

Story of the New Testament

Lesson 2 (Part 2) - The Gospel of the Kingdom

Welcome back to the story of the New Testament. We are continuing with Lesson 2, this will be Part 2. In Part 1 of this Lesson, we introduced and set the context for the Gospel of the Kingdom as we tell the story of the New Testament.

We started an analysis of the four gospel presentations of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. How was Jesus presented? Why were there four gospels and not just one gospel presentation? Let's start this lesson with a summary of the prior lesson. We will begin on page 24.

At the top of page 24 you can see a picture or diagram that will help you tell the story of the Gospel of the Kingdom. These four gospel presentations were written between 58 AD to 70 AD, primarily the three synoptic gospels. The gospel of John was written between 80 – 90 AD.

Through these gospels, **Jesus is revealed!**

He is proclaimed. He is announced. The good news is the announcement, proclamation, or declaration that Jesus has come. The king has come. The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news.

This is the Gospel of the Kingdom. In the diagram, you see the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Remember the eyeglasses? Synoptic meant to see the same way, to have a common view.

John wrote his gospel presentation from a different perspective. John was written from heaven down. He started in the eternity past, stating that **Jesus is the Word of God**. "The Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." (John 1:1-3)

And then the **Word became flesh**. The other three gospels begin with the birth of Jesus and continue on into his adulthood and public ministry. John starts with Jesus in heaven and then moves to the incarnation and his baptism by John the Baptist to begin his public ministry.

These four gospel presentations, are not biographies. They do not document the entire life of Jesus.

In fact, the last week of Jesus' life on earth, the passion week leading up to the crucifixion and the resurrection, accounts for 25 to 30 percent of the synoptic gospels. Matthew chapters 21-28 accounts for 25% of the chapters in the gospel according to Matthew.

Mark chapters 11 – 16 account for 33% of the gospel of Mark that document the final week of Jesus' life and resurrection.

Luke chapters 19 - 24, accounts for 25% of all the chapters.

John chapter 12 - 21 focuses on the triumphal entry up until the resurrection. This accounts for 50% of the gospel according to John.

Notice too that the pictures provided in the diagram help us understand the identity of Jesus that the authors were communicating to each audience.

In Matthew, you see the crown signifying that Jesus is the King.

In Mark, you see the basin and someone washing the feet of another person pointing to Jesus the servant. Mark was communicating Jesus is the suffering servant that was prophesied by Isaiah, the prophet.

In Luke, you see the picture of a man caring for another person. Jesus is our substitute. He is our savior. He is the one who shows compassion toward the outcast.

It is hard to show a picture for the gospel of John. John wants us to know that Jesus is God. The deity of Christ is emphasized by John. Jesus is God. He is the Great I Am.

Below those four pictures, there are pictures of the key events in the life of Jesus.

#1: The birth of Christ, the announcement, the proclamation that the Savior has been born. #2: The public ministry of Jesus teachings of Jesus through his teaching, miracles, gathering of his disciples, preparing them to continue to build the church when he departs.

#3: The Crucifixion of Jesus. God demonstrated his own love towards us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#4: The Resurrection. The empty tomb is the reminder that all of Christianity hangs on the truth of the resurrection. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we are to be pitied more than all men. He is risen indeed.

#5: The ascension and Jesus' return. We look ahead to the beginning of the book of Acts, Jesus ascends into heaven, and the promise that he is going to come again.

You could tell the story of the Gospel of the Kingdom just from this small diagram, at the top of page 24.

Below on page 24 is a summary of chart on pages 23 and 83.

Let's review the key points from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In Matthew, Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the descendant of David and Abraham. In other words, he is the king of the Jews. He is the Anointed One, the Messiah.

Matthew was written first for the Jewish audience to present Jesus as a promised Messiah, the promised king, written between 58 and 68 AD.

Forty-two percent of the content of Matthew is unique. Sixty percent of it is teaching. Five major sermons, 53 Old Testament references, and 76 Old Testament allusions.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is repeated 33 times. The son of David is repeated 9 times. The word "fulfilled" is used throughout this gospel presentation. Matthew is showing that the things that were taking place through Jesus were intended to fulfill what was prophesied in the Old Testament.

Jesus was coming to reorder earth like heaven, to establish his new rhythm of life. Through Jesus' life, teaching, parables and miracles, you see a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew provides specific teaching by Jesus on the Kingdom of heaven in chapter 13. Also the sermon on the mount in chapters 5-7 provide a picture of life in the kingdom.

The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as the suffering servant and the son of God.

