

# **THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**



**Kaniki Bible University College 2019**

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# 1 Introductions

## 1.1 The Gospel is Good News

## 1.2 Gospel as a Literary Genre

## 1.3 Inspiration and Authority

## 1.4 Principles of Hermeneutics

## 1.5 Introducing the Essays UNIT 18, the Seminar UNIT 19 and Words of Eternal Life UNIT 20

## 1.6 The Synoptic Problem

### 1.6.1 HOW THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN – THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

#### What Luke says about his Gospel

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye witnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)*

#### Examples of the Similarities and Differences between Matthew, Mark and Luke

##### Similarities in Wording

Matthew 19:13–15	Mark 10:13–16	Luke 18:15–17
Matthew 22:23–33	Mark 12:18–27	Luke 20:27–40
Matthew 24:4–8	Mark 13:5–8	Luke 21:8–11

##### Similarities in Order

Matthew 16:13–20:34	Mark 8:27–10:52	Luke 9:18–51/18:15–43
Matthew 12:46–13:58	Mark 3:31–6:6a	Luke 8:19–56

**Similarities in Parenthetical Material** e.g. *Let the Reader understand* Matthew 24:15 Mark 13:14.

**Similarities in OT Quotations** – not following Hebrew or Greek OTs e.g. Matt 3:3 Luke 3:4

NOT just down to “**the verbal inspiration of the Holy Spirit**” this explains similarities, not differences.

Mark is the shortest in length. Of Mark’s 11,025 words, only 132 have no parallel in either Matthew or Luke. Percentage-wise, 97% of Mark’s Gospel is duplicated in Matthew; and 88% is found in Luke. On the other hand, less than 60% of Matthew is duplicated in Mark, and only 47% of Luke is found in Mark. There is much important material found in both Matthew and Luke that is absent in Mark. In particular, the birth narrative, Sermon on the Mount, Lord’s Prayer, and resurrection appearances.

For examples of exclusively Mark-Luke parallels, note the following: the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue (Mark 1:23-28/Luke 4:33-37); the widow’s mite (Mark 12:41-44/Luke 21:1-4).

For examples of exclusively Mark-Matthew parallels, note the following: the offending eye/hand (Matt. 5:29-30 and 18:8-9/Mark 9:43-47); the details about the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-12/Mark 6:17-29); Jesus walking on the water (Matt 14:22-33/Mark 6:45-52); Isaiah’s prophecy about a hypocritical people and Jesus’ application (Matt 15:1-20/Mark 7:1-23); the Syrophenician woman

pericope (Matt 15:21-28/Mark 7:24-30); the healing of the deaf-mute (Matt 15:29-31/Mark 7:31-37); the feeding of the four thousand (Matt 15:32-39/Mark 8:1-10); Elijah's coming (Matt 17:10-13/Mark 9:11-13); the withering of the fig tree (Matt 21:20-22/Mark 11:20-26); the soldiers' mockery of Jesus before Pilate (Matt 27:28-31/Mark 15:17-20).

### **1.6.2 Suggested Answers to The Synoptic Problem**

Most scholars agree that the Gospels are so similar, yet so different, because of a literary dependence between them.

**Augustine** (5<sup>th</sup> Century) Matthew wrote first, Mark used Matthew, Luke used Mark

#### **The Two Gospel hypothesis (Owen 1764, Griesbach 1789)**

Matthew wrote first, Luke used Matthew, Mark used Luke and Matthew.

Agrees with the Early Church tradition that Matthew was written first. It can explain the agreements between the Gospels, especially where Matthew and Luke agree and Mark doesn't. But it doesn't explain the differences between accounts. Why would Luke miss out so much of Matthew. And why would Mark have bothered to write anything at all?

### **1.6.3 The Two Source Hypothesis (Holtzmann 1863 Streeter 1924)**

This is the view most widely held today. Mark wrote first. Matthew and Luke then each used Mark plus another source called Q (or other sources).

#### **Why do we think Mark wrote first?**

1. The argument from REDACTION. We can see reasons why Matthew and Luke might have changed from what they read in Mark, but no sensible reasons why Mark would have written what he did if he had Matthew and Luke.
2. The lack of verbal agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark
3. The absence of agreements in order with Matthew and Luke against Mark
4. Mark is the shortest and so much of Mark is in both Matthew and Luke.
5. Mark missed out so much from Matthew and Luke but adds redundant material.
6. Mark has the poorest Greek and the least developed theology.
7. Mark has Aramaic expressions (Mk 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36; 15:22, 34) which are not in Matthew or Luke.
8. Mark has harder readings theologically – limitations of Jesus' power (cf. Mk 1:32–34; 3:9f; 6:5f)

#### **The existence of Q (a body of source material shared by Matthew and Luke but not Mark)**

Matthew and Luke have in common about 235 verses not found in Mark.<sup>52</sup> The verbal agreements between these two is often striking e.g., Matt 6:24/Luke 16:13; Matt 7:7-11/Luke 11:9-13. But the non-Mark material appears in different places in Matt and Luke, and sometimes it differs. Matt 6:10 v Luke 11:2 Matt includes but Luke misses out, "your will be done on earth as in heaven."

Q could have been one document, or a collection of documents. Matthew and Luke could also have had their own unique sources, which some people call M and Q respectively. Matthew had his own recollections. Luke says Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Note also the recent insights of cognitive psychology. In a non-reading oral culture people were able to commit large blocks of content to memory and retell the stories reliably. And the disciples were highly motivated to remember Jesus's words and deeds as accurately as they could. Q could just be oral.

## READING

Articles and Extracts which are made available in course folders are indicated by (FOLDER).

Course reading is prioritised as follows:

**Required Reading** – you should do your best to read this at some point before or after the lecture.

**Recommended Reading** – the material to read first if you want to explore a particular subject further.

Suggested Reading – other material to move on to after you have read the Recommended Reading.

FOR PASTORS – non-academic reading which will be useful for preachers and church leaders.

## READING FOR THE WHOLE COURSE

The following reference works and general books contain articles or chapters relating to this course. Appropriate articles or pages are noted in different units.

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

*IVP New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

*IVP New Bible Commentary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Keener, C. S. *The IVP Biblical Background Commentary: New Testament*. InterVarsity, 1993.

G.D.Fee and D.Stuart *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition Zondervan 2014)

G.D.Fee and D.Stuart *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition Zondervan 2014)

The following book has sections related to much of the course but is written at a deep level.

**NT Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* 1997**

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**These general books are also helpful**

John Drane *Introducing the New Testament* 2001

Donald Guthrie *Introducing the New Testament* IVP 1990

Donald Guthrie *New Testament Theology* IVP 1981

Scott McKnight *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* Baker Book House 1988

D.A. Carson *New Testament Introduction* 2005

C.L. Blomberg *Jesus and the Gospels an Introduction* 2009, 2014

J.D.G. Dunn *Jesus according to the New Testament* 2019

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## READING FOR UNIT 1

Books, articles and extracts are generally listed in the order in which they should be read.

**IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels – article *SYNOPTIC GOSPELS***

Peter Thomas *Is the Longer Ending of Mark Holy Scripture? An Exploration of the Nature of Biblical Authority* – Dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Aspects of Biblical Interpretation. London Bible College 1995. Chapters 2 and 3. (FOLDER)

R. Bauckham *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* pp 1-11 (FOLDER)

FOR PASTORS: Peter Thomas *Understanding the New Testament: a Course in Principles for Biblical Interpretation* (FOLDER)

## 2 Mark's Gospel – an Overview

### 2.1 Author and Date

Conservative opinion is John Mark, a companion of both Peter and Paul – see 1 Peter 5:12-13; Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13; 15:37–39, Philemon 24; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11. He was part of the Jerusalem church which met at his mother's home (Acts 12:12) which might have been where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper (Mark 14:14–15; Acts 1:13–14). Many believe Mark himself was the “young man” in Mark 14:51-52.

Papias's *Interpretation of the Lord's Sayings* (c. A.D. 120/30) cited by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.15), claims: “And this is what the Elder said, ‘Mark, who became Peter's interpreter, accurately wrote, though not in order, as many of the things said and done by the Lord as he had noted.’ This tradition was followed by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria as cited by Eusebius. On Peter's influence see Mark 16:7.

Early tradition says Mark wrote following Peter's death in Rome (assumed to be during Nero's persecution 64-65 AD). Before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD (foretold in Mark 13:3-37) and even before the military blockade of 67-69 AD. So probably 65-67 AD

### 2.2 Purposes

- (a) An evangelistic book to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, Messiah, Son of God (Mark 1:1)
- (b) A narrative with narrator, characters and plot, to record faithfully the words and actions of Jesus to pass on to distant readers and future generations. Narrative features such as *euthus*.
- (c) An apologetic defending the certainty that Jesus truly was the “Messiah, Son of God” (e.g., 1:11; 1:25; 1:34; 3:11; 5:7; 8:27–29; 9:7; 14:61–62; 15:39) despite his death (8:27–31; 14:61–62; 15:39)
- (d) A pastoral message reassuring disciples who were facing persecution and suffering, warning them of troubles (13:3-37) and reminding them of the need to take up the cross (8:34–38). but assuring them that the kingdom is still coming, particularly in the seed parables (4:1–20, 26–29, 30–32).

### 2.3 The Ending of Mark's Gospel?

Critical scholarship has argued that the Longer Ending 16:9-20 which is absent from early manuscripts should be discounted because Mark almost certainly did not write it. Mark 16:8 “*for they were afraid*” is a very abrupt ending and 16:9ff does not flow on from it. Bruce Metzger counters:

“Since Mark was not responsible for the composition of the last twelve verses of the generally current form of his Gospel, and since they undoubtedly had been attached to the Gospel before the Church recognized the fourfold Gospels as canonical, it follows that the New Testament contains not four but five evangelic accounts of events subsequent to the resurrection.” (The Text of the New Testament Oxford: OUP, 1992, 229.)

I have argued that the Longer Ending of Mark (16:9-20) should still be accepted as a part of Holy Scripture, even if Mark was not the author, because it is part of the New Testament canon accepted by all the churches which has shaped the theology and worship of the church from the earliest days.

