

THE GOSPEL STORIES
Jesus Series
Dr. Roger Barrier
S-1518

•SLIDE #: Glenn, Jack and I are preaching a series of four or five Sunday vignettes about different aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus. Interspersed between each vignette will be several evangelistic spotlight series designed to lead our friends to Christ.

•SLIDE #: Transformers change shape into all sorts of intriguing things. Jesus pictured as transformed in multiple manifestations. Some times he is a king, some times an ox, sometimes a man, some times an eagle, sometimes a lion, sometimes a lamb.

The gospels reveal Him in multiple dimensions.

Where do we find out about Jesus? Jesus never wrote a book or a magazine article. He wrote in the sand once – but that's gone!

•SLIDE #: Today I would like to overview the major sources for the life story of Jesus with an emphasis on the four gospels.

•SLIDE #: There is only one Gospel. The word means, “good news” to deal with all the sin, corruption, hate, murder, incest, backstabbing, injustice in the world. Jesus Christ, God who put on a body, came to earth, took the sin on His own body and paid the price for all of it. Sins forgiven at the foot of the cross and life is transformed to change the world into a kingdom of right and peace.

The gospels are not biographies. Leave out too much material to be true biographies. Basically skip over 30 years of his life. About half of each gospel deals with only the last week in X's life.

Give enough information about who Jesus is to prepare us for his death and resurrection, which is the focal point for each gospel.

The Biblical records are not our only source of information about Jesus of Nazareth.

•SLIDE #: Jesus is mentioned on many occasions in secular history dating to the 1st century.

Josephus was the governor of Galilee 66 AD when the Romans invaded, wrote extensive history of the Jews from Adam through the reign of Nero! *Antiquities of the Jews*.

Sizeable paragraph on the History of Jesus Christ. *Antiquities*- Book 18; Chapter 3; Paragraph 3.

Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, - a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to

him, both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

The Jewish Talmud has eight references to Jesus Christ – all eight are designed to discredit him.

Roman Historians Tacitus and Suetonius made reference to Christ and His followers. Read References in Bettenson's Documents of Christ and Church. pp1-2.

Correspondence between Emperor Trajan & Pliny the Younger.

•SLIDE #: Pseudepigrapha (false writings: given name of one close to Christ.)

Gospel of Judas, etc! New information re Jesus?

Infancy Gospel – Thomas – JC lengthens Bed

Pseudo-Matthew- Kills professor raises him back to life;-dead birds brought to life; thirsty on road to Egypt

Written by Gnostics

Most after 150 A.D.

Most found in Egypt

Most written in Coptic

•SLIDE #: Christ was one of many spirit beings that sprang forth from God and Sophia.

These spirit beings brought salvation by special knowledge only to the spiritually elite.

God almighty was not the creator. Lesser beings like Lucifer and Jesus created the universe.

Gnostics elements are still found today in new age mysticism, extreme charismatic groups and Mormonism

They wrote their own scriptures to support their views. Most famous is the Gnostic gospels from Nag Hammadi (site in Egypt out side of Alexandria) discovered in 1945, all gospels written in Coptic: all pseudegraphic written as if written by famous NT or OT characters.

•SLIDE #: The gospel of John and 1-3 John written against Gnosticism.

That is why the emphasis on the word of God being God,

Jesus was present at the creation, he was not created: He was the creator.

Jesus presented as the Truth that can be had by anyone.

•SLIDE #: What did Jesus look like!

Suffering servant—

READ Isaiah 52:14 – Appearance marred.
READ Isaiah 53:2 – No beauty that we should behold Him
Cyril of Alexandria went on to say: “Ugliest of children of men!”
READ Psalm 45:2 – fairest of Sons of Men!

The most famous of all descriptions is in the *Letter of Lentulus*, who purports to be governor of Jerusalem:

•SLIDE #: Holman Hunt used this description for his famous painting Jesus.

