

## Bible Overview

### Gospel records - Matthew to John

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

---

#### Matthew

Matthew gives a very full account of the life of Christ from birth until the time of ascension. The record covers the narrative aspects of his life as well as the matters of great spiritual significance.

A number of themes run throughout this gospel record. The most obvious is the theme that is most central to the whole of Scripture - God has provided the saviour that He promised in Genesis 3:15 (q.v. Genesis) who will "save his people from their sins" (1:21).

Associated with this salvation is repentance and baptism taught first by John the Baptist (3:1 - 2) and endorsed by Jesus (3:13 - 17; 28:19 - 20).

The people to be saved were not only to be Jews but also Gentiles. Jesus' acceptance of both Jews (the disciples) and Gentiles (12:18,21; 15:24) demonstrated the availability of God's saving grace to all.

He made constant reference to the Kingdom of God through his many parables (20:1 - 15; 22:1 - 1) and his miracles were performed to show the glory of his Father as well as to alleviate the suffering or difficulties of those benefiting from the miracle (5:16; 15:22,31).

Matthew also presents Jesus as the Son of man as well as the Son of God, the reason for the genealogy being given in Chapter 1, and he gives a full account of Jesus' temptation (4:1 - 11) showing that he was "tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Hebrews 4:15).

Judgment for sin is another theme evident through the parables (18:23 - 35) and other addresses (25:31 - 46) and Jesus was particularly severe on the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who made a pretence of religion but who were inwardly base (23:13 - 33).

Perhaps the most famous of Scriptural discourses is found in Chapters 5 through 7, the "Sermon on the Mount". In this Jesus, apart from giving a foundation for Christian living, endorses the

Old Testament scriptures by either putting them in a new light (5:21, 27 etc) or simply accepting their teaching (5:17 - 20).

## Outline

1:1 - 2:23 Jesus' birth and childhood  
3:1 - 17 John the Baptist  
4:1 - 25 Temptation and early ministry  
5:1 - 7:29 The Sermon on the Mount  
8:1 - 11:30 Miracles and preaching  
12:1 - 50 The Pharisees  
13:1 - 53 Seven parables of the Kingdom  
13:54 - 17:27 Further preaching and conflict with the Pharisees  
18:1 - 20:34 For the disciples  
21:1 - 22:46 Towards Jerusalem  
23:1 - 24:51 Warning - prophecy  
25:1 - 46 On the Kingdom  
26:1 - 27:66 The crucifixion  
28:1 - 20 The resurrection

---

## Mark

It has been suggested by a number of commentators that the four gospel writers dwell on a particular aspect of Jesus' life and mission. For example, in Matthew can be seen Jesus the King. The number of parables and discourses about the Kingdom support this contention. Luke dwells on Jesus the man, and John specifically expounds Jesus as the Son of God.

In Mark, Jesus is seen as the servant of God in terms suggested by Isaiah in 52:13 - 15 and 53:1 - 12. The term "Son of Man" is found fourteen times in Mark: (2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9,12,31; 10:33, 45; 13:26,34; 14:21, 62) and in at least 9 of these the clear association of the suffering servant can be seen.

At the same time, there are seven occurrence of the term Son of God (or term that implies Son of God) e.g. 1:1,11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61; 15:39. It seems that the first and last of these set the seal for the whole of the gospel record according to Mark where in 1:1 we read "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God ". In 15:39, after Jesus crucifixion, the impressed centurion said "Truly this man was the Son of God." The two clear aspects of Jesus are

demonstrated in this passage and in the record as a whole. Even the first verse itself conveys the summary of the book's message. It might be paraphrased this way: "The beginning of the good news of the kingdom of God (Matthew 9:35) preached by the one by whom God saves, the anointed, the Son of God."

It is also suggested that the gospel record by Mark was the first to be written. Mark was the cousin of Barnabus and is mentioned eight times in the New Testament. His other name was John. Because there are quite a few references to the Old Testament in this record, it is suggested that perhaps it was written more for Gentiles who would, initially have less knowledge of Old Testament scriptures.

## Outline

### 1:1 - 13 The Prologue

- 1:1 - 11 John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism
- 1:12 - 13 Jesus' temptation

### 1:14 - 10:52 The Ministry

- 1:14 - 20 The disciples called
- 1:21 - 3:12 In the synagogue; teaching and healing
- 3:13 - 35 Twelve chosen
- 4:1 - 34 Parables
- 4:35 - 5:43 Stilling the storm and other miracles
- 6:1 - 13 Further teaching
- 6:14 - 29 The death of John the Baptist

### 6:30 - 10:52 More teaching

### 11:1 - 16:20 The Crucifixion and Resurrection

- 11:1 - 26 Entering Jerusalem
- 11:27 - 13:37 Questions and answers
- 14:1 - 72 The approaching suffering
- 15:1 - 47 The trial and the crucifixion
- 16:1 - 20 The resurrection and ascension

## Luke

This is the first of two works by Luke. The second is the Acts of the Apostles. The first work, the gospel record, is an historical account of Jesus' life, and the second, an historical account of the early preaching of the gospel beginning from the time of Jesus' ascension.