“As far as scholarship is concerned, G.M.Burge describes Mark 16:9-20 most aptly as ‘expunged from the NT and relegated to the graveyard of quietly dismissed passages.’ Yet, in sharp contrast, elements of Mark 16:9-20 have become major pillars for various popular constructions of a theology of ‘signs and wonders’. The question is simple and urgent, ‘Is Mark 16:9-20 Holy Scripture?’ Does this text carry the same authority for theology, church and Christian living as Mark 1:1-16:8? This study will argue that Mark 16:9-20 should receive once again the full status of Holy Scripture.” (page 2)

See Peter Thomas *Is the Longer Ending of Mark Holy Scripture?* (FOLDER)

## **2.4 Themes in Mark's Gospel**

**2.4.1 The Kingdom of God as future expectation and present reality SEE UNIT 5.**

**2.4.2 Jesus as miracle worker and prophet SEE UNIT 5**

**2.4.3 Discipleship SEE UNIT 6**

**2.4.4 Christology: Son of Man and Son of God SEE UNIT 14**

**2.4.5 Jesus as the Suffering Servant SEE UNIT 16**

## **2.5 Special theme in Mark – The Messiah and the Messianic Secret (Mark 1:1)**

## **2.6 Jewish expectations about the Messiah – God's end-time redeemer**

**2.6.1 A figure like Elijah (from Ecclesiasticus)**

**2.6.2 The Eschatological Prophet – One like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)**

**2.6.3 God's Servant (Isaiah 42:1-7)**

**2.6.4 Melchizedek (Qumran community)**

**2.6.5 A Messiah like David (Isaiah 9:2-7) – the most popular expectation**

## **2.7 Does Mark present a "Messianic Secret"? (W Wrede 1901)**

**2.7.1 Jesus commands silence after healings (e.g. Mark 5:43, 7:36) and from demons (on Mark 1:25 and 34 but not on other occasions), and from disciples (e.g. Mark 9:9)**

**2.7.2 Jesus taught in parables to conceal truth (Mark 4:11)**

**2.7.3 BUT most of Jesus's ministry was very public e.g. feeding 5000. Mark 9:41 is explicit.**

## **2.8 What kind of Messiah was Jesus?**

**2.8.1 Messiah would be misunderstood as a political title so Jesus needed to educate his disciples away from mistaken views to understand what kind of Messiah he was, particularly the necessity of his suffering and death (Mark 8:31, 9:30-32, 10:33-34)**

**2.8.2 Despite his declaration of faith, Peter clearly still misunderstood (Mark 8:31-33)**

**2.8.3 Towards the end Jesus made clear that he was indeed the Messiah. SEE UNIT 15.**

**2.8.4 Jesus would be the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52-53. SEE UNIT 16**

**2.8.5 Jesus was convicted and crucified for being a "messianic pretender". Mark 14:57-64**

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## **READING FOR UNIT 2**

**NT Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* 1997 Chapter 11 parts 2 and 4.**

**IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels IVP 1992 article on *Mark, Gospel of,***

**G.D.Fee and D.Stuart *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (4<sup>th</sup> Edn Zondervan 2014) *Chaper on Mark***

**RH Stein *Jesus the Messiah* 2017**

**Recommended Commentaries on Mark:-**

**R.T. France – *The Gospel of Mark* (New International Greek Testament Commentary). 2002**

**William Lane *Gospel According to Mark* (New International Commentary on the New Testament). 1974**

***New Testament Introduction*. Donald Guthrie Intervarsity Press 1970 Chapter on Mark**

**Hendriksen, *The Gospel Of Mark*, NT Commentary William Baker Book House,**

## 3 Matthew's Gospel – an Overview

### 3.1 Author and Date

The only option ever proposed in the Early Church was the apostle Matthew called by Jesus in Matthew 9:9; Matthew 10:3. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (died c. A.D. 130) made this statement about Matthew, known as “the Papias Logion” which survives only in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.16). “Matthew collected (*synetaxato*) the oracles (*ta logia*) in the Hebrew language (*Hebraidi dialektō*), and each interpreted (*hērmēneusen*) them as best he could.” Earlier generations understood this to say that Matthew wrote in either Hebrew or Aramaic, and the Gospel as we have it was later translated into Greek. However the phrase is now generally thought to mean instead “in the Hebrew style”. Irenaeus added that the First Gospel was composed while Peter and Paul were founding the church in Rome (*Haer.* 3.1.1; from Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.8.2). Eusebius and Origen (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.25.4) agreed

Some argue that Matthew (an apostle) would not have used Mark (not an apostle) but that objection does not stand if Peter (chief apostle) was Mark's main source and authority. Known as Levi (a Jewish name) in Mark 2:14-15 and Luke 5:27-29 the Gospel-writer was most probably a Jew but as a tax-collector, he would have been fluent in Greek. Many scholars support apostolic authorship including Tasker, Albright and Mann, Maier, Gundry, Carson, and France.

Several passages in Matthew imply that the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing when they were written – Matthew 5:23–24; 17:24–27; 23:16–22). After the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD Emperor Vespasian replaced the temple tax with a “Jewish tax” for the treasury of the temple in Jerusalem. It is unlikely Matthew would have included as story encouraging Christians to pay such a tax to support pagan worship Matthew 17:24-27. So although many would date Matthew after 70 AD it is credible to suggest the late 60s AD (see commentary by R.T.France).

### 3.2 Themes in Matthew's Gospel

#### **3.2.1 Jesus is God's Messiah who fulfills OT promises, reveals God's will and inaugurates the kingdom of heaven through his public ministry, passion and resurrection, and consequently, reigns over the new people of God.**

Jesus is given the title Messiah in Matthew 1:1, 16, 17, 18; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16, 20; 22:42; 23:10; 26:63, 68; 27:17, 22. In Jesus the OT promises of restoration and salvation are coming to pass (cf. 2:4; 26:63) fulfilling the OT in his person and ministry (see below). For Matthew the term Messiah seems to imply preexistence (2:4; 22:41–46). Jesus as Lord – evidenced by worship offered to Jesus as one who alone has divine power. Matthew 8:2, 6, 25; 9:28; perhaps also 2:2; 8:11; 14:33.

#### **3.2.2 Jesus the Teacher**

Jesus's own description of himself Matthew 10:24, 25; 23:8; 26:18

Called “teacher” by others Matthew 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36

Jesus's ethical teaching – especially the Sermon on the Mount chapters 5-7 and see also 13 and 18.

#### **3.2.1 Discipleship**

#### **3.2.2 Matthew is the most “ecclesiastical” Gospel. Matthew 16:17-19; 18:15-20**

Perhaps offering a “Manual of Discipline” for the church (Stendahl) e.g. on divorce 5:31-33, disputes 18:15-20, discipline 18:18; 16:9 in a “mixed membership” church 7:15-27; 13:24ff.

### **3.3 Special theme in Matthew's Gospel – The Fulfilment of God's Promises to the Jews in the Life and Ministry of Jesus**

#### **3.3.1 The Prologue – Genealogy, Davidic Kingship, Virgin Birth Matthew 1-2**

#### **3.3.2 Formula Quotations: "All this took place so that ... " Not always obvious quotes from MT or LXX, sometimes from Targums, including editorial comments.**

Matthew 1:22-23 (Isaiah 7:14) 2:5-6 (Micah 5:2) 2:15 (Hosea 11:1) 2:17-18 (Jeremiah 31:15) 2:23 ("Nazarene" not a quote) 4:14-16 (Isaiah 9:1-2) 8:17 (Isaiah 53:4) 12:17-21 (Isaiah 42:1-4) 13:35 (Psalm 78:2) 21:4-5 (Zechariah 9:9) 27:9-10 Judas's death echoes of Zechariah and Jeremiah.

#### **3.3.3 Other Quotations from the Old Testament in Matthew**

Matthew 3:3 (Isaiah 40:3) 11:11 Malachi 3:1 13:14 (Isaiah 6:9-10) 21:16 (Psalm 8) 21:42 (Psalm 118:22-23)

#### **3.3.4 Jesus fulfilling the Law Matthew 5:17**

#### **3.3.5 Jesus reshaping the Law Matthew 5:17-46; 12:1-14; Chapters 21-22**

#### **3.3.6 Jesus cleanses and renews the Temple Matthew 21:13**

#### **3.3.7 Typology – a pattern (type) in the OT echoed in NT (antitype).**

Jesus is a sort of new Moses e.g. 2:22. He brings a new Exodus, and he is a kind of new Israel (c.f. Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 1:18–2:23; 3:3). In Matthew 4 Jesus as Son of God is being tested as Israel was in Deuteronomy. Jesus is like David 12:3-4, Priests 12:5-6, Jonah 12:39-41, Solomon 12:42. Jesus is like Elisha 14:15f, Isaiah Mt 13:13. Matthew 21:42 quotes Psalm 118 Matthew 27:46 echoes Psalm 22. The disciples are portrayed as a new Israel in Matthew 21, also 5:48, 5:5, 8:11-12, 26:31, 19:28, 26:28. So Jesus is in line with OT, but also superior to the OT and the fulfilment of the OT, bringing in the promised Messianic Age.

#### **3.3.8 The relationship between Israel and the Church Matthew 21:43; 8:11-12; 19:28; 15:21-28.**

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## **READING FOR UNIT 3**

G.D.Fee and D.Stuart *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (4<sup>th</sup> Edn Zondervan 2014) chapter on Mark  
IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels Article on Matthew, Gospel of

Recommended commentaries on Matthew:-

R.T. France – *The Gospel of Matthew* (New International Commentary on the New Testament). 2007

D.A. Carson – *Matthew* (The Expositor's Bible Commentary). 1984

Donald Guthrie *New Testament Introduction*. Intervarsity Press 1970 - Chapter on Matthew

Craig Keener. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*.

## 4 Luke's Gospel – an Overview

### 4.1 Author and Date

The Early Church thought and most agree that Luke wrote both Luke and Acts. Both written to the Theophilus, Acts 1:1 and the ascension links them (Luke 24:49–53; Acts 1:1–11). Luke wrote as a careful historian on the basis of research he undertook with eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4).. The Early Church's only suggestion for authorship, universally accepted by 200AD, was Luke, a companion of Paul. Justin (c. 160) in *Dialogues* 103.19 writes about Luke having written a "memoir of Jesus" and notes the author was a follower of Paul. The Muratorian Canon (c. 170–180) attributes the Gospel to Luke, a doctor, who is Paul's companion. Irenaeus (c. 175–195; *Haer.* 3.1.1; 3.14.1) attributes the Gospel to Luke, follower of Paul, and notes how the "we sections" suggest the connection (see Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16) claiming that Luke was "inseparable" from Paul (*Haer.* 3.14.1). The so-called Anti-Marcionite Canon (c. 175) describes Luke as a native of Antioch in Syria (Acts 11:19–30; 13:1–3; 15:30–35), commenting that he lived to be eighty-four, was a doctor, was unmarried and wrote in Achaia Tertullian (early third century; *Marc.* 4.2.2; 4.5.3) calls the Gospel a digest of Paul's gospel. Eusebius (early 4<sup>th</sup>; *Hist. Eccl.* 3.4.2) mentions that Luke was from Antioch, a companion to Paul and the author of the Gospel and Acts. Most scholars see Luke as a Gentile.

The end of Acts happened in 62AD which would be the earliest date of writing. Acts does not record the death of Paul (late 60s) nor the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD (which would surely have been mentioned in e.g. Acts 6-7 and Acts 21-23). So Bruce, Hemer, Ellis, Marshall argue for a date before then, so mid to late 60s.

### 4.2 Luke and the Synoptic Problem

The Farrer Hypothesis (Farrer 1955, Goulder 1972, Goodacre 2002)

Farrer and others have proposed that Mark wrote first and Matthew and Luke both used Mark. But then similarities between Matthew's and Luke's non-Mark material did not come from a separate written or oral source termed Q. Instead Luke also had sight of Matthew's Gospel and copied or altered elements of that.

Their reasons to question Q include Occam's Razor: Luke following Matthew is simpler than a hypothetical source Q. No-one has ever seen Q not even a fragment. No ancient author had ever heard of Q. When Narrative Sequence in Matthew and Luke departs from Mark they agree, which fits with Luke following Matthew rather than Q as a collection of sayings. There are several major and very many minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark, including in the Passion Narrative.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons to prefer the two-source hypothesis. It is very hard to imagine Luke writing as he did if he also had Matthew e.g. missing out large parts of the Sermon on the Mount and other teaching, changing the Beatitudes and the wording of the Lord's Prayer, or missing out the Visit of the Magi which fits so well with his great concern for the good news for the Gentiles. Why would Luke have replaced the explicit Holy Spirit reference in Matthew 12:28 with the more primitive "finger of God" in Luke 11:20. Some feel that Luke, not an apostle, would not have been so courageous in changing the work of the apostle Matthew.

### 4.3 Purpose

The prologue addressed to Theophilus, a man of considerable standing (Luke 1:1-4) suggests that Luke is a careful historian writing in excellent Greek and seeking to record the life and teaching of Jesus to a seeker or perhaps a new Christian. Luke has many concerns, in particular, how could Gentiles be included in God's plan of salvation, especially when Jews were rejecting Jesus? How could the death of Jesus fit into that plan and what does it mean to respond to Jesus?

