

SUNDAY MORNING

BIBLE CLASS

The Four Gospels

Celebrating the Uniqueness
of Each Narrative

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Table of Contents

Matthew

The Man.....	1
The Recipient.....	2
Theme.....	3
Unique Accounts.....	5

Mark

The Man.....	7
The Recipient.....	8
Theme.....	9
Unique Accounts.....	11

Luke

The Man.....	12
The Recipient.....	13
Theme.....	15
Unique Accounts.....	16

John

The Man.....	17
Theme.....	18
Unique Accounts.....	19

Matthew: the Man

1. Matthew 9:9-13

Name the differences between this text and Luke 5:27-32.

What do you think is the reason for these differences?

2. Levi means “joined,” Matthew means “gifts.” Do you think Matthew had two names, as some suppose, or do you think his name was changed? If changed, at what time? Investigate the evidence: Mark 2:14, Mark 3:18, Luke 5:27, Luke 6:15.

- Tax collectors in the 1st Century: Robbers, murderers, and tax collectors were classed together. Tax collectors had the authority of the Roman government to stop anyone they wanted on the road and search their vehicle. Then, they had authority to determine how much money that individual should be taxed at that time. Rome did not regulate tax collectors, as long as Rome received its percentage, it did not concern itself with whatever the collectors took in excess. Jews who served as tax collectors were considered traitors to the nation of the Jews. Tax collectors were banned from the synagogue.
- Types of Taxes: Income tax: 1%. Poll tax: Men (age 14-65) and women (age 12-65). Ground tax (1/10th grain, 1/5th oil and wine). Road tax, harbor tax, clothing tax, and market tax. Road taxes were calculated per cart, per wheel, and per animal.

Matthew: The Recipient

1. The evidence that Matthew wrote to the Jews:

Matthew 1:22-23; 2:14-15; 23; 4:13-16. What do all of these scriptures have in common?

Matthew makes use of Old Testament scriptures 129 times. The book contains 53 scripture quotations, and 76 direct references to Old Testament scriptures. Of the 39 Old Testament books, Matthew uses 25 of them.

2. **Scriptures unique to Matthew's account that are condemning toward the Jews:**

The 8 woes of the Pharisees (23:13-26)

The vineyard workers (21:33-46)

The marriage of the king's son (22:2-14)

The two sons (21:28-31)

The ten virgins (25:1-13)

3. Why do you think Matthew spends so much time recording the negative words of Jesus toward the Jews?

Matthew: The Theme

1. Matthew's focus: JESUS IS KING! Or more specifically, Jesus has the right to be king of the Jews.

How does Matthew chapter 1 relate to the theme?

How do the final verses of Matthew (28:18-20) relate to the theme?

The Birth of the King (chapters 1-2)

The Proclamation of the King (chapters 5-8)

The Credentials of the King (chapters 8-10)

-Power over the human realm. List 8 examples:

-Power over the realm of nature. List 6 examples:

-Power over the spirit realm. List 6 examples:

2. The King's Kingdom.

Matthew speaks of the kingdom about 54 times.

He is the ONLY writer to use the term “Kingdom of Heaven.” Compare Matthew 5:3 to Luke 6:20.

3. Secular findings of the term “kingdom of heaven.”

“That a man first take upon himself the kingdom of heaven, and then the yoke of the precept.” -Talmud (200 B.C.)

“That a man first take upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and then the yoke of the precept.”

-Babylonian Talmud (300 A.D.)

“What is the yoke of the kingdom of heaven? In like manner as they lay the yoke upon an ox, that he may be serviceable; and if he bear not the yoke, he becomes unprofitable: so it becomes a man first to take the yoke upon himself, and to serve in all things with it: but if he casts it off, he is unprofitable” -Gamaliel (Pharisee teacher, contemporary with Jesus)

Consider the interesting use of Jesus' language as he draws from the language of the Jewish teachers to teach His truths: Matthew 11:28-30. Note: only Matthew records these words of Jesus.

Why do you think Matthew records the words “kingdom of heaven” when all other bible writers use “kingdom of God?”

Matthew: Unique Accounts

1. About 38% of Matthew's account is not found in any of the other gospel accounts.

For example, only Matthew records: the genealogy through David to Abraham, the coming of the wise men, the slaughter of infants, the escape and return from Egypt, the **extended sermon on the mount, Peter walks on water, Christ's reply to Peter's confession, the woe's against the Pharisees, betrayal of Judas for 30 pieces of silver, Judas' remorse and suicide, watch at the tomb, bribing the soldiers, opening of saint's graves, the coin in the fish's mouth, and the parable of the tares, hidden treasure, the pearl, the fish net, the unmerciful servant, the vineyard workers, the two sons, marriage of the king's son, ten virgins, and the talents.**

2. Let's consider a few of Matthew's unique accounts.

Peter walks on water (14:22-33).

The further actions of Judas (26:14-16; 27:1-10).

The opening of the saint's graves (27:50-54).

The parable of the Talents (25:14-30).