A key verse, Mark 10:45. "The son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus was portrayed as the suffering servant, that glory would come, but there was suffering that would come before the glory.

Mark was written for believers in Rome, suffering under persecution, probably in the estimated time frame of 55 to 65 AD.

37% of this gospel describes the final week of Jesus' life.

Mark focused on the authority of Jesus. He spoke with authority, unlike the Pharisees, the teachers of law and the scribes.

The picture to the right of the page helps to draw out this servant analogy. There is a person washing the feet of another. That was a job reserved for the lowest of slaves, the lowest of servants.

The Gospel of Luke, presents Jesus as the Son of Man, our human substitute, our Savior.

In Luke 1:30 - 35, he is called Jesus, meaning savior, the Son of the Most High, the son of God who will be given the throne of David. Jesus referred to himself often in Luke as the Son of Man. This fulfilled the prophecy in Daniel chapter 7:13.

Jesus is referred to as the Savior in multiple places in Luke. Salvation is a key part of Luke's message. A key verse would be Luke 19:10. "The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost". Luke presents Jesus as the Savior for all, both for Jew and for Gentile.

Luke wrote to a primarily Greek audience in 58 to 68 AD.

Jesus' parables play a big part in the Gospel of Luke. 35 of the 51 parables recorded in the four gospels are found in Luke.

Luke portrayed Jesus with a heart for the outcasts, those on the fringe of society who were cast off by the religious leaders.

The focus of John's gospel was that Jesus is the Word of God. He is God!

John chapter 1:1- 3, and 14 confirm these truths. Jesus is God. Jesus (The Word) was with God in the beginning. Then, the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. And we've seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father full of grace and truth.

John wrote his gospel to show that Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the second person of the Trinity.

It was written later than all the other gospels, around 80 - 90 AD.

A key verse, John 20: 31, "These things were written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

The word "believe" is a key word. It is used almost 100 times in the gospel of John.

92% of the content of John is unique, which means it was very different than the synoptic gospels. John had a different perspective.

Throughout the gospel of John, there are the 7 I Am statements and 7 signs/miracles that authenticated that Jesus is God. He is exactly who he claimed to be.

If you turn with me to page 25, there are four points to summarize the key messages of these gospel accounts.

#1: Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament story. He is the Messiah, the Christ. This is the main truth we need to recognize about Jesus. He is the king who has come.

#2: Jesus is the son of God who has come to dwell or to tabernacle among his people, to establish his kingdom, to bring shalom or the peace to all areas of our lives. He is Emmanuel. He is God with us.

#3: Jesus is known as the Savior. Jesus came to redeem people for his kingdom through his death on the cross and resurrection. This truth is central to all the gospel accounts. Everyone who trusts in Jesus as their personal savior and receives him as king becomes part of this new community called the church, this family of the redeemed.

#4: Jesus came to call people to follow him as disciples and participate in his global kingdom and purpose to proclaim the Word of God to all the nations and provide all with the opportunity to hear, see, and respond to the good news of the gospel.

Notice the reference to the four living creatures in Revelation 4:5 - 8 and Ezekiel 1:10. John and Ezekiel describe similar visions of these four creatures around the throne.

One creature had the face of a lion. We think of that as the King or the Messiah.

One creature had the face of an ox or a calf. The ox is a working animal or beast of burden. This reminds us of Jesus as the suffering servant as well as Jesus being our sacrificial lamb or redeemer.

One creature had the face of a man. In Luke's gospel, Jesus is presented as our substitute. He is the Son of Man. He is the living God dwelling with his people.

And then there was one creature with the face of an eagle. Eagles could soar and fly fast. The word of God was meant to be carried throughout the world. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son."

Some believe that these four faces provide a picture of Jesus is and why he came. He is the King, He is the Suffering Servant. He is the Savior, the Son of Man, our substitute. He is the Word of God for the World.

We started Lesson 2 by starting two themes with the Gospel of the Kingdom.

1: The coming of the promised King

2: The Conquest of the King

As we discussed the coming of the king, we talked about the promise of the King looking back to Malachi and other Old Testament prophecies. We also focused on the person and work of King Jesus. An aspect related to the person of the King is also the preaching or teaching of the King. Each of the four gospel accounts are filled with Jesus' teaching.

For example, The Sermon on the Mount, the Upper Room Discourse, messages about the kingdom of heaven, and the future times of the end of the age. At the center of Jesus teaching was a focus on proclaiming the kingdom of God. This is the message of the entire Bible. God is establishing his kingdom. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In the gospels, there's more than 100 references to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. From the story of the Old Testament, we said that a kingdom needs a king. A kingdom needs a place, a land. A kingdom needs a group of people to serve the king. And a kingdom requires a rule of law or a purpose to honor and glorify the king.