## **4.4 Themes in Luke's Gospel**

**4.4.1 God's Plan of Salvation**

**4.4.2 God's Radical Inclusion of marginalised groups including women, the poor and the Gentiles**

**4.4.3 God's Unconditional Welcome expressed in Table Fellowship SEE UNIT 9**

**4.4.4 The Place of Gentiles in the Kingdom**

**4.4.5 Healing**

**4.4.6 Prayer SEE UNIT 11**

**4.4.7 Opposition to the gospel**

**4.4.8 Resurrection and Ascension SEE UNIT 17**

**4.4.9 The Work of the Holy Spirit SEE UNIT 19 SEMINAR**

**4.4.10 Wealth and Possessions SEE UNIT 10**

## **4.5 Special theme – Jesus's Radical Affirmation of Women in Luke**

**4.5.1 God loves women as much as men Luke 4:25-29, 4:38-39, 13:10-13, 7:36-38, 47-50**

**4.5.2 Women are welcomed as disciples exactly the same as men are Luke 2:36-38, 23:26f**

**4.5.3 Mary the mother of Jesus was a model disciple Luke 1:26-28, 1:35-38, 1:46-49 etc**

**4.5.4 Women were the first witnesses to the Resurrection Luke 24:1-11 (see also John 20:11-16)**

**4.5.5 Women supported the ministry of Jesus and of the apostles materially Luke 8:1-3 (see also Acts 9:36-42, 16:13-15, 17:12, 17:34)**

**4.5.6 Women teach us all about prayer and devotion Luke 15:8-10, 18:1-8, 21:1-4, 10:38-42 (see also Mark 14:3-9)**

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## **READING FOR UNIT 4**

**G.D.Fee and D.Stuart *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (4<sup>th</sup> Edn Zondervan 2014) chapter on Luke**

**K.E.Bailey *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* pages 189-199 chapter Jesus and Women (FOLDER)**

**IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels article on Luke, Gospel of**

*New Testament Introduction*. Donald Guthrie IntersVarsity Press 1970 Chapter on Luke

**Recommended commentaries on Luke:-**

**Joel Green – *The Gospel of Luke* (New International Commentary on the New Testament). 1997**

Darrell L. Bock – Luke 1:1-9:50 & Luke 9:51-24:53 (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) 1994, 1996

# 5 The Kingdom of God

## 5.1 The Kingdom is the Central Message of Jesus Mark 1:14-18

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:14-15

John the Baptist announced that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2). Jesus takes this message forward. The Synoptic Gospels contain 76 different kingdom sayings, or 103, including the parallels:

(1) *Mark-Matthew-Luke* (Mk 4:11 par. Mt 13:11 and Lk 8:10; Mk 4:30 par. Mt 13:31 and Lk 13:18; Mk 9:1 par. Mt 16:28 and Lk 9:27; Mk 10:14 par. Mt 19:14 and Lk 18:16; Mk 10:15 par. Mt 18:3 and Lk 18:17; Mk 10:23 par. Mt 19:23 and Lk 18:24; Mk 10:25 par. Mt 19:24 and Lk 18:25; Mk 14:25 par. Mt 26:29 and Lk 22:18);

(2) *Mark-Matthew* (Mk 1:15 par. Mt 4:17);

(3) *Mark-Luke* (Mk 15:43 par. Lk 23:51);

(4) *Matthew-Luke* (Mt 5:3 par. Lk 6:20; Mt 6:10 par. Lk 11:2; Mt 6:33 par. Lk 12:31; Mt 8:11 par. Lk 13:29; Mt 10:7 par. Lk 9:2; Mt 11:11 par. Lk 7:28; Mt 11:12 par. Lk 16:16; Mt 12:28 par. Lk 11:20; Mt 13:33 par. Lk 13:20);

(5) *Mark* (4:26; 9:47; 10:24; 12:34);

(6) *Matthew* (3:2; 4:23; 5:10, 19 [bis], 20; 7:21; 8:12; 9:35; 13:19, 24, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 4, 23; 19:12; 20:1, 21; 21:31, 43; 22:2; 23:13; 24:14; 25:1, 34);

(7) *Luke* (1:33; 4:43; 8:1; 9:11, 60, 62; 10:11; 12:32; 13:28; 14:15; 17:20–21; 18:29; 19:11; 21:31; 22:16, 29–30; 23:42);

## 5.2 Jewish Expectations

Although the phrase "kingdom of God" is rare in OT, the idea that God is King, Creator, Sovereign and reigning on high is everywhere declared and assumed.

The Kingdom is God's awaited eschatological (end-time) rule; beginning with Israel, then universal; bringing an end to all evil. OT promises Isaiah 24:1-23; 52:1-10; Zechariah 14:9-20, Daniel 2:44. Many promises to the exiles were yet to be fulfilled giving the idea that Israel was still in exile. Prophecies concerning the Day or the Year of the Lord. 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts 1:6)

In the Inter-Testamental Period of Judaism (ITP) God's kingdom is a hoped-for time of blessing: e.g. Assumption of Moses 10:1, Qumran

The *Qaddish*: the Jewish daily prayer, begins: "Magnified and hallowed be his great name in the world ... And may He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and in your days ... quickly and soon."

## 5.3 The Kingly Rule of God

The Gospels use three terms to express the idea of the kingdom of God: *hē basileia tou theou* ("the kingdom of God"), *hē basileia tōn ouranōn* ("the kingdom of [the] Heaven[s]") and the absolute *hē basileia* ("the kingdom"). The primary meaning of the Hebrew *mal'kūt* (with synonyms), Aramaic *malkû* and Greek *basileia* is abstract and dynamic, that is, "sovereignty" or "royal rule."

In Jesus's teaching the Kingdom of God is "the awaited manifestation of God's perfect reign" – a "tensive symbol" (Perrin) or banner phrase for "God's end-time rule". The "kingdom of heaven" is just a reverential circumlocution for a Jew to avoid using the name of God. There is NO difference in meaning between the two terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven".

## 5.4 History of Understanding of “The Kingdom of God” – already or not yet?

### 5.4.1 Consistent eschatology – all in the future

“Consistently eschatological” understandings (J Weiss 1892) then Thoroughgoing Eschatology (A. Schweitzer The Quest for the Historical Jesus 1906). Still popular with German theologians.

Future imminent coming – Mark 9:1, Matt 6:10, Mark 8:11 and 14:25; Mark 9:47

Miracles are signs of the imminence of the Kingdom Luke 12:20, Luke 10:9-11,

Jesus’s ethics as “Interimsethiks” – intense short-term effort getting ready for the Kingdom to come.

Also followed by Dibelius 1949 and Bultmann 1951. Fits how Jews would have understood Jesus, but ignores the possibility that Jesus transforms expectations.

Later Dalman 1887-1922 emphasised that the Kingdom *malkut* means God’s kingly rule and not territory.

### 5.4.2 Realised Eschatology - God’s reign has already come in Jesus’s ministry.

CH Dodd Parables of the Kingdom 1935

“Parables of crisis”; 10 virgins, thief at night, waiting servants, need to respond to Kingdom NOW

“Parables of growth”; sower, weeds, mustard seed, reaping.

Other parables Matthew 13:44-46 Treasure and pearl; Luke 14:15-22 Banquet has arrived

Also in sayings: Luke 10:23f, Mark 2:18-22 (bridegroom is here), Luke 4:16-21, Luke 7:18-23 answer to John the Baptist,

And in statements: Luke 17:21 Kingdom of God is among you Luke 16:16 *Kingdom is here since John*;

Exorcisms are proof that the kingdom has arrived *ephthasen* (aorist) Matt 12:28/Luke 11:20

But Dodd suggested that the Kingdom has arrived completely, without remainder. That is WRONG.

Mark 1:15 *the kingdom has come near*, not arrived but imminently near. *ēngiken* – “has come near”, or “is at hand” verb perfect active indicative, third person singular.

“Thy Kingdom Come” prayer would not be necessary if the Kingdom has fully arrived already

Disciples on thrones has a FUTURE fulfilment (Matt 19:28); parables of growth have future completion.

Parables of decision require action BEFORE Kingdom finally comes; Beatitudes promise future rewards; Luke chapters 12, 13, 17 teaching on “the End” not yet. A NEW TEMPLE is a major end-time expectation, yet to be fulfilled in Jesus’s lifetime.

Dodd spiritualised and internalised the Jewish eschatological hopes. In 1970 Dodd conceded that the kingdom has both present AND future consummation.

### 5.4.3 Inaugurated Eschatology Kingdom is both present and future

Jeremias 1930, Kümmell 1957 Bornkamm 1956, RH Fuller (Proleptic Eschatology) George Eldon Ladd

J. Jeremias – eschatology in the process of realisation. Now the King is present in humility – one day he will be present in glory. Salvation now experienced at a personal individual level through ministry of Jesus, then will be manifested universally. Present fulfilment carries with it the certainty of the future promise. (c.f. in John’s Gospel, eternal life has started now, more is yet to come)

The Kingdom is breaking in. God’s kingly rule has begun in Jesus’s ministry, more will come through Jesus’s cross and resurrection, the kingdom will finally come at Jesus’s return, At the moment old and new age are side by side and we are living life in the overlap.

OLD AGE -----|----- Day of the Lord

Other evidence of the Kingdom being present already: Fig tree Mark 13:28; the Shepherd is an eschatological figure, OT prophecies applied to Jesus (Luke 4:16f) Gift of forgiveness especially to poor and lost/sinners is the supreme gift of the Messianic Age. Teaching of Jesus replacing the Torah (Matthew 5-7).

## 5.5 The Kingdom in the Teaching of Jesus – see Unit 6.

## 5.6 The Kingdom in Action – Unconditional Welcome and Table Fellowship – see Unit 9.

## 5.7 The Kingdom in Action – Forgiveness of Sins Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 1:21, Luke 7:48-50

## 5.8 The Kingdom in Action – Miracles

### 5.8.1 The function of miracles Matthew 12:38-42

### 5.8.2 Healing

### 5.8.3 Nature miracles

### 5.8.4 The Beelzebub Controversy and Plundering the Strong Man Matthew 12:24-29

*“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” (Matthew 12:28)*

### 5.8.5 Healing and Deliverance today

## 5.9 The Kingdom and the Church

"Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom, and what arrived was the Church" (A. Loisy 1902)

## READING FOR UNIT 5

Joel Green *Kingdom of God* in IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels 2015

Wright, N. T. (1996). *Jesus and the victory of God*. London: SPCK Chapter 6 parts 2 and 4, chapter 10 part 4 (ii)

D. Guthrie *New Testament Theology*. (Leicester: IVP 1981) Part 4 The Mission of Christ – the Kingdom

*The Kingdom of God* in The IVP New Bible Dictionary

**FOR PASTORS: Peter Thomas *Healing and deliverance today: God's kingly rule in actions* (includes bibliographies) (FOLDER)**

G. E. Ladd *The Presence of the Future* (Grand Rapids 1974, 1996);

G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids and Carlisle, 1986, 1988);

C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1935);

N. Perrin *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* chapter 1. (SCM 1975, Study Edition 2012)

G. H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, 1999)

## 6 Responding to the Kingdom

### 6.1 Repentance, Faith and Discipleship Mark 1:14-18

### 6.2 The call to sincere repentance

6.2.1 John the Baptist prepared the way Luke 3:1-14

6.2.2 Luke 5:32, 15:7, 15:10.

### 6.3 The need for faith

“Believe” is the expected response to the good news in Mark 1:15 and Luke 8:12–13. “Your faith has saved you” (Luke 7:50) (Compare “believing” or “believing in Jesus” appears 100x in John’s Gospel. Believing and being saved is the starting point of discipleship in Acts. See e.g. Acts 2:38=39; 16:31; 17:30))

### 6.4 The call to discipleship – see also Essay D on the conditions of discipleship

6.4.1 “Follow me” (16x) – leaving everything to learn from the *Rabbi* Jesus’s teaching and example.

6.4.2 “Take up the cross” Luke 9:23; 14:27;

6.4.3 “Become a servant” Mark 10:43-45;

6.4.4 “Enter through the narrow gate” Luke 13:22-30.

