

New Testament Survey – Introduction
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School
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Introduction

When coming to the Scriptures, many people tend to read and/or study the passages that speak to them the most: the sermon on the mount, the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus' miracles or parables, an epistle, Revelation, or an OT favorite like Proverbs or Psalms. Yet, God gave us a complete book. We cannot know the whole story by reading or even by studying in-depth little passages in isolation. (Most cults have sprung up using this approach to Bible study.) Scripture explains and clarifies Scripture.

Only Scripture is perfectly adequate for all matters of faith and conduct—for salvation and sanctification. Only Scripture is able to meet all the spiritual needs of God's people. Scripture is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. Therefore, we need to be in taking all of it.

¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the **wisdom that leads to salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶**All Scripture** is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷**so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.** 2 Tim 3:15-17

²like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may **grow in respect to salvation,** 1 Pet 2:2

⁴But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" Matt 4:4

¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** Heb 4:12

Progressive Revelation and Dispensationalism

As we read through and understand the chronology of the Bible, we see that God did not provide all information about Himself at a single time, but progressively added more revelation concerning Himself and His plan. This is the idea of progressive revelation.

A framework to interpreting the Bible that we will use is dispensationalism. Dispensationalism recognizes that God has dealt with people differently through the various ages or dispensations. Yet, God has maintained the same way to enter into a relationship with Himself in all dispensations – faith. Up to eight dispensations can be identified:

- 1) Dispensation of innocence – creation to the fall
- 2) Dispensation of conscience – the fall to Noah
- 3) Dispensation of human government – Noah to Abraham
- 4) Dispensation of covenant/promise – Abraham to the Law of Moses
- 5) Dispensation of the law – the Law of Moses to Christ
- 6) Dispensation of grace – Christ to the tribulation (Church age)
- 7) Dispensation of the Tribulation
- 8) Dispensation of the fullness of times – the Millennium to the eternal state

The distinctives of dispensationalism are

- 1) maintaining a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture
- 2) maintaining a distinction between Israel and the church
- 3) maintaining that the glory of God as God's ultimate purpose in the world

Intertestamental Context

In order to understand the meaning of the NT, we need to understand the world that helped form its thinking and culture. The writers of the NT were first century Jews and Gentiles. A brief understanding of the intertestamental period is essential to a right appreciation of the NT.

The narrative of the OT closes during the period of restoration to the land. The events of the book of Nehemiah and the prophecy of Malachi would bring the OT to a close.

Date	Event
1050-1010 BC	Saul
1010-970	David
970-930	Solomon
722	Fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Assyria
605	Exile: Stage #1 Daniel and a few taken captive to Babylon
597	Exile: Stage #2 10,000 Jews taken captive to Babylon
586	Judah Falls to Babylon (Exile: Stage #3 Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem)
539	Babylon falls to the Medo-Persians (Daniel 5)
538	Decree of Cyrus (2 Chron 36/Ezra 1)
538	Return: Stage #1 50,000 Jews return under Zerubbabel and Joshua
516	Completion of 2nd Temple
458	Return: Stage #2 2,000 Jews return under Ezra to restore worship
445	Return: Stage #3 Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem
433-424	Malachi

The land of Israel would endure 400 years of prophetic and revelatory silence until the events surrounding the birth of Christ, where the NT narrative picks up. Even though these 400 years are called "the silent years" because there was no prophetic word from God, God was active, and his people were left with information. The Prophet Daniel had predicted exactly what would happen. These 400 years were a time of world-shaking events. Great empires rose and fell, many battles were fought, and writings such as the Apocrypha and Septuagint were part of the silent years. The events of the 400-year intertestamental period would set the stage for the NT. So when we open our NT we find a very different Jewish world. World history made rapid strokes during this interval. The internal condition of Judah experienced a radical transformation. A new culture, different institutions, and unfamiliar organizations arose in this period, which appear in the NT, but not in the Old.

The OT closed with the Medo-Persian Empire being the dominant power. Also, Egypt was still a power to be reckoned with in world politics. During the interval between the testaments both faded from the scene as world powers. World power shifted from the east to the west, from Asia to Europe, and from Medo-Persia to Greece. When the NT opens a new world power, Rome, has come on the scene. There are four periods of history during this time frame: 1) The Persian Period; 2) The Hellenistic (Greek) Period; 3) The Hasmonean Period; and 4) The Roman Period.

