

The Life of Christ The Gospels

Introduction:

We are going to look at Christ through the eyes of the writers of the Gospels in the New Testament, written to show us pictures of the life of Jesus while He was here on this Earth. No man before Him or after Him could or can compare with this great Man. He lived a life here on Earth without *ever* committing a sin (II Corinthians 5:21 “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who **knew no sin**; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”; Hebrews 4:15 “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet without sin.*”). God used four different men to write about this Man, Jesus. These four men wrote books that carry their names as titles, yet the real subject of their writings is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. These four Gospels are not verbatim quotes of one another—instead, they are different views of the same Man and His life.

The book of *Matthew* pictures Jesus as the **King**. It was written in such a way so that the Hebrews could understand and see Jesus as the King of the Jews. The book of *Mark* presents Jesus as a **Servant**. The people that Mark targeted were the Romans, most of whom were servants or what we would now refer to as “Blue-Collar Workers.” The book of *Luke* was written to show Jesus as the **Son of Man**. The people to whom Luke tried to explain Jesus were the Grecian people. The Grecian people were highly-educated. Perhaps that is why God chose a physician to teach them of Jesus. The Book of *John* is unique in that it really does not have a targeted audience. Instead, God used John to show Jesus to everyone as the eternal **Son of God**. John spoke in a language that all could understand. In order to accomplish what should be the desire of every Christian—to **be like Jesus**—we must learn everything that we can about Him. All that God wanted us to learn about Jesus is found in the Bible. We are going to spend some time learning about Jesus. All of these views of Jesus were written by men from different walks of life that at some point in their lives decided to live their lives for Christ and follow Him no matter what the cost. God used these men’s life experiences to give a unique perspective on His Son, Jesus. Through this God proves to us that He can and will use us to accomplish His will if only we are willing and dedicated.

I. Matthew—Jesus, the King of the Jews (Written to the Jews)

Matthew – Would God even consider using someone with a “dark” past to write one of the four records of the life of His Son? The book of Matthew was written by a man of what many would consider a dark past. Matthew is introduced in the Bible in Matthew 9:9 as a man at the receipt of custom. Luke 5:27 further elaborated on who this Matthew was. His name was recorded as Levi in Luke and he is the owner of a great house full of publicans or tax collectors at a great feast for Jesus. Jesus, criticized for meeting with these people who notoriously falsify tax information in order to make themselves rich did not fail to see the potential. This practice of falsifying numbers, made the tax collectors extremely unpopular among the people of the land. Luke 5:27-28 tells us that Matthew was asked by Jesus to leave all his riches and the life that made those riches possible and follow Him. Matthew did follow Him and because of that dedication to Jesus, God allowed Levi to be an eye witness to the ministry of His Son. It is most certain that Matthew’s involvement in the government affairs made him a prime candidate to write the Gospel to link the Jesus back to the Jewish Messiah because of his keen eye to record keeping.

Matthew was a tax collector. God used Matthew's ability to keep detailed records to detail to the Jews how Jesus fit the mold of the Messiah. Matthew's book referred to the Old Testament more often than the other Gospels. It also pictured Jesus fulfilling the prophecies from the Old Testament. This was done in hopes of convincing the Jewish people that Jesus was truly their Messiah.

II. Mark—Jesus, the Servant (Written to the Romans)

Mark-Many times, as Christians, we make mistakes: oftentimes due to youth, inexperience, ignorance or indifference. Whatever the reason, we sometimes make a mistake or a series of mistakes in our lives that go against everything we know about God and His desires for our lives. After the mistake is made, there is a feeling of guilt and worthlessness that takes over and we often feel that God cannot use us anymore. If there is one person in the Bible that typifies this it would be the man, John Mark. Much happened in the life of this man that would lead one to this conclusion. The Bible tells us that he was born to a woman named Mary, who was the sister of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). He was apparently no stranger to Jesus and to the church, because his mother's house was used for a prayer meeting for Peter when he was in jail. It is believed that his family was of some means, because the Bible says in Acts 12:12 that "many were gathered together" there in his house. John Mark was, by all indications, a wealthy child that grew up in church. On the surface, this appears to be a great thing, but a closer look at his life reveals that, though he was well provided for and well trained, he found himself in many situations where his character failed him. While many people just quit completely when they have found the road too difficult, John Mark, though he would fail, continued in his effort to make a difference for God.

Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, simply served with God's men. Generally, people who are servants do not have or know of the exact date of their birth. This is why there is no record of Jesus' birth or of His geneology in the book of Mark. Mark's book also moved Jesus from situation to situation in a quick, precise fashion, showing us how Jesus worked while here on Earth.

III. Luke—Jesus, the Son of Man (Written to the Grecians)

Luke-During the ministry of Paul, the Apostle, there were many great men that he mentioned as companions. One of the most mysteriously used men that Paul mentions is a man named Luke. We find Paul referred to Luke as the "the beloved physician" in Colossians 4:14. It appears that this man was just an ordinary physical doctor. He is not labeled as a preacher, yet he was used to author one of the four Gospels. Luke is also the author of Acts, the history book of the early church. Many times, we mistakenly believe that God can only use people in full-time Christian service. Luke, the physician, proves this theory to be false. Luke demonstrates to us just how valuable both our past and our occupation can be to the work of God. God needs people from all walks of life. Our talents are given to us from God: He has a purpose and a use for each one of our talents. Luke used his occupation to become one of the most steady, dependable followers and supporters of Paul. God saw this devotion and faithfulness and put it to great use as He used His Holy Ghost to inspire Luke to write two of the most important books of the Bible.

Luke, a physician, gave us perhaps the best look at Jesus as a human being. In Luke, we discover that John, the Baptist, was related to Jesus (they were cousins). We also learn about the inn, the stable and the manger which were only mentioned in Luke's account of the birth of Jesus. In many other areas, we see in this book that Jesus truly was human.

IV. John—Jesus, the Son of God (Written to the World)

John - Jesus, during His ministry here on earth, had 12 disciples. Of these twelve men there was a certain group to whom Jesus seemed to be closest. There was Peter, who was the “leader,” if you will, of the disciples. Then there was a man called James and his brother John. These men made up the “*inner circle*.” There are many interesting characteristics of these disciples who were the inner circle of Jesus. The only disciple in this inner circle who wrote any of the Gospels is John. John’s Gospel pictures Jesus as the Son of Man and it is in this Gospel that we learn much of what we know about the love that Jesus had. Throughout this Gospel we see the author make mention of himself as the disciple that Jesus loved. In fact, the only mention of the name John in the Gospel of John is in reference to John the Baptist. It seems a bit odd that a man of the magnitude of a disciple of Jesus would not even mention his own name throughout the Gospel that he wrote. John was also the man that Jesus chose to take care of Mary, Jesus’ mother, as He hung dying on the cross. There must be something great about this man. History tells us that John became a preacher and was greatly used of God in this capacity. He never quit his work for God. Even while in exile on the Isle of Patmos, his time was spent so close to God that God showed him visions that would reveal to the rest of the world the events of the end times. As author of the book of Revelations, God used this disciple to pen perhaps the most discussed book in the Bible.

John referred to himself throughout his Gospel as the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” John loved people and this was evidenced in his love for Jesus. He was the only disciple at the foot of the cross with Mary while Jesus died. That is why the word “love” appears more frequently in John’s Gospel than in any other. I John 4:8 and 16—two verses from a book written later by John—tell us that “God is love.” Therefore, it stands to reason that John’s Gospel, which pictures Jesus as the Son of God, would also vividly picture God’s love (John 3:16).

Conclusion:

God loved us **so much** that He sent His only Son to die for us on a cross. Then He allowed four different men to be used to write down the happenings in Jesus’ life so that we, no matter what walk of life we come from, could understand, accept and then explain Jesus Christ and His saving power to others.

Questions:

- 1. What are the names of the 4 Gospels?**
- 2. How does Matthew picture Jesus?**
- 3. How does Mark picture Jesus?**
- 4. How does Luke picture Jesus?**
- 5. How does John picture Jesus?**