6.4.5 Continuing Jesus’s mission Mark 3:13-15; Matthew 28:19-20

6.4.6 Believer’s baptism as a sign of becoming a disciple Matthew 28:19

6.5 *Then neither do I condemn you.’ ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’* (John 8:11)

### 6.6 Interpreting the Parables

#### 6.6.1 What is a parable?

A parable (Greek *parabole*, Hebrew *mashal*) is any literary device with two levels of meaning which reveals a deeper truth. It can be e.g. a proverb (Luke 4:23) a riddle (Mark 3:23) a comparison (Matthew 13:13) a contrast (Luke 18:1-8) and a story which could be simple (Luke 13:6-9) or complex (Matthew 22:1-14). Some distinguish between forms such as “similitudes” (a comparison using “like” or “as”), “example stories”, “parables” which are extended metaphors, and “allegories”, but categories are blurred.

#### 6.6.2 Why did Jesus teach in parables?

- To capture attention, stimulate interest and seal in the memory;
- To make people think for themselves;
- To stimulate a response, often by graphic or humorous dramatization;
- Narrative examples to clarify applications of teaching;
- To emphasise unusual or controversial elements of teaching;
- To undermine the defences of opponents.

### 6.6.3 How parables work – The Sower and the seeds Matthew 13:1-9, 18-24;

Concealing and revealing – see Matthew 13:10-17.

“To further reveal the truth to those who accepted the mysterious”, at the same time to “conceal the truth from those who rejected the obvious” Hendricksen on Matthew 13:12.

Only those who accept Jesus as Messiah will receive the truth the parables reveal (Tasker).

### 6.6.4 History of the interpretation of parables

From the Early Church Fathers onwards and through the Medieval period – allegorising e.g. Augustine.

A. Jülicher (1888, 1899). Each parable has only one single “point of correspondence.”

Jeremias and Dodds: seeing the parables in the context of the Kingdom of God: parables of growth and parables of crisis. Both argued for realised eschatology – parables revealing the kingdom as it has arrived.

E. Fuchs and E. Jüngel: parables as “language events” which bring into being the reality they describe.

Recent approaches of literary criticism and reader-response hermeneutics detach the parable from its original context so it can mean whatever the reader wants it to mean. Not a helpful approach.

### 6.6.5 The contribution of Kenneth Bailey *Poet and Peasant, Through Peasant Eyes*

**A. Recognising the rhetorical forms within parables:** identifying the literary structures. He suggests four:

Prose sections structured using the inversion (chiasmus) principle A B C D D' C' B' A' e.g. Luke 18:18-30

Poetic sections using a variety of parallelistic devices – Bailey has found seven types. They include:

step parallelism, Luke 6:20-26 (A B C A' B' C' );

inverted parallelism Matthew 13:13-18 ABCDEFGG'F'E'D'C'B'A';

Bailey also identifies sections with a tight parallelism in the centre encased within one or more sets of matching prose sections.

The parables in Luke usually follow a distinct “parabolic ballad” form. In these there is often an inverted structure e.g. A B C D E D' C' B' A and the turning point or hinge of the story brings attention to the most important point. So in the parable of the prodigal son Luke 15:11-24 the turning point in the literary structure is at v.17 “*he came to his senses*”.

**B. Locating the parables in their cultural settings,** particularly in the customs of peasant communities in the Middle East in the First Century AD. See examples of exegesis in UNITS 9.5.3, 11.8 and ESSAY E.

## 6.7 Hermeneutics of parables

- What was the meaning in the original Sitz im Leben (life setting – the cultural context)? Dodd & Jeremias, recently especially Bailey,
- What was the meaning which the Gospel Writer was wanting to convey (the literary context)? Conzelmann and Redaction Criticism.
- What is the meaning for us today? First find the “point(s) of correspondence.”
- Often “the rule of end stress” – what is the punchline? P.G. Wodehouse defined a parable something like this. “A parable is a rattling good yarn which drags you in and keeps you hooked but keeps something up its sleeve which sneaks out and bops you one in the end.”

## 6.8 Surveys of the parables

Almost all the parables teach about one or more aspects of the Kingdom of God, addressing one or more of three questions:

- How does God act in His Kingly Rule?
- What can we learn about the character of God and/or Jesus as King?
- How should (or do) people respond to God as King?

Every commentator offers different categories for the parables, typically depending on literary form, structure or content. Craig Blomberg (contents pages of *Parables* 1990) differentiates according to whether (in his eyes) a parable is making one, two or three points, as follows.

<b>6 Simple Three-Point Parables</b> _____	7.5 The Great Supper (Lk 14:15-24; cf. Mt 22:1-14) _____
6.1 The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) _____	7.6 The Unforgiving Servant (Mt 18:23-35) _____
6.2 The Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (Lk 15:4-10; cf. Mt 18:12-14) _____	7.7 The Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-13) _____
6.3 The Two Debtors (Lk 7:41-43) _____	7.8 The Wicked Tenants (Mk 12:1-12 pars.) _____
6.4 The Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32) _____	7.9 Conclusions _____
6.5 Faithful and Unfaithful Servants (Lk 12:42-48; Mt 24:45-51) _____	
6.6 The Ten Virgins (Mt 25:1-13) _____	<b>8 Two-Point &amp; One-Point Parables</b> _____
6.7 The Wheat and the Tares (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43) _____	8.1 Two-Point Parables _____
6.8 The Dragnet (Mt 13:47-50) _____	8.1.1 The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:9-14) _____
6.9 The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) _____	8.1.2 The Two Builders (Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:47-49) _____
6.10 The Children in the Marketplace (Mt 11:16-19; Lk 7:31-35) _____	8.1.3 The Unprofitable Servant (Lk 17:7-10) _____
6.11 Conclusions _____	8.1.4 The Seed Growing Secretly (Mk 4:26-29) _____
	8.1.5 The Rich Fool (Lk 12:16-21) _____
<b>7 Complex Three-Point Parables</b> _____	8.1.6 The Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13:6-9) _____
7.1 The Talents (Mt 25:14-30; cf. Lk 19:12-27) _____	8.1.7 The Unjust Judge (Lk 18:1-8) _____
7.2 The Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16) _____	8.1.8 The Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5-8) _____
7.3 The Sower (Mk 4:3-9, 13-20 pars.) _____	8.1.9 The Householder and the Thief (Mt 24:43-44; Lk 12:39-40) _____
7.4 The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) _____	8.2 One-Point Parables _____
	8.2.1 The Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price (Mt 13:44-46) _____
	8.2.2 The Tower Builder and the Warring King (Lk 14:28-33) _____
	8.2.3 The Mustard Seed and Leaven (Lk 13:18-21 pars.) _____

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## READING FOR UNIT 6

K. E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); idem, *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lucan Parables, Their Culture and Style* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980);

R.V.G.Tasker *Parables* in IVP New Bible Dictionary

Wright, N. T. (1996). *Jesus and the victory of God* (pp. 174–182). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

C. L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990);

J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1963);

NT Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* 1997 Chapter 7 parts 2 and 5

**FOR PASTORS: on how we respond to the gospel: repentance, faith and discipleship:**

Peter Thomas *Prepared to Give an Answer* 2016 Chapter 4 *How should we respond to the Good News?*

Peter Thomas *Making Disciples One-to-One* 2008 Chapter 1 *Jesus calls us to be his disciples*

## 7 The Sermon on the Mount: The Beatitudes

### 7.1 What is the purpose of the Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew chapters 5-7)

Early Fathers said a guide to ethics and to interpreting the OT. Aquinas said a new law for everybody. Luther saw two kingdoms, S on Mt is for those who are in the Kingdom of God = Christians. For the Anabaptists, God expects literal and rigorous obedience to S on Mt.

Important modern understandings. 1. Absolutist. 2. Hyperbole. 3. General principles. 4. Attitudes not actions. 5. A challenge to repentance. 6. A manifesto on life in the Kingdom, because Christ is King.

Jesus was teaching everybody (Matthew 4:23) but S on Mt was for disciples (5:1)

Jesus fulfils the OT Law and S on Mt explains how disciples should live in the new covenant – our relationship with God leads to good deeds (5:16) a greater righteousness (5.20) good fruit (7:16-20).

Jesus was NOT replacing the Jewish Law or creating a new legalistic code. Instead he is outlining the principles Christian disciples should live by in order to please God.

### 7.2 The Upside-down Kingdom – The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-10

7.2.1 “Blessed is” *makarios* c.f. Psalm 1:1, 32:1; elsewhere in Matthew 11:6; 13:16; 16:17

7.2.2 Those who are spiritually poor c.f. Isaiah 61:1

7.2.3 Those who mourn c.f. Isaiah 61:1-2

7.2.4 The meek c.f. Psalm 37:11

7.2.5 Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

7.2.6 The merciful

7.2.7 The pure in heart Psalm 24:3-6

7.2.8 The peacemakers

7.2.9 Those who are persecuted

### 7.3 Rejoice and be glad Matthew 5:11-12

7.3.1 Despite persecution

7.3.2 The promise of rewards Matthew 5:12; 6:1,4,6,18; 19:27ff, 20:1-16; 25:21-23; 25:34ff

### 7.4 Being Salt and Light Matthew 5:13-16

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## READING FOR UNITS 7 and 8

ARTICLE on *Sermon on the Mount* in IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels

NT Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* 1997 Chapter 7 part 4 (iii) (b) and (c).

FOR PASTORS: JRW Stott *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount Bible Speaks Today* 1992

D.M.Lloyd-Jones *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* 1976

Commentaries on Matthew chapters 5-7

## 8 The Sermon on the Mount: a Greater Righteousness

### 8.1 Jesus fulfils the Law Matthew 5:17

Fulfilment – bringing to its true conclusion, completing the Law, which pointed to him (11.3)

### 8.2 A Greater Righteousness Matthew 5:20

8.2.1 Legalism is not enough – a greater righteousness is needed

### 8.3 Six Antitheses 5:21-48 *You have heard.... it was said .... but I say to you*

8.3.1 Murder vv.21-26 c.f. Exodus 20:13

8.3.2 Adultery vv.27-30 c.f. Exodus 20:14

8.3.3 Divorce vv.31-32 c.f. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 Swearing oaths Leviticus 19:12,

8.3.4 Deuteronomy vv.33-37 23:21

8.3.5 Retribution vv.38-42 Exodus 21:24f; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21

8.3.6 Love and hate vv.43-47 Leviticus 19:18

8.3.7 You must be perfect = like God v.48. How to be perfect in an imperfect world

### 8.4 Religious observance 6:1-18

8.4.1 How and why matter more than what v.1

8.4.2 On giving alms vv.2-4 see later at 10.3.3

8.4.3 On prayer vv.5-15 see later 11.5.2 and on the Lord's Prayer at 11.4

### 8.5 Money and possessions and not being anxious see later 10.3.1 & 10.3.2

### 8.6 Further comments on discipleship Matthew 7:1-12

8.6.1 On criticism and hypocrisy vv.1-5

8.6.2 On discrimination v.6

8.6.3 Confidence in prayer – ask, seek, knock vv.7-11 see 11.5.1

8.6.4 Summary – The Golden Rule v.12

### 8.7 True and false – four contrasts Matthew 7:13-27

8.7.1 The broad and narrow ways vv.13-14

8.7.2 Beware of false prophets vv.15-20

8.7.3 True and false disciples vv.21-23

8.7.4 The parable of the two housebuilders vv.24-27

8.7.5 The authority of Jesus is recognised v.28

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**READING FOR UNITS 7 and 8** as in UNIT 7 on page 17.