Timeline of Intertestamental Chronology			
Persian Period	Greek Period	Hasmonean Period	Roman Period
450 - 333 BC	333 - 166 BC	166 - 63 BC	63 BC - NT
- Repatriation - Samaritans - More civil power for the high priest	- Alexander the Great - Greek is <i>lingua franca</i> - Septuagint	- Maccabean Revolt - Pharisees & Sadducees	- <i>Pax Romana</i> - Solid system of roads - Rise of Herod

The Persian Period (450 - 333 BC)

The Persians were ruling the world at the close of the OT and continued in power for about 100 more years. This was a time when the Jews enjoyed religious freedom under the tolerant Persian rule. The Persians practiced a policy of repatriation. They would often return people to their native lands in order to gain their loyalty. As a result of this repatriation and the preceding Babylonian expatriation, the mixed race of the Samaritans (Gentiles mixed with Jews) came into being. During this period tremendous antagonism developed between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Persians also allowed native peoples to have some authority in their own regions. The Jews became a small semi-independent state under the Persian rule. This is the development of an internal self-government, which becomes the genesis of the Sanhedrin. The Jewish High Priest is given an increasing amount of civil power during this period, which explains the lack of civil power in the OT, but the great deal of power demonstrated in the NT. Commerce also developed among the Jews during this time-frame creating a sharp distinction between the rich and the poor and making Jerusalem the center of commerce for Israel. Israel suffered much during this period as a result of constant warfare between Egypt and Persia.

- 480 BC Xerxes, the Persian, was victorious against the Greeks at Thermopylae, but he was defeated at the battle of Salamis. This was the last bid of the East for world dominion.
- 333 BC Alexander the Great led the united Greek forces to victory over the Persians at Issus.

The Hellenistic (Greek) Period (333 - 166 BC)

Alexander the Great assumed the Macedonian Throne when his father, Philip II, was assassinated in 336 BC. Although he was only twenty, he was a natural leader and under the guidance of Aristotle he became well educated. This period began in Palestine around 333 BC when Alexander the Great conquered the land. The Persian armies stationed in Macedonia were defeated by Alexander as he sought to unify the world around Greek culture. Daniel prophesied of this kingdom:

²⁰The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of **Media and Persia**. ²¹The shaggy goat *represents* the **kingdom of Greece**, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. ²²The broken *horn* and the four *horns that* arose in its place *represent* **four kingdoms which will arise from his nation**, although not with his power. Dan 8:20-22

This is a truly remarkable prophecy. A new kingdom will come to power (Greece). Its first king (Alexander the Great) will be broken and four kingdoms will rise in his place. This is exactly what we see with Greece: after Alexander the Great died, the kingdom was split between his four generals.

There is a legend that the brilliantly robed Jewish high priest went out of Jerusalem to meet Alexander the Great. He read the prophecy to Alexander and Alexander spared Jerusalem from attack by his armies. In fact, Alexander permitted the Jews to observe their laws and even granted them exemption from tribute or tax during the Sabbath years. When he built Alexandria in Egypt, he encouraged the Jews to live there and he gave them the same privileges as he gave his Greek subjects.

Divided Greek Empire

Alexander died suddenly in 323 BC. After twenty years of wars, the kingdom was split between his four generals, as predicted in Dan 8. The Ptolemies took control of Israel in 301 BC and ruled until 198 BC.

Ptolemies (301 - 198 BC)

Under the Ptolemies, Palestine experienced a political, economic, and social re-birth. The policies formed here carried over into the NT period. The parables of Jesus with landowners, tenants, stewards, money lenders, day laborers, tax collectors, and land leasing all come from the systems developed at this time. The land was the king's land, a portion of all its produce went to the king. Jerusalem became a temple state governed by a high priestly aristocracy with all the power, rights, and privileges accorded a king. While under the rule of Egypt, many of the Jews moved there and enjoyed the privileges of the Greek population. Around 285 BC the Jews of Alexandria made a translation of the Hebrew OT into Greek. We know this as the Greek Septuagint or LXX and is often quoted by Jesus and the Apostles.

Seleucids (198 - 143 BC)

In 198 BC, the Seleucids, who controlled Syria and Persia, took control of Palestine under Antiochus III at the Battle of Panium (later Caesaria Philippi). Israel was divided into the regions of Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Trachonitis, and Perea. Initially the Jews were allowed to live according to their laws under the council of the high priest probably due to Antiochus' need of the Jews because Rome was moving, threatening everyone in their path. In fact, he signed a treaty with Rome in 188 BC which virtually reduced him to a tax collector for Rome, even though they had not physically invaded Palestine. To seal the deal he sent his son, Epiphanes, to Rome as a hostage.

