the Gospels

Try reading a Gospel in one sitting

'The best way to experience a field of flowers is on horse back.'

Chinese proverb

Appreciate the richness of four Gospels

The four different portraits give a fuller picture.



Discussion Time

Pause the video for 25 minutes.

Consider Matthew and Luke's versions of the Beatitudes:

Matthew 5.3–4,6	Luke 6.20–21
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.	Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.	Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

- What differences can you spot? How might these reflect the different emphases and concerns of Matthew and Luke?
- Which one of these beatitudes seems most relevant to your life right now? And why?
- How should these beatitudes shape our attitude on a daily basis?

Restart the video and move on to PART 2.

PART 2.

Jesus' birth and childhood

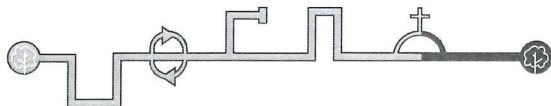
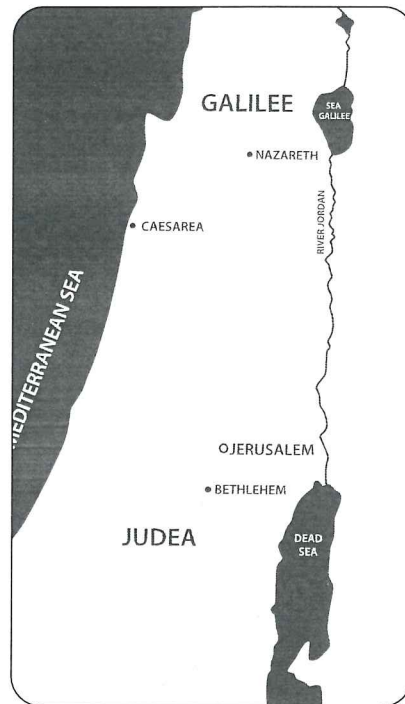
- An imperial census means Joseph and Mary return to Bethlehem - the birth place of King David.
- Shepherds (poor Jews) and Magi (rich Gentiles) worship Jesus
- Jesus grows up in Nazareth with several siblings, working as a carpenter

But you, O Bethlehem ... from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Micah 5.2

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.

Luke 2.52



Jesus' public ministry

The baptism of Jesus

- John the Baptist heralds the arrival of Jesus
- The Holy Spirit anoints Jesus at his baptism

The Holy Spirit descended on him ... like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Luke 3.22

The temptation of Jesus

- Satan tempts Jesus to eat in disobedience, like Adam and Eve
- But Jesus is the new Adam who overcomes evil

The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone."'

Luke 4.3-4

MY NOTES 

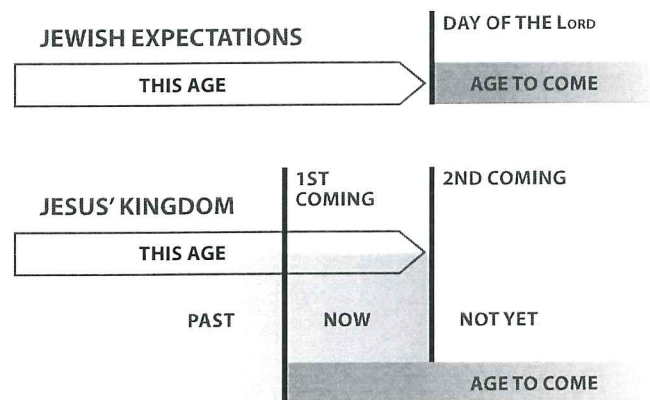
Jesus and the Kingdom

Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming ... 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'

Mark 1.14-15

- The kingdom of God is not a region but a realm where God is king
- Jesus healed the sick, cast out evil, fed the poor and raised the dead to demonstrate God's kingdom

The Kingdom is *now* and *not yet*



Jesus' identity and mission

Jesus said to his disciples, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

Matthew 16.15-16

- The disciples finally realise who Jesus is
- But Jesus shocks them. His mission is to suffer and die

The Mount of Transfiguration

- Jesus is lit up with the glory of God
- Moses (law) and Elijah (prophets) represent the Old Testament
- Jesus will bring salvation through his exodus

And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who ... spoke of his exodus, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luke 9.30-31

Jesus' death and resurrection

The crucifixion

And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him.

Luke 23.33

- After false trials, Jesus was mocked and flogged
- Then he hung on the cross in agony from 9am to 3pm
- But here he spoke his most powerful words

The resurrection

'He is not here, for he has risen.'

Matthew 28.6

- The claim: bodily resurrection that is the start of a new creation
- The evidence: the empty tomb, the eyewitnesses, numerous appearances

'The best attested fact in ancient history.'

Richard Swinburne, Prof. Emeritus Oxford University

JESUS' FINAL WEEK (April c.30 AD)

SUNDAY: *Triumphal entry into Jerusalem*

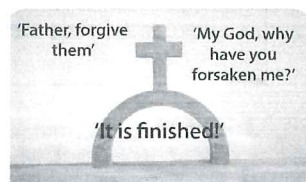
MONDAY: *Cleansing the Temple*

TUESDAY: *Teaching in the Temple*

THURSDAY: *Passover meal, then arrest and trials*

FRIDAY: *Crucifixion*

SUNDAY: *Resurrection!*



'Christianity, if false, is of no importance.

But if true, it is of infinite importance.

*The one thing it cannot be is
moderately important'*

Mere Christianity

– CS Lewis

Personal Reflection

Suggested: 10 minutes

Take a moment to reflect on this verse:

These [things] 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.

John 20:31

Write down something from this verse or the session that has inspired you ...

Write down something that has challenged you ...

Why not share your reflections with others and pray to finish.

Daily Bible Readings: Week 6

Read each passage through carefully. Then consider:

WHAT? *What did this passage mean in its context?*

NOW WHAT? *Now what does this passage mean for my life today?*

- Write down a key verse or phrase that stands out.
- Pray it through, asking God to help you live in this truth.

Day 1 Acts 2:1-47

The fire, the tongues and a new community – Pentecost

Day 2 Acts 7:1-60

Stephen, the speech and the stoning – persecution

Day 3 Acts 9:1-31

Paul, conversion and calling – Damascus road experience

Day 4 Acts 15:1-35

Controversy, the council and the conclusion – simply grace

Day 5 Acts 16:1-40

Philippi, Lydia and a jailer – church planting in Greece

Day 6 Acts 28:1-31

The viper, the gospel and Rome – ends of the earth