A talent is not currency, but a measurement of currency. 1 talent equal to the total amount of money made in over 16 years by the average worker. Today, the average wage in America is \$44,000. Therefore, **1 talent measure in today's economy would equal over \$700,000.** 5 talents would be a measurement of \$3,500,000.

What do you think this parable is really about?

Consider Matthew's use of money lingo throughout the book: tribute (4), farthing (2), penny (5), taxes (14), tax collector (9), money (7), silver (6), gold* (4), talent* (5). *used only by Matthew.

Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (13:24-30, 44-50).

In your own words, tell the point of these parables:

Parable of the Tares:

Parable of the Hidden Treasure:

Parable of the Pearl:

Parable of the Dragnet:

After examining the content of these parables, what is the **"kingdom of heaven," as taught by Jesus?**

Mar k : The Man

1. Acts chapter 12

This is the first mention of John in the biblical record, what facts does it say about him?

2. “John” is his Jewish name, “Mark” is his Roman name. Mark is also the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10).

3. Name the recorded events of Mark’s life:

Acts 12:25

Acts 13:5

Acts 13:13

Acts 15:37-39

1 Peter 5:13

Philemon 1:23-24

Colossians 4:10

Mar k : The Recipient

1. Mark's readers are Roman. Consider the evidence:

Mark translates words that were common to Jews:

Boanerges: Sons of Thunder (3:17)

Talitha, cumi: Little girl, arise (5:41)

Ephphatha: Be opened (7:34)

Bartimaeus: Son of Timaeus (10:46)

Abba: Father (14:36)

Golgotha: Place of a Skull (15:22)

Corban: A gift to God (7:11)

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? (15:34)

Mark gives explanations of Jewish customs that would not be necessary if written to Jews:

Mark 7:2-13

Mark 14:12; 15:42

Mark uses Latin words common to the Roman reader:

Legion (5:9), taxes (12:14), quadrans/farthings (12:42), scourged (15:15), praetorium (15:16), centurion (15:39), executioner (6:27).

Mark names the sons of Simon of Cyrene, who were Roman.

Mark 15:21 (compare Romans 16:13)

Mark : The Theme

1. Theme: Jesus is Power! Specifically, Jesus is the Son of God over all men.

What was Matthew's theme?

2. Evidence to support Mark's theme.

Roman history: The common and official title of Augustus Caesar was: **"Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of god."** The 38 B.C. Roman Denarius has image of Julius and Octavian, it's inscribed: **"Divine Julius"** and **"Divine Son."** The 31 B.C. Roman Denarius depicts Octavian, it's inscription: **"Caesar, Son of God."** The 14 A.D. Roman Denarius depicts Tiberius, it's inscription: **"Tiberius, Caesar, God Son of Augustus."**

Read Mark 1:1. How does this verse relate to the above?

What point is Mark making?

The words "Power" and "Authority" are common words in the book of Mark.

How does Mark 1:21-22 relate to Mark's purpose of writing?

What do the following scriptures teach about the extent of Jesus' authority?

Mark 1:22 -

Mark 1:27 -

Mark 2:10 -

Mark 5:30 -

The Son of God's credentials:

Although the shortest gospel account (16 chapters), Mark illustrates the power of Jesus by spending most of his time recording miracles.

Within the 16 chapters, Mark records 18 miracles and references 10 other miracles without giving details.

How do the following miracles differ in display of power and authority?

Mark 1:23-26

Mark 1:40-45

Mark 4:35-41

Mark 6:30-46

3. Jesus, a different kind of supreme authority than the Romans were use to.

Consider the following: Mark 1:40-45; 5:41-43; 9:2-10; 14:32-36; 15:25-32.

What are some differences between Jesus, the heir to the throne of God, and a Roman Emperor?

Mar k : Unique Accounts

1. Mark's gospel account is the shortest of the four accounts, and he does not have a lot of additional information recorded. The most unique thing about Mark's account is the way he delivers the good news of Jesus.

A. The Speed of Mark.

Mark uses the word "immediately" 36 times!

Mark 1:12; 18; 20-21; 28; 31; 42.

Do you think there's a reason why Mark's account is so short, concise at times, and it moves along quickly by the word "immediately?"

2. Unique Accounts.

There are a few things that Mark records that no other gospel writer records.

Mark 4:26-29

Mark 8:22-26

Mark 14:48-52

Mark 16:5-6

Luke: The Man

1. What details about Luke can we learn from the following scriptures:

2 Timothy 4:9-11

Philemon 1:23-24

2. Colossians 4:10-14

What was the occupation of Luke?

What was Luke's nationality?

3. Luke also wrote the book of Acts and uses "we" each time he records an event that he was particularly involved in.

Name some of the great things that Luke was a part of as a teacher that traveled with Paul.

Acts chapters 16-21

Acts chapters 27-28

Luke: The Recipient

1. Luke 1:1-4

Theophilus: a Greek name meaning “one who loves God.”