This tolerance came to an end when the hostage, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) was released from Rome to Athens and soon raised an army and reconquered his father's land. He became one of the most infamous characters in all of Jewish history. He ordered the Hellenization of Palestine, forbidding the Jews from keeping their laws or observing their religion. He plundered the temple treasury; took the objects of worship; desecrated the temple; enslaved the people; and stopped the observance of the Sabbath, festivals, sacrificing, and the circumcision of Jewish children. On December 25, 168 BC, he offered a pig on the great altar of the temple and then erected a heathen altar to Jupiter. It was this act along with the forbidding of all Jewish rites and ceremonies that led to a revolt and the end of the Greek period in Israel. Antiochus Epiphanes was the first pagan king to order the death of masses of Jews.

The historical significance of the Greek period is seen in the fulfillment of Daniel 8 with Alexander the Great conquering Persia and gaining control of Israel. Also noteworthy was the spread of Greek culture, which became a dominant issue in Israel between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Greek language became the *lingua franca* (universal trade language) of the Mediterranean world. So by the time of the NT, Greek was the dominant language and would become the language the NT was originally written in.

- 332 BC Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem. He was shown the prophecy of Daniel, which spoke of him; therefore he spared Jerusalem.
- 323 BC Alexander died, and the world empire of both east and west was divided among his four generals.
- 320 BC Judea was annexed to Egypt by Ptolemy Soter.
- 312 BC Seleucius founded the kingdom of the Selucidae. Judea became the battleground between Syria and Egypt as a buffer state.
- 285 BC The formation of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT.
- 203 BC Antiochus the Great took Jerusalem, and Judea passed under the influence of Syria.
- 170-168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes took Jerusalem and defiled the temple. He had been mentioned in Daniel as the little horn (Dan 8:9). He has been called the "Nero of Jewish history."

The (Maccabean) Hasmonean Period (166 - 63 BC)

This period begins following Antiochus IV's offensive sacrifices in the temple as the Jews were being greatly oppressed. Copies of the Scriptures were being ordered destroyed and laws were enforced with extreme cruelty. The horrible practices of Antiochus IV could not be tolerated any longer and the oppressed Jews revolted. Matthias, a priest with strong convictions and righteousness led this movement. He was the first of this family of liberators called the Maccabees. He was succeeded by Judas Maccabeus, who was assisted by four brothers. They regained possession of Jerusalem, purified the temple and again established the daily sacrifices. Trouble continued until about 142 BC, when the Maccabees gained national independence. During this time period, the high priest had both religious and civil power. Toward the end of this period civil war broke out between two brothers (Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II) about 66-63 BC. This civil war was ended when the Romans invaded and conquered Palestine. During this period the political groundwork was laid for the Herods in Israel and the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees emerged over the issue of Hellenism.

167 BC	Mattathias, the priest of Judea, raised a revolt against Syria. Judas Maccabaeus "the hammer" organized the revolt.
166-160 BC	Judas Maccabeus's leadership.
142 BC	Tower of Jerusalem is cleansed.
142-134 BC	Simon becomes high priest and establishes the Hasmonean dynasty.
63 BC	Pompey invades Palestine and Roman rule begins.

The effects of the Maccabees on NT Jewish history was tremendous:

1. The Hasidim (pious ones), with their zeal for the tradition of their ancestors and obedience to Torah probably began the organization of the Pharisees.
2. The revolt brought religious freedom and a spirit of nationalism which carried on as they negotiated deals with the Roman emperors to "rule themselves" in exchange for tributes and keeping their people under control.
3. A sensitivity to any threat which might abominate the temple or disgrace the law. Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath law and speaking blasphemy "against the temple" (Mark 14). Stephen was martyred for "speaking against the holy place and against the law" (Acts 6). Paul was charged for defiling the temple by bringing a gentile (Acts 21).
4. Hellenization continued as the office of High Priest was politicized.
5. Concentration on the law and its interpretations caused the Pharisees to martyr many righteous people who opposed their non-Biblical views just as the Maccabees had.
6. Apocalyptic literature flourished causing a rise of the belief that the Messiah would come in power and glory to overthrow the yoke of Roman tyranny.