Luke's gospel is different to the other Gospel records because of its historical approach. Luke is the physician and historian of the apostles. It is in this way that Luke records Jesus' ministry in an almost chronological way, similar to the way in which contemporary historians recorded the work of the time's political figures. It is also because of this approach that Jesus the man becomes evident.

The almost simplicity of this approach is not to deny the importance of the record. Luke goes into considerable detail in many events, and in particular, Jesus' birth. In this, he records the angels' message to Mary, drawing attention to the salvation possible through Jesus (1:32) and the fulfilment of the promise made to King David (1:32 - 33; cf 2 Samuel 7:11).

This emphasis sets the scene for the continual presentation of the theme of the gospel that is continued through the reference to John the Baptist (1:67 - 80), the events surrounding Jesus' birth (2:10 - 11), and through incidents in which Jesus indicates that salvation is possible to people in all circumstances. For example: to the Jews (1:33), to Gentiles, in this case, Samaritans (10:30 - 37), to women (10:38 - 42) as well as to men, to poor (7:22) and to the rich (19:2), although, for the rich, salvation is more difficult (6:24). Above all, Jesus came to call sinners to repentance (5:32) and that includes us all (Romans 3:23).

It is significant that the record concludes with the account of Jesus' exposition of the aspects of the law and the prophets which relate to his ministry, his request that the apostles preach the gospel of repentance and remission of sins, and a brief account of his ascension (24:44 - 51).

Even though Luke's account is historical, through God's guidance he never lost sight of the theme of salvation through Jesus.

## Outline

1:1 - 4 Introduction

1:5 - 2:52 The birth and childhood of Jesus

3:1 - 4:13 Preparation for the ministry - John the Baptist; Jesus' baptism; Jesus' temptation

4:14 - 9:50 The ministry in Galilee - Teaching through parables; Teaching through healing;

9:51 - 19:40 The ministry continues on the way to Jerusalem

19:41 - 21:38 The ministry in Jerusalem -Prophecy

22:1 - 24:53 The crucifixion, resurrection and ascension

---

## John

The apostle himself explained why he wrote this gospel account and included the signs (or miracles) that were important.

"These signs are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (20:30 - 31).

These signs referred to a number of aspects of Jesus' ministry.

- 2:1 - 11 - water into wine. This sign suggests the new covenant that took the place of the old. The "new" wine was better.
- 4:43 - 54 - the healing possible in Jesus, not only physical healing.
- 5:1 - 18 - the mercy shown by Jesus in contrast to the hardness of the Pharisees.
- 6:1 - 14 - physical and spiritual sustenance.
- 6:15 - 21 - the power to create peace.
- 9:1 - 7 - the light of Jesus contrasted to the darkness of the Pharisees.
- 11:1 - 54 - the power to raise and the hope of the resurrection.
- 21:1 - 14 - the power of Jesus to convert men and women so that none who are gathered in the net will be lost.

Within the framework of these signs and in other important passages, John gives a very comprehensive insight into Jesus, the Son of God and the manifestation of his Father.

Jesus was the Word of God (Greek *logos* - divine expression (Strong) made flesh (1:1 - 14), the bread of life - "he who eats this bread will live for ever" (6:58). He was (and is) the Shepherd of his sheep (10:1 - 30) . It was Jesus who was lifted up, symbolically showing how he would overcome the serpent that was originally responsible for encouraging sin. In this way Jesus fulfilled prophecy (see Genesis 3:15 and John 3:14).

John shows Jesus more comprehensively than the other gospel recorders because of the way Jesus' statements are written. Jesus says "I am: - the way, the truth and the life, the shepherd, the bread of life, the resurrection and the life, the door (of the sheepfold) the vine, the light of the world."

John records Jesus' statement of God's love:

**"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (3:16)**

## **Outline**

1:1 - 18 Introduction: Jesus, the Word of God  
1:19 - 51 Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God  
2:1 - 4:54 Teaching through signs, and the new birth  
5:1 - 47 The Son of God  
6:1 - 6:71 The bread of life  
7:1 - 10:42 The Jews' questions  
11:1 - 54 Resurrection  
11:55 - 17:26 The Passover - Jesus and his Father  
18:1 - 19:42 Jesus' death  
20:1 - 31 Jesus' resurrection  
21:1 - 25 Final words

---