“There has appeared here in our time and still lives here, a man of great power named Jesus Christ. The people call him a prophet of truth, and his disciples, the Son of God. He has a venerable face, of a sort to arouse both fear and love in those who see him. His hair is the color of ripe chestnuts, smooth almost to the ears, but above them waving and curling, with a slight bluish radiance, and it flows over his shoulders. It is parted in the middle on the top of his head, after the fashion of the people of Nazareth. His brow is smooth and very calm, with a face without wrinkle or blemish, lightly tinged with red. His nose and mouth are faultless. His beard is luxuriant and unclipped, of the same color as his hair, not long but parted at the chin. His eyes are expressive and brilliant. He is terrible in reproof, sweet and gentle in admonition, cheerful without ceasing to be grave. He has never been seen to laugh, but often to weep. His figure is slender and erect; his hands and arms are beautiful to see. His conversation is serious, sparing and modest. He is the fairest of the children of men.

Some believe this is nothing less than the police description of Jesus at the time of his arrest. But, the Letter of Lentulus is certainly a forgery, although even then it is not impossible that it does embody a genuine tradition.

It may be that we have to say of the appearance of Jesus, with Augustine, “We are utterly ignorant.”

•SLIDE #: The gospel, the story of the life of Christ is a singular message—yet we have four records of it from four different points of view, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each presents a decidedly different aspect of the character of Jesus Christ.

There are four visionary insights into the throne room of Heaven in the Bible. They are remarkably alike.

Ezekiel saw the crystal sea, and four living creatures glorifying God, each had four faces and four wings.

•SLIDE #: EZEKIEL 1:4-6: “The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings.”

•SLIDE #: EZEKIEL 1:10: Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a MAN, and on the right side each had the face of a LION, and on the left the face of an OX; each also had the face of an EAGLE.

Looks remarkably like the picture of the throne in REVELATION 4:6-7.

- SLIDE #: Revelation 4:6: Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.
- SLIDE #: Revelation 4:7 The first living creature was like a LION, the second was like an OX, the third had a face like a MAN, the fourth was like a flying EAGLE.

These animals typify the character of Jesus Christ as delineated in each gospel.

- SLIDE #: Let's look at this more carefully

Matthew: Lion of the tribe of Judah—Jesus Christ revealed as King

Mark: Ox was the beast of burden—Jesus Christ as the Servant

Luke: Picture of God as man—Jesus Christ calls himself the Son of Man

John: Eagle—Jesus Christ seen as the eternal, divine Son of God.

Only two have the Christmas story: Matthew and Luke, Joseph's side with wise men for a king; Mary's side with shepherds for the common man.

Mark has none. Who cares about the birth of a slave?

John has none because God is eternal.

Only two have genealogies: Matthew because the King has a pedigree. Luke because Jesus is human.

Mark has no genealogy because who cares where a servant comes from!

John has none because God has no ancestors.

- SLIDE #: The four gospels are divided into two Broad Divisions: Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called "Synoptics:" ("see together") 1 year of ministry

John stands alone, it is unlike all the others; three years of ministry.

Followers of Christ expected eminent return. Jesus had yet to return; eyewitnesses dying; need to make a record.

- SLIDE #: About 60 a.d. Mark decided to write down the story. Mark wrote Mark

Papias (130 a.d.) "Mark is a copy of one of Peter's sermons."

Irenaeus (180 a.d.) "Mark transmitted to us in writing the things that Peter preached.

Acts 10:37-42: Peter's sermon to Cornelius is an outline of Mark.

No teaching or parabolic sections

- SLIDE #18: Mark presents Jesus Christ as Servant.

Mark left his signature: Read Mark 14:51-52.

Mark was a failure in Christian ministry. Fled in panic when Christ was arrested.

Accompanied Paul and Barnabas on 1st journey. Quit when the going got tough (Acts 13:13, “John Mark left them to return home to Mama.

Paul and Barnabas split up in Acts 15 before 2nd journey over John Mark. Failure no one wanted.

But he did not quit. Picked up the pieces of his life. Great ending.