The Roman Period (63 BC – New Testament)

This period began with Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 BC. The local government was entrusted to patriarchs who were appointed by the emperors. In 63 BC, Hyrcanus II was given the position of high priest. In 47 BC, Julius Caesar made Antipater ruler of Judea and his son, Herod, governor of Galilee. Following the murder of Caesar, Herod received the appointment to become king of Judea. On his return he married Mariamne, the beautiful granddaughter of the former high priest Hyracanus II. He did so hoping to gain the good will of the people. Herod was a very brutal and cunning individual as he committed crimes of unspeakable cruelty even murdering his wife and two sons. He would later attempt to kill Christ by having the children of Bethlehem killed. In another attempt to gain the favor of the people, he rebuilt their temple, which is the temple that Christ came to many times.

When the NT opens, the Roman empire is ruling the world with Caesar Augustus as its emperor and with Herod as king of Judea. The Roman period is known for the establishment of a reasonably consistent system of law. The Roman government took control of piracy and thievery making travel easier and safer. The Roman policy of *Pax Romana* (world-wide peace) also facilitated travel. The development of a solid system of roads during this time not only allowed for ease in travel, but would also allow for ease in the spread of the Gospel later on.

63 BC	Pompey invades Palestine and Roman rule begins.
40 BC	Roman Senate appointed Herod to be King of Judea.
37-25 BC	Herod eliminated Hasmonean rule.
31 BC	Caesar Augustus became emperor of Rome.
19 BC	The rebuilding of the Herodian temple was begun.
14-4 BC	Herod's family feuds (He slew his wives, sons and part of the Sanhedrin).
5/4 BC	Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
4 BC	Herod dies before Passover after a lunar eclipse dated at March 14, 4 BC.

The years following the death of Herod the Great were years of unrest and revolt in Judea. It became a period of Tetrarchs, Procurators, and Kings, as Rome tried desperately to deal with the "Judean problem." Many of their names pop up in the NT in various roles relating to the control of the Roman Jewish dilemma. The fate of the Jews hinged on the style and personality of the current ruler.

Agrippa I and Titus

In AD 37, Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, was in jail. He had befriended a young man named Gaius who, through circumstance and intrigue became the perverted and cruel Emperor Caligula. He was released from prison, given a gold medallion, and made king of the territory once ruled by his grandfather.

Agrippa may or may not have been a pious man, but he was sensitive to the Jews and was appreciated by most of them (see Acts 12). At his death, the Jews mourned and with great reason. The following rulers were cruel, insensitive, harsh, and ruthless. Matters again came to a head in AD 66. A war, the result of anti-Roman hatred and fueled by incompetent, greedy, and ruthless procurators, was waged by anarchistic Jews. The plundering of the temple treasury, again, this time by Forius, brought out the Zealots who drove the Romans out of Jerusalem and then ran to Masada while anarchists, both Jews and Gentiles, massacred each other in the streets.

In AD 68, Vespasian was ready to attack and re-capture Jerusalem, but Nero committed suicide and he was appointed Emperor. He returned to Rome but named his son, Titus, as his general and charged him with solving the Jewish problem.

In AD 70, Titus brutally sacked Jerusalem, burned the temple, then followed the escapees to Masada where he built a siege ramp to scale the walls. He found only two women and five children alive, as all others had chosen suicide over capture. All deference to Judaism ceased. Temple worship was terminated and Jerusalem became a pagan city. Worship moved into Synagogues.

Why was it during the Roman Empire that Jesus came? Why not in Egypt, or Greece, or Persia, or England? When God considered the time absolutely right, He sent Jesus into the world to redeem us.

¹Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ²in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, ³**but at the proper time manifested**, *even* His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, Titus 1:1-3

⁴**But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Gal 4:4-5

Bible Arrangement

The first major part of the Bible is called "the Old Testament," which literally means "the Old Covenant." A covenant is an agreement made by a person which another person could accept or reject, but could not change. The OT deals primarily with God's relationship with Israel based on the covenant He gave through Moses at Mt. Sinai. The Old Covenant revealed the holiness of God in the form of a righteous standard called "The Law" and promised a coming redeemer.

The order of the 39 English OT books is not chronological, yet it is a logical order based on subject matter. The first 17 books are history, the last 17 books are prophecy, and the middle five books are poetry. However, there is prophecy in the history books, history in the prophecy books, poetry in the history books, etc. The history, poetry, and prophecy categories may be further broken down.