## 9 The Teaching of Jesus: Radical Welcome and Table Fellowship

### 9.1 Jesus Eating with Sinners Luke 5:27- 32

9.1.1 Calling Levi/Matthew

9.1.2 The significance of Table Fellowship in the time of Jesus – reconciliation

9.1.3 *The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.”* Luke 7:34

### 9.2 The Nazareth Manifesto Luke 4:16-30

9.2.1 The Anointed Deliverer Isaiah 61:1-3 but without the judgment.

9.2.2 The widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:7-25); Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5:1-19)

### 9.3 Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman Luke 7:36-50

9.3.1 The scandal of the anointing

9.3.2 The parable of the two debtors

9.3.3 Jesus forgives the woman’s sins

### 9.4 The Parable of the Great Banquet Luke 14:15-22; Matthew 22:1-14 – see ESSAY E

### 9.5 Three Parables of the Lost Luke 15:1-32

9.5.1 The Parable of the Lost Sheep (vv1-7)

9.5.2 The Parable of the Lost Coin (vv8-10)

9.5.3 The Parable of the Prodigal Son

9.5.4 The Parable of the Older Brother who refused to welcome the Prodigal (vv11-32)

### 9.6 Jesus and Zacchaeus Luke 19:1-10

9.6.1 How to respond to God’s grace

9.6.2 *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’* (Luke 19:10)

### 9.7 The Significance of Table Fellowship in Jesus’s Ministry

9.7.1 Old Testament prophecies of God’s inclusive Kingdom Isaiah 2:2-3; 56:3-7; 42:6-7; 49:6-7; 60:1-6; Psalm 86:8-10. See also ESSAY A and the Nunc Dimittis

9.7.2 Anticipation of the Messianic Banquet Isaiah 25:6–8; Isaiah 55:1-6; Luke 13:29; Matthew 8:10-12; Luke 14:15.

9.7.3 Jesus is creating a new inclusive community.

9.7.4 Jesus declared all foods clean Mark 7:18-23

## **9.8 Are there conditions for inclusion? Considered earlier in UNIT 6**

### **9.8.1 Repentance, Faith and Discipleship Mark 1:14-18**

### **9.8.2 Sincere repentance Luke 3:1-14, Luke 5:32, 15:7, 15:10.**

### **9.8.3 The need for faith.**

“Believe” is the expected response to the good news in Mark 1:15 and Luke 8:12–13. “Your faith has saved you” (Luke 7:50) (Compare “believing” or “believing in Jesus” appears 100x in John’s Gospel. Believing and being saved is the starting point of discipleship in Acts).

### **9.8.4 The call to discipleship – see also Essay D on the conditions of discipleship**

“Follow me” (16x) learning from Jesus; “Take up the cross” Luke 9:23; 14:27; “Become a servant” Mark 10:43-45; “Enter through the narrow gate” Luke 13:22-30. Continuing Jesus’s mission Mark 3:13-15; Matthew 28:19-20. Believer’s baptism as a sign of becoming a disciple Matthew 28:19

### **9.8.5 Then neither do I condemn you.’ ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’ (John 8:11)**

Luke 5:32 *I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*

Luke 15:7 *I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.*

Luke 15:10 *In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

Luke 19:10 *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’*

## **9.9 The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector Luke 18:9-14**

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## **READING FOR UNIT 9**

NT Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* 1997 Chapter 7 part 3

Bartchy, S. S. (1992). *Table Fellowship*. In J. B. Green & S. McKnight (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (pp. 796–800). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**K.E. Bailey *Poet and Peasant & Through Peasant Eyes* Sections on the relevant parables.**

Commentaries especially on Luke.

For PASTORS: Peter Thomas *Prepared to Give an Answer* 2016 Chapter 4 How should we respond to the Good News?

Peter Thomas *Making Disciples One-to-One* 2008 Chapter 1 Jesus calls us to be his disciples

# 10 Jesus's Teaching: Rich and Poor, Wealth and Possessions

## 10.1 Good News for the Poor

10.1.1 The Nazareth Manifesto Luke 4:18

10.1.2 The Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

10.1.3 Luke's Beatitudes Luke 6:20-26

## 10.2 The Dangers of Wealth

10.2.1 The Rich Young Ruler Luke 18:18-30

10.2.2 The Parable of the Rich Fool Luke 12:15-21

## 10.3 Teaching in the Sermon on the Mount

10.3.1 Treasures in Heaven, Envy, and Serving Two Masters Matthew 6:19-24

10.3.2 Do not worry Matthew 6:25-34

10.3.3 Giving Alms Matthew 6:1-4

## 10.4 The proper use of wealth

10.4.1 The Parable of the Talents Matthew 25:14-30

10.4.2 Zacchaeus Luke 19:1-10

10.4.3 The Widow's mite Luke 21:1-4

10.4.4 *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (Luke 12:48)*

## 10.5 Rich and Poor in Acts: see Acts 2:44; 4:32-37; 5:1-11; 6:1-4

## 10.6 The dangers of the false gospel of "health, wealth and prosperity"

For some Christians, following Jesus brings suffering and struggle. For others being a believer means an easy life. But which way is it MEANT to be?

Christ has died. Christ has defeated sin and the devil. Christ has risen. Christ has defeated death and given the gift of eternal life to all believers. Christ has ascended on high and is exalted King of Kings and Lord of Lords! So is the life of Christians meant to be doom and gloom and suffering and persecution? Or is the life of the believer meant to be filled with victory and blessings? How is it meant to be?

The fastest growing religion is as dangerous as it is unbiblical. It is what is known as the "prosperity gospel." It is the mistaken and wrong teaching that if you are a Christian God will always give you health, wealth and success, just as long as you have enough faith. The prosperity gospel.

Christians of all types and times have relied on God's material provision. But the kind of blessings that prosperity gospel preachers often promise are very different. An expectation of abundant wealth, runaway professional success, and unassailable physical and emotional health, all so that Christians can fund Christian work and prove to the watching world that Christ exists. That is false teaching.

But what is wrong with Christians expecting God to bless them? Aside from the fact that the blessings being promised are NOT the blessings God promises to Christian believers? Very often the prosperity gospel takes Old Testament promises about the blessings which the nation of Israel was going to enjoy when they took possession of the promised land, and applies those promises out of context to the lives of individual Christians. But more than that.

1. Promises of health wealth and success encourage people to come to God for what they get from him – to seek the gifts instead of the Giver.
2. When the blessings don't come as the evangelist has promised, many folk then fall away from faith, or just as bad, are overwhelmed by guilt that they have "failed" to have enough faith.
3. Prosperity gospel teachers preach that to know God's blessing, you have to give generously and even sacrificially to God. Which means giving to the preacher! So some of these peddlers of the prosperity gospel become incredibly rich. They fly in their own private planes and live in the most luxurious hotels to conduct crusades in some of the poorest cities of Africa. At the expense of impoverished Christians who have not got enough to live on! So the prosperity gospel allows church leaders to exploit and manipulate their members.

I say that the promises that disciples will enjoy health, wealth and success are not Biblical. So what does the Bible actually teach about these things?

The Bible does NOT promise physical healing for every Christian every time. Sometimes we are healed – sometimes according to God's eternal purposes we are not. The doctrine that says you will always be healed as long as you have enough faith is not Biblical. Think of the apostle Paul who experienced weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties as well as *a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me*, (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) which God did not take away from him. The question of whether complete physical healing is guaranteed to every Christian is considered in the article *Healing and deliverance today: God's kingly rule in actions* Peter Thomas 2019 (FOLDER)

Scriptural justification for the Prosperity Gospel often begins with (Deuteronomy 8:18) *"But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."* (NASB) The prosperity gospel teaches that financial prosperity and wealth was also included in the Atonement. This is based on an interpretation of the words of the Apostle Paul: "Yet for your sakes he became poor, that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). The case is very clear that Paul was speaking of spiritual riches, rather than material prosperity.

Some verses of scripture taken out of context seem to promise wealth. But others taken in context warn on the dangers of greed! 1 Timothy 6:5 warns of *"people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain"* and also warns *"But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."* (1 Timothy 6:5, 9-11.)

Jesus warned, "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions" (Luke 12:15). Paul said covetousness is idolatry (Ephesians 5:5-7) Far from stressing the importance of wealth, the Bible warns against pursuing it. Believers, especially leaders in the church (1 Timothy 3:3), are to be free from the love of money (Hebrews 13:5). Love of money leads to all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Jesus said *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal"* and *"You cannot serve God and riches."* (Matthew 6:19 and 6:24)

When it comes to success and prosperity, some people read Psalm 91 as a guarantee of success and blessing for every Christian, but that was the very temptation Jesus resisted in the wilderness. Some quote Proverbs 18:21: "*Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and they that love them will eat the fruit thereof*" and Numbers 14:28 "*... the Lord says, as you have spoken in my ears, so will I do*" to argue that all Christians need to do is simply declare our "word of faith" and God's blessings are guaranteed. But the Jesus's parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:15-21) clearly contradicts this teaching, as does James 4:13-16 "*Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.*"

The false Prosperity Gospel suggests that the believer can use or manipulate God. This is the opposite of biblical Christianity. Health and wealth and success are NOT part of the package of the Christian gospel! Those who come to Christ expecting Him to keep them healthy and make them rich and prosperous will never experience fullness of life. They will never be rich in salvation, forgiveness, joy, peace, and glory, or rich in their relationship with the Living God. (Peter Thomas 2019)

## 10.7 Hear these very challenging sayings of Jesus

**Luke 12:15 Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'**

**Matthew 6:24 You cannot serve both God and Money.**

**Matthew 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal"**

Matthew 5:42 *Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

Luke 18:25 *Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'*

Luke 14:12-14 *Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,<sup>4</sup> and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'*

Luke 14:33 *In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.*

Luke 12 33-34 *Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

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## READING FOR UNIT 10

**Dauids, P. H. (1992). *Rich and Poor*. In J. B. Green & S. McKnight (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (pp. 701–709). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.**

Joel Green Good News to Whom: *Jesus and the Poor in the Gospel of Luke* in *Jesus of Nazareth, Lord and Christ*, essays ed. J.B.Green and M.M.B. Turner (Eerdmans 1994) pages 59-74 (FOLDER)

D. P. Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts* (Linz: Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt, 1982);

# 11 Prayer in the Synoptic Gospels

## 11.1 Jesus's own example of prayer

### 11.1.1 Regularly in the synagogue Luke 4:16

### 11.1.2 Daily individual morning and evening prayers at sunrise and sunset

–including the *Shema* (quoted by Jesus in Mark 12:29) and the *Qaddish* He prayed early Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, often in solitude Luke 5:16 and sometimes through the night Luke 6:12.

### 11.1.3 Luke especially recalls Jesus praying.

See Luke 3:21; 9:18, 28-29; 10:21-22\*; 11:1; 22: 31-32, 41-44\*; 23:46 (all except the starred references are unique to Luke)

### 11.1.4 Jesus's prayers from the cross Luke 23:34, 46 and Mark 15:34

## 11.2 Gethsemane – a prayer of formation, transformation and relinquishment Luke 22:39-46

## 11.3 Jesus taught his disciples to pray to “*Abba*, Father”

11.3.1 Aramaic “*Abba*” especially recorded in Mark 14:56 (and use by the Early Church e.g. Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6). More intimate than Jewish prayers.

11.3.2 *Abba* was most probably underlying Greek *Pater* Father in all Jesus's prayers e.g. Mk 14:36; Mt 11:25–6 par. Lk 10:21; Lk 23:34, 46; Mt 26:42; Jn 11:41; 12:27–28; 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24–25. The only exception to “Father” is “My God” at Mark 15:34.

11.3.3 Note how Jesus taught his disciples to know God as Father throughout John's Gospel.

Prayer is expression of our relationship to God as Father. God is called “Father” in all of OT only 40 times. In NT God is called “Father” 260 times.

## 11.4 The Lord's Prayer – a model of how to pray Matthew 6:9-15

11.4.1 <sup>9</sup> “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

11.4.2 <sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11.4.3 <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

11.4.4 <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

11.4.5 <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,

11.4.6 but deliver us from the evil one.

11.4.7 The condition for forgiveness (vv14-15)

c/f/ Matthew 18:21-35. Note also praying facing times of trial Mark 13:18, 14:38, Luke 21:36 and praying for those who persecute us Matthew 5:44.