Read 2 Timothy 4:11: “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”

Lesson from his life: Don’t’ give up, don’t’ ever give up.

Learn lessons from the mistakes of your life and keep going.

Portria Nelson: “An autobiography in 5 short chapters

Chapter One: I walk down the street, There is a deep hole in the sidewalk, I fall in. I am lost. I am helpless. It isn’t my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter Two: I walk down the street, There is a deep hole in the sidewalk, I pretend I don’t see it. I fall in again. I can’t believe I am in the same place, but it isn’t my fault. It takes a long time to get out.

Chapter Three: I walk down the same street, there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it is there. I still fall in. It is a habit. My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.

Chapter Four: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

Chapter Five: I walk down a different street.

- SLIDE #: About five years later, 65 a.d. Matthew used four sources to compose his gospel:

The Gospel of Mark

(Study Matthew and Luke and discover that they contain massive amounts of material not found in Mark. But basically everything in Mark is found in Matthew and Luke).

A collection of Jesus sayings and teachings called *Q*. *Q* never been found, just postulated.

Personal experiences that appear in no other gospel

Talked to Joseph’s side of the family: Birth narratives; Magi, gold, frank, myrrh

- SLIDE #: Matthew presents Jesus Christ as King

Was a Roman government employee interested in government and kings; tax collector.
Matthew's structure and outline
Ordered like an accountant;

Left his signature: Calling of Matthew: READ Matthew 9:9.
Life Transformed to a new purpose in life
Laws of kingdom Focus on teaching sections of the Kingdom

Matthew Party.
Read Matthew 9:10-11.

Great Commission to announce the king and evangelize people into the kingdom.

•SLIDE #: About 65 a.d. Luke used four major sources to compose his gospel:

The Gospel of Mark
A collection of Jesus sayings and teachings called *Q*
Research from those who met Jesus personally
Birth narratives from Mary's side of the family, shepherds, etc.

•SLIDE #: Luke presents Jesus Christ as Man

Luke was a Physician, born in Greece.
Probably man in the Macedonian Vision that led Paul to leave Turkey and bring gospel to Europe.

His signature: READ Luke 1:1-4.
He also wrote Acts: Read Acts 1:1-4.

Never knew Jesus. Through investigation of truth. Mary's family.

Human compassion. Warm, human touch.
Special emphasis on Christ's concern for women and children.

Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25): unique to Luke
Lost sheep, coin, son (Prodigal Son): unique to Luke.
Ten lepers healed

•SLIDE #: About 95 a.d. John had obviously read Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Decided to fill in the gaps with his personal experiences with Christ.

Baptism by John the Baptist: Wedding at Cana; Nicodemus, Woman at the well, man born blind, raising of Lazarus

- SLIDE #: John presents Jesus Christ as God

Taylor Schull story: Who is that? Gary, Glenn, Darin. Pointed to Roger: god.

READ John 1:1-3. Focus on divinity.

Seven signs: Read John 20:30-31.

Show you John's signature: Read John 13:22-25.

John knew Jesus better than any one else on earth, and was convinced He was God.

READ 1 John 1:1-4. Personal testimony of the divine reality of Jesus Christ.

Trust worthy validity of the gospels: Holy Spirit is there moving deeply in his heart. Holy moments.

Accuracy of the words guaranteed.

- SLIDE #: READ JOHN 14:26: But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

- SLIDE #: Each gospel writer encountered Jesus in a different way—and their gospel perspectives reflect it.

Remember our Chart of Four faces of the heavenly creatures foreshadowed: Lion; Ox, Man, Eagle

This is what transformers are for!

APPLICATION

The central theme of each gospel provides an outline for a Christ-based life.

- SLIDE #: Matthew: Bowing to King Jesus is to experience the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

- SLIDE #: Mark: Developing the attitude of a servant is to cultivate the heart of Christ.

- SLIDE #: Luke: Sharing compassion is to express the passion of Christ.

- SLIDE #: John: Recognizing the Divinity of Christ is to enjoy the life of Christ.