The first five books are called the Pentateuch and were written by Moses. These five books describe the creation of the universe and the early history of the Jewish people. This is where God’s law is given to His chosen people. It is this law that is a “tutor” which leads us to Christ (Gal 3:24). The next 12 books describe the continuing history of the Jewish people before becoming a kingdom, as a kingdom before the Babylonian captivity, and after the Babylonian captivity. These books describe God’s continuing faithfulness to His chosen people and how He responds to them depending on their response to His law.

The poetry books are mostly written during the time of Kings David and Solomon, though Job was written during the time of Genesis. These books describe the inner and outer struggles of God’s people as they try to live according to the revelation that God had given them.

The prophetic books are usually divided into two categories: major and minor. This division is essentially based on the size of the book. Another way to categorize the prophetic books is based on their relationship to the Babylonian captivity (pre, during, or post). The prophets challenged people to return to God lest they be judged. These books can also be categorized based on their recipients: Israel, Judah, or Assyria.

Old Testament (39)							
History (17)			Poetry (5)	Prophecy (17)			
Pentateuch (5)	Pre-Exilic (9)	Post-Exilic (3)		Major (5)		Minor (12)	
			Pre-Exilic (2)	Exilic (3)	Pre-Exilic (9)	Post-Exilic (3)	
Genesis	Joshua	Ezra	Job	Isaiah	Lamentations	Hosea	Haggai
Exodus	Judges	Nehemiah	Psalms	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Joel	Zechariah
Leviticus	Ruth	Esther	Proverbs		Daniel	Amos	Malachi
Numbers	1 Samuel		Ecclesiastes			Obadiah	
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel		Song of Sol			Jonah	
	1 Kings					Micah	
	2 Kings					Nahum	
	1 Chron					Habakkuk	
	2 Chron					Zephaniah	

OT purpose According to NT

There are several reasons given in the NT for the OT.

1. To lead us to Christ

²⁴Therefore **the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ**, so that we may be justified by faith. Gal 3:24

2. To show that faith is the requirement for entering into a relationship with God.

²²Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ²³Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, ²⁴but **for our sake** also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. Rom 4:22-25

3. To give us examples and instruction for sanctification, perseverance, and encouragement.

⁶Now these things happened as **examples for us**, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 1 Cor 10:6

⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was **written for our instruction**, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Rom 15:4

¹¹Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were **written for our instruction**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 1 Cor 10:11

The second major part of the Bible is called "the New Testament," which literally means "the New Covenant." The NT describes a new arrangement, or "New Covenant" of God made with man through Jesus, the Christ (Ex 24, Luke 22, 2 Cor 3). The central theme of the NT is SALVATION and centers around the Person who gave Himself for the remission of sins, and the people who have received His salvation. The Gospels introduce the Savior. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles describes the spreading of this message in the first century AD. The Epistles explain and detail the doctrine of Salvation and its application to daily living, and Revelation previews the culmination of this salvation.

New Testament (27)					
Gospels (4)	History (1)	Paul to Churches (9)	Paul to People (4)	General Letters (8)	Prophecy (1)
Matthew	Acts	Romans	1 Timothy	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	2 Timothy	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	Titus	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	Philemon	2 Peter	
		Ephesians		1 John	
		Philippians		2 John	
		Colossians		3 John	
		1 Thessalonians		Jude	
		2 Thessalonians			

Christocentric Nature of the Bible

Jesus, the Christ, is the center of the entire Bible. He is the theme, either in anticipation or in fulfillment, of all the Scriptures.

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.** Matt 5:17

²⁷Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, **He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.** Luke 24:27

⁴⁴Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**” Luke 24:44

³⁹You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; **it is these that testify about Me;** John 5:39

Norman Geisler in “A Popular Survey of the New Testament” shows the Christocentric structure of the Old and New Testaments.

Section of Scripture	Christocentric Emphasis
Law	Foundation laid for Christ
History	Preparation for Christ
Poetry	Aspiration expressed for Christ
Prophecy	Expectation of Christ
Gospels	Manifestation of Christ
Acts	Propagation of Christ
Epistles	Interpretation and application of Christ
Revelation	Consummation of all things in Christ

Introduction to The Gospels

The word "gospel" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "godspeel", "god" meaning good, and "speel" meaning story or news. Later, the Greek word evangellion, which meant "a good report" was also translated gospel. Each Gospel simply has the title "According to ..." in the Greek. The titles in most English Bibles are "Gospel According to..." which is fitting since the "good news" of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is the greatest news ever reported.