## **11.5 Prayer elsewhere in the Sermon on the Mount**

**11.5.1 Prayer as asking – Ask Seek Knock, How much more Matthew 7:7-12**

**11.5.2 How not to pray Matthew 6:5-9**

**11.6 Persistence – the Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge Luke 18:1-8**

**11.7 The power of gathering and praying together Matthew 18:19-20**

**11.8 Trust in the character of God – The Parable of the Friend at Midnight  
Luke 11:5-8**

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## **READING FOR UNIT 11**

I Howard Marshall *Jesus – Example and Teacher of Prayer in the Synoptic Gospels* in Longnecker (Ed) *Into God's Presence* pages 113-131 (FOLDER)

Article on *Prayer* in IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels

FOR PASTORS: the very best book on prayer is Richard Foster *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*

## 12 The Kingdom Still to Come

### 12.1 Inaugurated eschatology leaves expectations yet to be fulfilled

The end is at hand (e.g., Lk 3:9; 18:7–8; 21:31–32) but at the same time the Parousia has not yet arrived (e.g., Lk 12:45; 19:11). Many Old Testament promises and expectations of Jews in the Inter-Testamental Period (ITP) had not yet been fulfilled during Jesus's ministry.

### 12.2 Apocalyptic eschatology

The word 'apocalyptic' refers both to a genre of Jewish and Christian literature and also the key ideas found there. Eschatology talks about the events of the End Times. Apocalyptic is a highly stylized form of literature based on OT sources, featuring dreams and visions.

The OT prophets contain apocalyptic passages e.g. Isaiah 24–27; 56–66; Joel; Zechariah 9–14. The resurrection of the dead is in Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2. The apocalypse is anticipated in the visions of Daniel 7:9-14, Ezekiel and Zechariah 1–6. Later Jewish apocalyptic ideas appear in e.g. 1 Enoch, the Assumption of Moses and 4 Ezra. In apocalyptic literature the coming eschatological salvation will transcend the great events of salvation-history so far. In this new creation there will be no evil or suffering and even death will be defeated. The Kingly Rule of God will replace all earthly empires forever.

Jesus's expectations of the future rested on these Old Testament and Jewish traditions. So he expected the resurrection of the dead (Mk 12:18–27) and a great judgment (Lk 10:13–15; 11:31–32) with rewards for the righteous (Lk 6:20–23) and justice on the wicked (Lk 6:46–49). Before the end there would be tribulation for the faithful (Luke 12:49-52) and even disruptions to the natural world (Mark 13:24-25). At the same time Jesus rejected sign-seeking (Mk 8:11–13; Lk 17:20–21). He repeatedly stated that he did not know the date of the end (Mk 13:32).

### 12.3 Apocalyptic elements in the Synoptic Gospels

Jesus's teaching in Mark 13 includes many elements found in Jewish pictures of the end: times of trial and difficulty, false prophets, (vv.5–6), wars, earthquakes and famines (vv.7–8), the faithful suffering (vv.9–13). There will be dangers on earth (vv.14–23) and signs in the heavens (vv.24–25). Only then will the Son of Man appear (vv.26–27). Matthew and Mark's understandings of the End Times are very similar but Matthew additionally emphasises Jesus' role as the Son of man in the final judgment (Matthew 13:41; 16:28; 25:31). Luke, more so than the other evangelists, seems to distinguish between the historical events surrounding the fall of the Temple (21:8–9, 12–24) and the eschatological events that will take place at a later time (21:10–11, 25–36).

### 12.4 The certainty of Christ's return

In the New Testament there are 318 references to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. For every prophecy in the Bible concerning Christ's first advent, there are 8 which look forward to His return!

Jesus himself promised to return in glory. Matthew 16<sup>27</sup> *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.* (Matthew 16:27) In Acts 1:9-11 the ascension brings the promise and the guarantee that Christ will return. Very much of Jesus's teaching brings challenges to be watching and ready for his return (see below). Apocalyptic promises are linked to calls to discipleship (Mark 8:31–9:1; 10:17–31)

## **12.5 Matthew 24:1-25:46** Jesus foretells the Destruction of the Temple and the Parousia of the Son of Man

24:1-2 Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple – understood by his enemies as a threat

v.3 When will the Temple be destroyed and what will be the sign of the Parousia of the son of Man?

### **24:4-35 Questions about the destruction of the Temple,**

vv.4-8 Preliminary events which are not signs of the end

vv.9-14 Persecutions and troubles during that period and the need to stand firm

vv.15-28 Descriptions of the beginnings of the end, the siege of Jerusalem

v.29 “After the distress of those days”

vv.30-31 The sign of the Son of Man in heaven. Often misunderstood – this does NOT relate to the Parousia but rather to the destruction of the Temple

vv.32-35 Sign of the fig tree – everything so far will happen within this generation

### **24:36-25:46 Questions about the Parousia and the End of the Age on “that day”**

v.36ff on the Parousia, “that day or hour no-one knows”

vv.36-44 The day and hour are unknown

vv.37-41 The day will come suddenly and unexpectedly

vv.42-44 Therefore keep watch – the parable of the thief in the night

### **24:51-25:46 Four parables about preparing for the End**

vv.51ff The parable of the faithful and wise servant

25:1-13 The parable of the wise and foolish virgins

vv.14-30 The parable of the bags of gold (talents)

vv.31-46 The parable of the sheep and the goats

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## **READING FOR UNIT 12**

NT Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* 1997 Chapter 8 part 4

Geddert, T. J. (1992). *Apocalyptic Teaching*. In J. B. Green & S. McKnight (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (pp. 17–27). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Allison, D. C. J. (1992). *Eschatology*. In J. B. Green & S. McKnight (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (pp. 206–209). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Commentaries on Matthew Chapter 24 and Mark 13 especially by R.T. France

## 13 Who Was Jesus? The Birth Narratives

### 13.1 Matthew's Account Matthew 1:1-2:23

13.1.1 The Genealogy – the throne succession from Judah; the four women

13.1.2 The angel and Joseph, Jesus the Saviour, Immanuel God with us (Isaiah 7:14)

13.1.3 The visit of the Magi – maybe as much a year later

Micah 5:2-4; Isaiah 2:2-3; Psalm 86:8-10; Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:10-15; Isaiah 49:6-9,

13.1.4 The escape to Egypt and return to Nazareth Hosea 11:1, Jer 31:15, “a Nazarene”

13.1.5 Supernatural elements – angels, star

### 13.2 Luke's Account Luke 1:26-2:20

13.2.1 The angel appears to Mary Luke 1:26-38

13.2.2 Jesus is born and laid in a manger Luke 2:1-7

13.2.3 The angels and the shepherds Luke 2:8-20

13.2.4 The testimony of Simeon and Anna Luke 2:22-38 – see UNIT 18 ESSAY A

### 13.3 (John's Prologue John 1:1-18)

### 13.4 The Virgin Birth

### 13.5 The Reliability and Historicity of the Gospels

### 13.6 The Quest for the Historical Jesus

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## READING FOR UNIT 13

N.T. Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* Chapter 3 part 2

FOR PASTORS Peter Thomas *Prepared to Give an Answer* 2016 Chapter 8 Can we trust the New Testament?

IVP Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels article *The Birth of Jesus* B. Witherington III

Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: IVP 1981. Part 3 Christology, especially The Virgin Birth

IVP New Bible Dictionary article *Virgin Birth*

CL Blomberg *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Leicester IVP 2008)

I. H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977);

Commentaries on Matthew and Luke

## 14 Who Was Jesus? Key events in the life of Jesus

**14.1 Jewish Monotheism in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4): the meanings of the phrases “the son of God” and “God the Son”**

**14.2 The Message of John the Baptist Matthew 3:1-12 c.f. Isaiah 40:3**

**14.3 The Baptism of Jesus Matthew 3:13-17**

14.3.1 see Isaiah 42:1-4, Psalm 2:7 (Matt 12:17ff)

**14.4 The Testing of the Son of God Matthew 4:1-11**

14.4.1 Turn stones into bread Deuteronomy 8:3

14.4.2 The pinnacle of the temple Psalm 91:11-12, Deuteronomy 6:16

14.4.3 All the kingdoms of the world and their splendour Daniel 7:14; Deuteronomy 6:13

**14.5 Peter’s declaration Matthew 16:13-20**

14.5.1 The Messiah the Son of the Living God

14.5.2 Suffer many things, be killed, be raised on the third day

**14.6 Jesus the prophet – expectation of “a prophet like Moses” in Deuteronomy 18:15-18**

14.6.1 Mark 6:4, Luke 7:16, Luke 13:32-33, Matt 16:14, Matt 21:11, Luke 24:19

**14.7 The Transfiguration Matthew 17:1-13**

14.7.1 Moses and Elijah; the voice from heaven as at baptism

**14.8 The meaning of “The Son of Man” ( Mark 14x, Matthew 30x, Luke 25x)**

14.8.1 Criteria of dissimilarity – authentic to Jesus

14.8.2 Non-titular – *bar nasha* used by rabbis as a modest self-designation. In Jesus’s time it was NOT a Messianic title. Mostly in Jesus’s use just a way of saying “I”.

14.8.3 Apocalyptic fulfilling Daniel 7:13-14 Mark 14:62; 13:26; 8:38; Matthew 16:8; 19:28.

## 14.9 Christology in the Synoptic Gospels: Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God

14.9.1 Triumphant entry, cleansing the temple, the parable of the tenants – see Unit 15

14.9.2 Binding Satan and plundering the strong man Mark 3:23ff, freeing the captives Luke 4:16-21

14.9.3 Claiming authority greater than the Law Matthew 5:31-32, 5:43; Mark 7:14-23, 2:21; 2:23-28

14.9.4 Forgiving sins Mark 2:5-7; Luke 7:48-50

14.9.5 “Amen/Truly I say to you” Mark 3:28; 8:12; 9:1; 9:41; 10:15; 10:29

14.9.6 “Abba”

14.9.7 Jesus the Bridegroom Mark 2:19 Shepherd Luke 15:3-7 rock, sower, judge

14.9.8 Since John the Baptist was the fore-runner, Jesus was God Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6

14.9.9 (Jesus is shown to be God elsewhere in the NT, especially by the resurrection. John 1:1-18; 10:30; 20:28; Colossians 1:15-20; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 1:1-4; Romans 1:1-4)

## 14.10 So – did Jesus think of himself as divine?

“Unless there is some correlation between Christian claims for Jesus and Jesus’ own self-awareness, these claims lose touch with reality. ... Certainly it is quite clear that if we can indeed properly speak of the ‘divinity’ of the historical Jesus, we can only do so in terms of his experience of God [by the Spirit]: his ‘divinity’ means his relationship with the Father as son and the Spirit of God in him.”

(J.D.G. Dunn *Jesus and the Spirit* p92)

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## READING FOR UNIT 14

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. Article *Son of God* D.R.Bauer

Commentaries especially on Matthew.