The kingdom of God can be defined as God's people, under God's rule, in God's place, fulfilling God's purpose.

The kingdom of God is the rule and the reign of Christ, not just in heaven, not just in a future millennial kingdom or a future eternity in a new heaven and new earth, but it is the rule and reign of Christ in our hearts today. What we see throughout the New Testament is that the kingdom of God has a now and not yet aspect to it.

It is now!

In Mark 1:15, Jesus said, the kingdom of God is here or near. Repent and believe the good news. Jesus, the promised king, was right in front of them. They (and we) could enter the kingdom by putting your trust in Jesus.

Not yet!

Yet there is a gap from the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension before Jesus returns as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is in heaven now while the church is growing, but he is going to return again. The ultimate fulfillment of the kingdom of God will come when Jesus returns the second time.

The second theme of the Gospel of the Kingdom is the Conquest of the King. We will discuss three points:

1. The Unusual Authority of the King
2. The Unexpected Way of the Cross
3. The Ultimate Triumph of the Resurrection

At the bottom of page 25, We will start first with the unusual authority of the king.

We noted the word "authority" in the gospel of Mark. There were many ways that Jesus demonstrated authority. He spoke in ways and did things that only God could do.

Let's consider the miracles that Jesus performed. He was not looking to draw a viewed as the miracle worker. The miracles that Jesus performed were meant to authenticate the message of the kingdom. Jesus would teach on a topic (He is the light of the world) and then a miracle was done to authenticate what he was teaching on (healing of the man born blind). Other times Jesus would perform a miracles and then teach on a topic related to the miracle. The miracles were done with purpose, not just for show, not just to gather a crowd.

Through these miracles Jesus demonstrated and authenticated his authority. You may read the scripture references listed for each demonstration of Jesus' authority.

Jesus has authority over nature! He calmed the seas. He walked on water. He fed the 5,000 and the 4,000. He demonstrated that he has authority over the natural part of creation.

Jesus has authority over demons. Demons are fallen angels. They followed Satan, Lucifer, when he rebelled against God. Angels are created beings. Jesus is the creator. Jesus has authority over them because he is the creator.

Jesus has authority over disease and sickness.

Jesus has authority over suffering. The diseases that afflicted people created much suffering. For example, the woman who was bleeding for 12 years, was an outcast. She was viewed as someone who was unclean. There was suffering and persecution that came with the sickness that she had. Not only did Jesus heal immediately to show he had authority over sickness and suffering and disease, but he also brought a wholeness, a shalom, a peace, a relief from the suffering. He brought people back into relationship and showed them the value that they had in the eyes of God.

Jesus has authority over sin. We see this clearly in Mark 2 with the healing of the paralytic. His four friends bring him on a mat before Jesus, hoping that he would be able to walk again. Jesus says, your sins are forgiven. The Pharisees were thinking on the hearts that Jesus was guilty of blaspheming because only God can forgive sin. Jesus says, so you know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sin, he tells the man to rise up and walk. He said, what's easier to say your sins are forgiven or to a lame man, get up and walk. It is easier to say your sins are forgiven because how can you judge that? It is an invisible spiritual thing that happens between God and the person. But to say, rise up and walk, you could see the result immediately.

Jesus has the authority over death. There were a number of accounts of Jesus raising the dead. The raising of Lazarus is well known. There was a little girl who was 12 years old who was brought back to life. There was the widow's son of the village of Nain who was brought back to life. Ultimately, we see, Jesus has authority over death, even with his own resurrection.

In all of these miracles, there was purpose. The miracles that Jesus performed authenticated or proved to the world that he was who he claimed to be. He is the one who has authority. He is the king. He is the Messiah. He is the Great I Am. And we must trust in him completely.

On page 26, we can see the Unexpected Way of the Cross.

Even the followers of Jesus, did not fully grasp the purpose of the cross. They thought that Jesus needed to establish his kingdom. He would set them free from the oppression of Rome.

Jesus died at the same time the sacrificial lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover, commemorating the exodus 14 centuries before. When Jesus went to the cross, this was a new exodus. He was bringing about a complete liberation from sin. The exodus from

Egypt was a picture of what would come, the liberation that could come only through Jesus.

All four gospels record the crucifixion. You can see those references listed in your handout.

The final week of Jesus' life represented 25 to 50 percent of the content of each of the four gospels. The cross was necessary to redeem a people for the kingdom. Many of the theological terms we used to describe what was accomplished in connection with salvation as a result of the cross.