Some suppose that, by Theophilus, Luke is writing to **all who love God. Others note that the term “most excellent Theophilus” denotes a rank or high office of one individual (consider Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25).**

2. The recipient is Greek.

Luke explains things throughout the text that would not be needed if the reader was a Jew, or even familiar with Judea.

“Capernaum, a city of Galilee” (4:31)

“Country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee” (8:26)

“the mount that is called the mount of Olives” (21:37)

“feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover” (22:1)

“Arimathaea, a city of the Jews” (23:51)

“a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs” (23:13)

Luke records about 30 fewer references to the Old Testaments than Matthew. Little is said about the fulfillment of prophecy, demonstrating that, unlike the Jews that Matthew **wrote to, Luke’s reader was not as concerned about the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy.** But they do have other major concerns which Luke will place focus on.

3. The Greeks invested their time in intellectual power, gaining wisdom, knowledge, and an understanding of this world as well as the realms beyond. (Acts 17:18-21; 1 Corinthians 1:22).

Luke spends much of his time on the teachings of Jesus.

Where was Matthew's focus?

Where was Mark's focus?

Consider how these writers focused on things that were the most concerning to the reader. Think of the **application here for how we talk to other's about the gospel.**

4. About 51% of Luke's account is dedicated to the teachings of Jesus, the rest of his account narrates the birth, early years, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Luke records 35 parables in his 24 chapter book!

Luke: The Theme

1. The humanity of Jesus. Specifically, the perfect man.

The godhood of Jesus (which was the main focus of Mark) is **not hidden nor denied by Luke, it's simply not his theme.**

Therefore, Luke does not focus on recording miracles that prove the power and godhood of Jesus.

2. An outline of Luke's theme.

Luke 1 — Luke 4:13

The beginning of Jesus' life in the flesh.

Luke 4:14 — Luke 9

The identification of Jesus: God in flesh.

Luke 9:51 — Luke 19:27

The teachings of Jesus. 60% of this content is unique.

Luke 19:28 — Luke 24

The sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus.

3. Within Luke's main theme, we see multiple purposes for writing.

Read Luke 1:1-4. What reason does Luke give for writing to Theophilus?

Consider the following: Luke 2:14, 32; 3:6; 24:47. What was another point Luke wanted to make known.

Luke: Unique Accounts

1. About 55% of Luke's account is unique.

Of the 35 parables in the book, 18 of them are unique to **Luke's account.**

2. Unique accounts chosen for our study:

The background of John the Baptist (Luke 1).

Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37).

What is significant about the fact that the compassionate man is a Samaritan?

Parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32).

Who does the eldest son represent?

The Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31).

What characteristics of this account demonstrate that this is not a parable but a true event?

Jesus before Herod Antipas (23:1-12).

The Road to Emmaus (24:13-35).

John: The Man

1. What do we learn about John in the following verses?

Matthew 4:21

Matthew 10:1-2

John 21:20

2. Describe the relationship that John had with the Lord.

Mark 5:37; Matthew 17:1; Matthew 26:37.

3. John penned 5 New Testament books: John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Revelation.

4. John is an active laborer in the book of Acts.

Acts 3:1; 4:13; 8:14.

5. Jesus gives John a new name: Mark 3:17.

For what reasons do you think Jesus would call him that?

John: The Theme

1. John 20:30-31

What does John say about his purpose in writing?

2. The word “Believe” is used 66 times in John’s account. “Know” is used 82 Times (although not every time does “know” refer to belief)

John gives examples of individuals who believe in Jesus after:

Observing Jesus from the beginning (2:1-11)

Observing Jesus for a few hours (1:37-41)

Observing Jesus for a long time (6:68-69)

John gives God’s own testimony (1:29-34)

John also provides testimony of those who did not believe:

John 1:10-11; 5:16-18; 8:41-45, 56-59; 11:45-50; 12:37-43.

3. Subthemes

The word “Life” appears 51 times.

Consider: John 3:15-16, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47-51; 11:25; 14:6.

The word “Light” appears 16 times.

Consider: John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46.

4. How do the words believe, life, and light relate to each other in the book of John?

John: Unique Accounts

1. About 92% of John's account is unique!

Matthew: 38%

Mark: 7%

Luke: 55%

2. Miracles in the book of John.

John records 7 miracles of Jesus, 5 of which are unique.

Water to wine (2:1-11)

Healing at Bethesda (5:1-9)

Raising of Lazarus (11:1-53)

3. Teachings of Jesus.

There are NO parables in the book!

John's unique approach to the teachings of Jesus is to record discussions and interactions that Jesus had with both individuals and groups.

Nicodemus (3:1-21)

Who was Nicodemus and what was his purpose in coming to Jesus?

What things did Jesus teach Nicodemus about Salvation?

Samaritan Woman (4:7-29)

What things did Jesus teach this women about the coming church?

The Greeks (12:20-36)

What was different about these Greeks that made them unlike most Greeks?

The Apostles (chapters 13-17)

Write out a simple outline (or order of events) of this discourse:

John 13

John 14

John 15

John 16

John 17