Wright, N. T. (1996). *Jesus and the victory of God* (pp. 147–150). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: IVP 1981. Part 3 Christology, especially Son of God and Summary of Christological Titles

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. Article *Son of Man* I.H.Marshall

## 15 The Last Week

**15.1 The Triumphal Entry Matthew 21:1-11; Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:25-26**

**15.2 The Demonstration in the Temple Mark 11:12-18**

15.2.1 Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11,

15.2.2 Malachi 3:1-4; Matthew 26:61-63; Zechariah 6:12-13 (John 2:18-22)

**15.3 The Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard Matt. 21:33-46; Isaiah 5:1-7**

**15.4 Jesus's Teaching in Jerusalem during the Last Week**

15.4.1 The authority of Jesus questioned Matthew 21:23-27

15.4.2 The Parable of the Wedding Banquet Matthew 22:1-14 See Essay E on Luke 14:15ff

15.4.3 Whose son is the Messiah? Matthew 22:41-46

15.4.4 Criticisms of the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees Matthew 23:1-39

15.4.5 The destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times – see Unit 12

15.4.6 The parables of The 10 Virgins, The Talents and The Sheep and the Goats Mathew 25:1-46

**15.5 Jesus anointed at Bethany Matthew 26:6-13**

**15.6 Judas's Betrayal and Peter's Denial Matthew 26:14-16, 31-35, 47-56, 69-75**

**15.7 Gethsemane Matthew 26:36-46 See Unit 11**

**15.8 The Trials of Jesus Matthew 26:57-68, Matthew 27:11-26**

**15.9 So why was Jesus crucified? Matthew 27:37**

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### READING FOR UNIT 15

**N.T. Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* Chapter 9 part 3 and Chapter 11 part 3**

FOR PASTORS: Peter Thomas *The Way to the Cross: Six Devotional Sermons for Lent* (FOLDER)

Article Trial of Jesus B Corley in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013

Commentaries especially on Matthew

# 16 The Death of Jesus

## 16.1 Jesus's death is anticipated throughout the Gospels

Matthew 1:21, 16:21–27; 17:22–23 and 20:17–28 and parallels

Mark 10:45 // Matthew 20:28 *"For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

## 16.2 The Last Supper Matthew 26:26-29

This is my body. This is my blood of the covenant. Fulfilling the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jesus saw the background clearly as Isaiah 53 especially vv 11-12

Luke 22<sup>37</sup> *It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."*

Mark 14:24<sup>24</sup> *'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,'*

## 16.3 The sufferings on the way to the cross Matthew 27:27-44

## 16.4 The thief on the cross Luke 23:39-42

## 16.5 The cry of dereliction Mark 15:34

*"My God, my God, why did You abandon me?"* (Mark 15:34)

"Christ saw Himself as lost, as forsaken by God, felt in His conscience that He was cursed by God, suffered the torments of the damned who feel God's eternal wrath, shrink from it and flee." (Martin Luther)

"It was a deep division in God Himself, as God abandoned God and contradicted Himself." "The suffering in the passion of Jesus is abandonment, rejection by God His Father. Jesus humbles Himself and takes upon Himself the eternal death of the Godless and the Godforsaken, so that the Godless and the Godforsaken can experience communion with Him." (Jurgen Moltmann)

## 16.6 The veil of the Temple is torn in two Mark 15:28

## 16.7 The testimony of the centurion Mark 15:39 c.f. Mark 1:1

## 16.8 (Jesus's death in John's Gospel confirms the Synoptic Gospels understanding)

John the Baptist announces, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:31, 36) echoing (i) the Passover Lambs; (ii) the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement; (iii) the lamb led to the slaughter in Isaiah 53.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11, 14-15). Jesus says of his death "my hour has come" to be glorified, bringing judgment, driving out the devil. (John 12:31-33, 13:1) Being "lifted up from the earth" reveals who Jesus is (John 8:28) and draws all people to him to receive eternal life (John 3:14).

Jesus's death is the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying to produce many seeds. (John 12:23).

So Jesus says "It is finished!" *tetelestai*. (John 19:30) It is completed, accomplished.

## 16.9 Isaiah 53 as the background to Jesus's understanding of His death (R.T.France Jesus in the Old Testament)

**Luke 22:37** 'It is written: "And he was numbered with the transgressors"; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfilment.' DIRECT QUOTE of Isaiah 53:12.

TWO CLEAR ALLUSIONS Mark 10:45 // Matthew 20:28 and Mark 14:24 "The many" c.f. Isa 53:11-12 See also a possible allusion in Mark 9:12 and implicit predictions in Luke 22:22, Mark 10:38, Mark 12:1ff (the parable of the wicked tenants who kill the son) Mark 14:8, Luke 9:31.

Not just similarity in wording but more important much more similarities to Isaiah 53 in theme and ideas. Jesus could not have seen himself as the Servant and NOT included the fourth song of the Servant, whose Sufferings in Isaiah 53 are redemptive and vicarious / substitutionary.

## 16.10 The Meaning of the Jesus's death

16.10.1 RANSOM (Early Church onwards) – CHRIST THE VICTOR (Aulen 1931)

16.10.2 SATISFACTION – CHRIST OUR SUBSTITUTE SUFFERS FOR US

16.10.3 MORAL INFLUENCE

16.10.4 PENAL SUBSTITUTION – A SACRIFICE FOR SIN (Reformation onwards)

**THE BIBLE TEACHES US** that Christ's death is central to our salvation, vicarious, representative, sacrificial, atonement, expiation, propitiation and substitutionary. So penal substitution is the only adequate understanding faithful to Scripture.

## 16.11 (The Suffering Servant from Isaiah 52:13–53:12 is found throughout the New Testament)

16.11.1 Servant Songs in the Gospels: Isaiah 42:1-4; Luke 3:21-22, Isaiah 49:1-6; Luke 2:29-32; Jesus is the eschatological prophet

16.11.2 Isaiah 53:3 John 1:10-11

16.11.3 Isaiah 53:4 Matthew 8:16-17

16.11.4 Isaiah 53:5 Romans 4:25; Hebrews 9:28

16.11.5 Isaiah 53:5-6 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-25; Matthew 10:12-14; John 10:11-18;

16.11.6 Isaiah 53:7 John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:34-35;

16.11.7 Isaiah 53:8-9 Luke 23:32; Matthew 27:57

16.11.8 Isaiah 53:10-11 1 Peter 3:18

16.11.9 Isaiah 53:12 Luke 22:37; Mark 14:24; Mark 10:45

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## READING FOR UNIT 16

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* IVP 2013 Article *Death of Jesus* J.B.Green

R.T.France *Jesus and the Old Testament* (IVP 1971) pages 110-134

*The Servant of the Lord in the Teaching of Jesus*, Tyndale Bulletin 19, 1968 pp 26-52

**FOR PASTORS** Peter Thomas *The Way to the Cross: Six Devotional Sermons for Lent* (FOLDER)

N.T.Wright *Jesus and the Victory of God* Chapter 12

Morris, L. L. (1996). *Atonement*. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 104). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity

John Stott *The Cross of Christ* (IVP 2000)

Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: IVP 1981. Part 4 The Mission of Christ – The Saving Work of Christ: developing understanding

Jurgen Moltmann *The Crucified God* (40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition SCM 2015) – a ground-breaking book

# 17 The Resurrection of Jesus

## 17.1 Mark's Account Mark 16

vv1-7 The Empty tomb and the message of the angel

v8 The silence and fear of the women

### The Longer Ending Mark 16:9-20

vv9-13 Jesus appears to Mary and to two walking in the country, but the disciples did not believe

v14 Jesus appears to the eleven and rebukes their stubborn refusal to believe

## 17.2 Matthew's Account Matthew 28

vv1-7 The empty tomb and the message of the angels to the women

vv8-10 Jesus appears to the women

vv11-15 The false report of the guards

## 17.3 Luke's Account Luke 24

vv1-10 The empty tomb and the message of the angels to the women

vv11-12 The disciples' disbelief and Peter sees the empty tomb

13-32 Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus

33-35 Report of Jesus appearing to Peter

36-44 Jesus appears to all the disciples

## 17.4 Evidence for the Resurrection in Paul 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

## 17.5 The Mandate for Mission

17.5.1 The Great Commission Matthew 28:16-20

17.5.2 The promise of Power from on High Luke 24:46-49

17.5.3 Preaching the gospel accompanied by miraculous signs Mark 16:15-20

## 17.6 Evidence for the resurrection.

- 17.6.1 The empty tomb
- 17.6.2 The resurrection appearances
- 17.6.3 The growth of the church and the spread of the Christian faith
- 17.6.4 The changed lives of the first disciples
- 17.6.5 The change lives of Christians today
- 17.6.6 The significance of the resurrection

"The more we study the tradition with regard to the appearances, the firmer the rock begins to appear upon which they are based."

Norman Perrin *The Resurrection According to Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1977) p 80.

"If the coming into existence of the Nazarenes, a phenomenon undeniably attested by the New Testament, rips a great hole in history, a hole of the size and shape of the Resurrection, what does the secular historian propose to stop it up with? ... the birth and rapid rise of the Christian Church ... remain an unsolved enigma for any historian who refuses to take seriously the only explanation offered by the church itself."

C.F.D. Moule *Phenomenon of the New Testament* (SCM 1967) p3

"The evidence for Jesus's resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things. First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live."

Wolfhart Pannenberg *Prism Magazine* (March/April 1997)

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## READING FOR UNIT 17

**William Lane Craig** *Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* Article in *Truth* 1 (1985): 89-95. (FOLDER)

**FOR PASTORS:** Peter Thomas *Prepared to Give an Answer* Chapter 5 Didn't he used to be dead?

Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: IVP 1981. Part 3 Christology, especially The Resurrection

Morris, L. L. (1996). Resurrection. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 1010). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Max Turner *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Wipf and Stock 2015)

Peter Thomas *Is the Longer Ending of Mark Holy Scripture?* (FOLDER)

**FOR PASTORS: on Mission and Evangelism:**

**Peter Thomas** *Prepared to Give an Answer* C PART 2 Talking about Jesus chapters 12-17

Michael Green *Evangelism In the Early Church*. Sussex; Broadway House, 1990.

## 18 ESSAY TOPICS

**Students each choose a different topic. At the end of the week you will then read your own essay and introduce a short discussion in a 25 minute mini-seminar.**

Each student will write an essay on one of the topics below. **MAXIMUM NUMBER OF WORDS** is including footnotes but not including bibliography. You should show the word count.

**The DEADLINE for the essays will be**

On Friday morning in the mini-seminars students will present their essays in turn for 25 minutes.

The set reading below will be provided in folders and further recommended reading will be suggested for each essay. You are welcome to find other reading in the library or from other sources.

Essays are not sermons. They should focus on the meaning of the passage, explaining its context and any particularly significant words or phrases. They may conclude with brief applications to Christian faith and living.

### **A. What do we learn from the prophecies of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:22-38)?**

**Set Reading:** K.E. Bailey *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* pages 59-61 (FOLDER)  
Marshall, I. H. (1994). *Luke*. In *IVP New Bible commentary*: (4th ed., pp. 984–985).  
Keener, C. S. (1993). in *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Lk 2:22–40).  
Nixon, R. E. (1996). *Simeon*. In *IVP New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., pp. 1103–1104)  
Ellis, E. E. (1996). *Nunc Dimittis*. In *IVP New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 837).

### **B. What can we learn from the Miracles of Walking on the Water recorded in Matthew 14:22-33.**

**Set Reading:** R.T. France *The Gospel of Matthew* NICNT 565-572 (FOLDER)  
Any other commentaries

### **C. What does the Transfiguration reveal about Jesus and His mission? (See Mark 9:1-13 and parallels)**

**Set Reading:** R.T. France *The Gospel of Matthew* NICNT 640-655 (FOLDER)  
Any other commentaries

### **D. How should we understand Jesus' teaching on the cost of discipleship in Luke 9:21-26; 9:57-62 and 14:25-35?**

**Set Reading:** Extracts from  
C.S. Keener on Lk 14:25–35 in *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* 1993.  
Marshall, I. H. (1994) in *IVP New Bible commentary*: (4th ed., pp. 1004–1005).  
MJ Wilkins, *Discipleship*. in *IVP Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels* (pp. 184–185).

### **E. What is the meaning of the Parable of the Great Banquet as recorded in Luke 14:15-24?**

**Set Reading:** K.E. Bailey *Through Peasant Eyes* pp 88-114 Combined Edition 1985.  
Any other commentaries

## 19 SEMINAR

### What can we learn from Luke's Gospel about the work of the Holy Spirit?

Everybody should prepare to participate in the discussion by reading and reflection

**PLEASE NOTE:** This seminar is not focussed on just one passage but instead on an overview of the whole of Luke's Gospel. You are of course free to find further reading, but the two pages below will be sufficient to help you consider the topic for yourself and **further reading is not expected.**

You will also want to use a concordance to look up all the references in Luke's Gospel to the Holy Spirit, including also Luke 11:20 and Luke 24:46-49. An important element in this seminar is your own reflections on all those passages.