We talk about justification, being declared innocent before a holy God.

We are enemies of God in need of reconciliation. Through the cross, God was reconciling the world to himself because Jesus took on all of God's wrath that we were deserving of.

We needed redemption. Jesus, through the cross, paid the penalty. He redeemed us or purchased us out of slavery from sin.

Jesus is our atonement. He did not just cover over our sin but and he washed it away. He appeased the holy standard of God.

All of these concepts are tied to what Jesus accomplished on the cross. There are Old Testament passages that point to the cross.

Isaiah 53 - 750 years before the crucifixion took place, before the Romans even instituted the crucifixion process, the prophet Isaiah described the kind of death that the Messiah would experience.

Psalms 118:22 - Jesus is the stone that the builders rejected.

Psalms 22 - A portrait of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Finally, the Conquest of the King is not complete without the Ultimate Triumph of the Resurrection.

All four gospels emphasize the crucifixion and the resurrection.

It is key. This is the gospel message from 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and he was buried. What is the proof that he died. He was

buried. Christ rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. What is the proof that he rose again? He was seen by many. He died. He was resurrected.

And each of the gospel account of the resurrection is followed by Christ's charge to share the gospel, the good news that King Jesus Christ has come, and he has conquered sin and death.

You can see the references there as well. Jesus even said to that generation who was asking for a sign to prove he was he Christ. He said there was only one sign that they would receive. The sign of Jonah.

As Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days, so the Son of Man will be in the earth for three days. He will be in the tomb for a portion of three days, and he will rise, just as he said. The Son of Man would be arrested, persecuted, flogged, crucified, and on the third day, he would rise again.

He's God. He is exactly who he said he is, because all of what he said came to pass.

The question for each of us to ask is have we accepted the kingdom? Have we entered the kingdom? Mark 1:15 says, the time is fulfilled. The time has come. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel, or believe the good news.

How do you enter the kingdom?

There is a radical turn to Jesus as king. We call this repentance. It is turning 180 degrees from where we're going, believing what we used to believe about Jesus. We change our thinking about who he is, and we believe he is the King, he is the Messiah, he is a Savior to come.

There is a radical trust in Jesus as king. That is called faith. Repentance and faith are different sides of the same coin. It's not faith in a message or a creed or a church, but it's complete and total trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work on the cross.

There is a radical transformation. We begin to experience the King's life.

We learn how to abide in Christ.

We embrace the king's teaching. We call this obedience.

We embody the king's character. We are called to live the life that he lived by the Holy Spirit of God living within us, to love and to serve as he loved and served.

We engage in the king's mission. He called us to be his witnesses. We are his ambassadors to witness and proclaim the truth of who Jesus is.

How do we enter?

There's a radical turn of repentance, a radical trust through faith, and a radical transformation. It happens at the point of salvation.

If anyone's in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. And there is a day-by-day ongoing transformation.

We're being conformed to the likeness of Christ. We're being transformed by the renewing of our mind. And we will become like him when he returns again.

We will end this lesson on page 27.

We talked many of the prophecies from the Old Testament that point forward to Jesus. The New Testament is a fulfillment of the Old Testament.

And as an example, Matthew had many Old Testament references, 53 Old Testament references, 76 allusions to the Old Testament. On this page I provided you with just a few some of the Old Testament messianic prophecies that were fulfilled in just the Gospel of Matthew.

This is proof that Jesus is the promise of what was stated in the Old Testament.

Also we remember the red thread of Jesus through the Old Testament. There are many types of Christ. A type of Christ is a picture of Jesus introduced in the Old Testament that is explicitly proven or fulfilled in the New Testament.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Passover lamb.

Jesus is the rock who produced water for Israel.

Jesus is the tabernacle was looking ahead to Jesus.

Jesus is the snake on the pole that was lifted up in Numbers.

The Old Testament provides the promises that are fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament.

In Christ, all God's promises are yes and amen.

This is the Gospel of the Kingdom. The proclamation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the teaching of Jesus Christ, and the conquest of the king as well.

We focus on the unusual authority of the king, the unexpected way of the cross, and the ultimate triumph through the resurrection.

In Lesson 3, we will continue with the Story of the New Testament as we discuss the Mission of the Kingdom as we look at the book of Acts in the 21 letters.

I look forward to meeting with you on the next audio lesson. Before you start the next lesson, take time to review Lesson 2 and read through the many scripture references. Take time to practice telling the story of the Gospel of the Kingdom.