**The seminar is about Luke's Gospel. We will only need to refer to Acts in passing, if at all.**

### SET READING BELOW

**Dunn, J. D. G. (1996). Spirit, Holy. In *New Bible Dictionary* (3rd ed., pp. 1127–1128) InterVarsity Press. Part III. *The Spirit in the teaching of John the Baptist and ministry of Jesus.***

#### III. The Spirit in the teaching of John the Baptist and ministry of Jesus

(1) *In early Judaism*, at the time of Jesus, God was tending to be thought of as more and more distant from man, the transcendent holy God, high and lifted up, dwelling in unapproachable glory. Hence the hesitation even to speak the divine name and the increasing talk of intermediary figures, the name, angels, the glory, wisdom, *etc.*, these all being ways of speaking about God's activity in the world without compromising his transcendence. In early days 'the Spirit' had been one of the chief ways of speaking about the presence of God (note, *e.g.*, the implication of 1 Sa. 16:13f. and 18:12, and of Is. 63:11f., that the Spirit of the Lord is the presence of the Lord). But now that consciousness of divine presence was lacking too (with the exception of Qumran). The Spirit, understood principally as the Spirit of prophecy, had been active in the past (inspiring prophet and Torah) and would be poured out in the new age. But in the present, talk of the Spirit had become wholly subordinate to Wisdom and Logos and Torah, and in particular with the rabbis, Torah was becoming more and more the exclusive focus of religious life and authority.

In this context John the Baptist created considerable excitement. Not that he himself claimed to have the Spirit, but he was widely recognized to be a prophet (Mt. 11:9f.; Mk. 11:32) and so to be inspired by the Spirit of prophecy (*cf.* Lk. 1:15, 17). More striking was his message, for he proclaimed that the outpouring of the Spirit was imminent—the one who was coming would baptize in Spirit and fire (Mt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16; Mk. 1:8 and Jn. 1:33 omit the 'and fire'). This vigorous metaphor was probably drawn partly from the 'liquid' metaphors for the Spirit familiar in the OT (Is. 32:15; Ezk. 39:29; Joel 2:28; Zc. 12:10), and partly from his own characteristic rite of water baptism—his drenching with or immersion in water was a picture of an overwhelming experience of fiery Spirit. It would be an experience of judgment (note the emphasis of John's message in Mt. 3:7–12 and particularly on fire in 3:10–12), but not necessarily wholly destructive, the fire could purge as well as destroy (Mal. 3:2f.; 4:1). The Baptist here was probably thinking in terms of the 'the Messianic woes', the period of suffering and tribulation which would introduce the age to come—'the birth pangs of the Messiah' (Dn. 7:19–28; 12:1; Zc. 14:12–15; I Enoch 62:4; 100:1–3; Sibylline Oracles 3. 632–651). The idea of entry into the new age by immersion in a stream of fiery *rūah* which would destroy the

impenitent and purify the penitent was not a strange or surprising one for John to formulate in view of the parallels in Is. 4:4; 30:27f.; Dn. 7:10; 1QS 4. 21; 1QH 3. 29ff.; 4 Ezra 13:10.f.

(2) *Jesus* created an even bigger stir, for he claimed that the new age, the kingdom of god, was not merely imminent but was already effective through his ministry (Mt. 13:41f.; 13:16f.; Lk. 17:20f.). The presupposition of this was clearly that the eschatological Spirit, the power of the End, was already working through him in unique measure, as evidenced by his exorcisms and successful deliverance of Satan's victims (Mt. 12:24–32; Mk. 3:22–29), and by his proclamation of good news to the poor (Mt. 5:3–6 and 11:5; echoing Is. 61:1f.). The Evangelists of course were in no doubt that Jesus' whole ministry had been in the power of the Spirit from the beginning (Mt. 12:18; Lk. 4:14, 18; Jn. 3:34; also Acts 10:38). For Matthew and Luke this special working of the Spirit in and through Jesus dates from his conception (Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:35), with his birth in Luke announced by an outburst of prophetic activity heralding the beginning of the end of the old age (Lk. 1:41, 67; 2:25–27, 36–38). But all four Evangelists agree that at Jordan Jesus experienced a special empowering for his ministry, an anointing which was also evidently bound up with his assurance of sonship (Mt. 3:16f.; Mk. 1:10f.; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:33f.), hence in the subsequent temptations he is enabled to maintain his assurance and to define what sonship involves, sustained by the same power (Mt. 4:1, 3f., 6f.; Mk. 1:12f.; Lk. 4:1, 3f., 9–12, 14).

**Turner, M. (2000). Holy Spirit. In T. D. Alexander & B. S. Rosner (Eds.), *New dictionary of biblical theology* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. (pp. 552–553). Section “In the Gospels”.**

(Professor Max Turner was Professor of New Testament at London School of Theology UK)

*In the Gospels*

With the exception of two references to speaking by the Spirit (David in Mark 12:36; par. Matt. 22:43; the disciples in Mark 13:11; par. Matt. 10:20; Luke 12:12), all the references to the Spirit in Mark (total = 6) and Matthew (total = 12) relate to Jesus and his work. With approximately twenty references to the Spirit in his Gospel (and a further sixty in Acts), Luke is the Synoptic writer with the greatest interest in the Spirit, and his teaching is Christocentric. Other pious figures experience the Spirit of prophecy in revelation and inspired speech (in Luke 1–3), but only as those who await the messianic salvation and recognize or testify to its inauguration in Jesus (so Zechariah, 1:67; Simeon, 2:25–27; John the Baptist, 1:15, 17 [80?]).

The portrait of Jesus and the Spirit in the Gospels functions primarily to confirm to readers that Jesus is indeed the Messiah anticipated by the OT (see above) and intertestamental Jewish writings. The latter tended to draw especially on Isaiah 11:1–4 in their anticipation of a ruler endowed with the Spirit of prophecy, and so with revelation, wisdom, redoubtable righteousness and power to cleanse Israel (see esp. *1 Enoch* 49:2–3, 62:1–2; *Psalms of Solomon* 17:37; 18:7; *Rule of the Blessings* 5:24–25, [4Q] *Testament of Naphtali*, etc.). The same picture probably informs the Baptist's promise that the coming one will baptize (= cleanse/purify) with Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. 3:11; par. Luke 3:16); the following verse sets this baptism in the context of the cleansing restoration of Israel.

Another vital aspect of the Synoptic portrait, however, draws on the great Isaianic 'new Exodus' themes. It is these that explain the main features of the prelude to Jesus' ministry. 1. John the Baptist chooses the wilderness as his location and Isaiah 40:3 (a key new-Exodus chapter) as his prime explanatory text (Mark 1:2–3; par. Matt. 3:2–3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). 2. The Spirit descends upon Jesus at his baptism and is interpreted by a heavenly voice in terms of the anointing of the Servant of Isaiah 42:1–2 (Mark 1:11; par. Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22). 3. Jesus is led by the Spirit in the wilderness (\*cf. esp. Luke 4:1) in a replay of the temptations that faced Israel in the exodus-wilderness traditions

of Deuteronomy 6–8. 4. Having overcome, he returns in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14), and in the programmatic sermon of Luke 4:16–30, he announces himself as the Spirited-anointed liberator, proclaiming the ‘good news’ of Isaiah 61:1–2. In the Isaianic context the essence of this good news is the forgiveness of Israel’s sins, the end of her historical chastisement, and the joyful proclamation to Zion that, with the return of Yahweh to them, their God reigns, and the nations will see the salvation he works in and from Jerusalem (\*cf. e.g. Is. 52:7–10; 40:1–11; 44:1–8; 49:6, etc.). It is mainly these ideas that inform the preaching of the forgiveness of sins, and the announcement of the kingdom of God, by the Baptist and especially by Jesus. Luke has already expressed the same set of hopes in the prophecies of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79), Mary (1:46–55) and Simeon (2:29–32), and in his designation of the Spirit in the conception of Jesus as ‘the power of the most High’ (Luke 1:35, evoking Is. 32:15–20 with its promise that Israel would be restored when God’s Spirit was ‘poured out on us from on high’; and see below on Acts 1:8).

Outside their introductions, the Synoptic Gospels have surprisingly little to say about the Spirit. Both Mark and Q (the non-Markan source shared by Matt. and Luke) include a tradition which warns that ‘blasphemy against the Spirit’ is unforgivable (Mark 3:28–29; Matt. 12:31–37; Luke 12:10). The immediate Markan and Matthean contexts suggest that this blasphemy consists in an absolute resistance to the idea that it is God at work through Jesus, which leads, in this instance, to his opponents attributing his exorcisms to demonic powers instead. It is implicit in Mark that Jesus works rather by the power of the Spirit. Such a view is made explicit in Q (‘If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, the kingdom of God has come upon you’; Matt. 12:28), and Matthew too clearly attributes Jesus’ healing miracles to the Spirit (\*cf. Matt. 12:15–18). Such a view is sometimes denied to Luke, on the grounds that he understands the Spirit as ‘the Spirit of prophecy’, and so cannot attribute to the Spirit either ‘works of power’ or ‘ethical effects’ (so, esp., E. Schweizer and R. P. Menzies). But this argument reflects a misunderstanding of what Jews meant by the Spirit of prophecy, especially in relation to messianic figures like the Branch of Isaiah 11:1–4, and it misrepresents Luke (see M. Turner, *Power From On High*). At the very beginning of his Gospel, the Spirit is portrayed as the creative power of God that miraculously brings about the conception of the ‘holy’ Son of God (1:35; cf. also Matt. 1:18, 20). The ‘power of the Spirit’, in which Jesus returns from the wilderness (4:14), enables both his proclamation and his mighty acts. The same double perspective is maintained in Luke 4:16–21, and in the account of its dramatized fulfilment in Luke 7:21–22 (\*cf. also Acts 10:38). Luke understands Jesus’ exorcisms and healings as examples of God’s new-Exodus, liberating reign which Jesus is anointed by the Spirit not merely to proclaim, but also to enact.

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## 20 WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE

### A FINAL EXERCISE FOR YOUR OWN REFLECTION

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (Matthew 24:35)*

From all the passages you have studied in the Synoptic Gospels, select TEN which you think it would benefit every Christian to learn by memory, not just pastors. Learn them yourself and share them with your churches.

## BIBLE QUOTATIONS

In this course manual unless stated otherwise BIBLE QUOTATIONS are taken from *The Holy Bible, New International Version (Anglicised edition)* Copyright ©1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica (formerly International Bible Society). Hodder & Stoughton.

Other recommended translations are *New Revised Standard Version*, *New Living Translation*, *Good News Bible*, and as a paraphrase Eugene Peterson's *The Message*.

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Peter has been a Baptist Minister for 33 years after first teaching science and computing. He holds the following qualifications.

MA in Aspects of Biblical Interpretation from London Bible College (now London School of Theology).

BA with Honours in Theology from London Bible College.

BA and MA in Natural Sciences from Cambridge University.

PGCE with Distinction and Charles Fox Prize from Cambridge University.

Nine years of Peter's Sermons and Studies are online at [www.pbthomas.com/blog](http://www.pbthomas.com/blog)

Sermon series directly relevant to this course include the entirety of Mark's Gospel, Following Jesus, Parables, Praying the Lord's Prayer, The Testing of God's Son, The Way to the Cross, The Upside-Down Kingdom – the Beatitudes, What is salvation? There are also series on the whole books of John's Gospel, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, Hebrews, 1 Thessalonians, much of Revelation and many other sermons on individual passages

He writes on Theology, Ministry and Mission at [www.pbthomas.com/thoughts](http://www.pbthomas.com/thoughts)

He also blogs about Evangelism and Outreach at [www.takingeveryopportunity.org](http://www.takingeveryopportunity.org)