Why were the Gospels Written?

The Rapid Spread of Christianity – When persecution and missionary zeal caused Christianity to spread, there was a need for an accurate accounting of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Many legends of His life, especially fantastic tales of miracles in His childhood, warped the purpose and meaning of His coming, so an accurate, eye-witness account was necessary. A telling focused on the purpose and meaning of His life, ministry, and death. The Gospels provide authoritative answers to questions about Jesus' life and ministry, and strengthen believers' assurance regarding the reality of their faith.

The Death of Many Witnesses – As the years went by, many of the witnesses to the events began to die. There was a need for written accounts of their testimony of what they had "seen, heard, and touched with their hands" (1 John 1:1).

Why These Four of Many?

Authors – There were numerous other "gospels" written, many which are included in apocryphal literature. The evidence is clear, however, that only these four were accepted by the early church. The early church accepted only the four written by an Apostle or one closely associated to and under the authority of an Apostle. Later church councils confirmed this decision.

Content – Other "gospels" have content that is inconsistent with Scripture. Fanciful stories of Jesus in childhood and writings supporting heretical or pagan points of view were excluded from the canon.

The Four Gospels

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, when compared to John, share a common point of view or "see together," thus they are called by the Greek term "Synoptic." John varies in that He focuses on the ministry of Jesus in Judea, while the others report primarily on His ministry in Galilee. The most important reason for the existence of four distinct books and the main differences between the accounts have to do with the authors themselves, their audiences, and their purposes for writing.

Authors

The Holy Spirit superintended (directed, but did not dictate to) the human authors so that, using their own words, revealing their own personalities, drawing on their own life experiences, and speaking in their own styles and vocabulary, they composed and recorded without error in the original manuscripts God's revelation to mankind. Matthew (the tax collector), Mark (a young Roman Jew) Luke (a doctor), and John (a fisherman) – all different, all witnesses of Jesus.

Audience

The gospels were written not just from four points of view, but to reach four specific audiences:

Matthew to the Jews

The Jewish people were, and are, an ethno-centric group with strong culture, customs, and traditions. The NT Jew was immersed in the OT Scriptures and aware of the patriarchs, law and prophets. So, Matthew writes about the great promise of the OT, presenting Jesus, the Promised King, the Messiah. Jesus was the one promised in their ancient prophecies – the Son of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, in the line of King David, coming to set up a New Kingdom on earth. Matthew dwells on genealogy, the fulfilling of the law, and Jesus' words and actions. Matthew 5-7 is especially powerful as Jesus presents the proper view of the law in the Sermon on the Mount.

Mark to the Romans

The Romans were the rulers of the known world, men of few words and much action. They have no knowledge of the OT or Jewish culture, therefore no interest in prophecies fulfilled or Messiahs given. They are, however, interested in a leader claiming special authority and having supernatural power. Mark writes of a man who does not just speak, but Jesus, the servant of an all-powerful God, who acts. There are no genealogies, no prophesy, and few words. Just a man of power, action, and miracles, a man the Romans could admire and understand. Mark uses "and" 1375 times, indicating a virtual list of actions and events, deeds not words.

Luke to the Greeks

The Greeks were lovers of culture, art, poetry, beauty, health, and knowledge. They collected man's wisdom, man's art, man's accomplishments, man's myths, even man's gods. They worshiped the human mind and body. So, Luke, a Greek doctor, writes to them of Jesus, the perfect Son of Man. There is a genealogy, but this one goes back, not to Abraham, but to Adam and Eve, those perfect human specimens. There are angels singing, kings worshipping, fireworks, an ultimate myth come true as the Son of Man is also the Son of God.

John to Everybody

Anybody with a need, or in trouble, or under pressure, or with hard questions needs John. John writes to all of us, presenting the only answer that can transcend our human capability. We need Jesus, the Son of God, who just happens to also be God! He presents Jesus "in the beginning with God" and exposes God's master plan to provide salvation for us. His emphasis on Jesus' teaching on salvation is the only truly "good news" that is effective to save the world.

The "Synoptic Problem"

Liberal Bible scholars have posed a problem with the synoptic gospels. How were the synoptic Gospels written with so much agreement in material, order, and wording, and yet with such differences that each writer remains an author and not a mere copyist of the Gospel tradition as recorded by others? In order to explain the similarities and differences while denying the supernatural work of God and church tradition, liberal scholars have developed a scheme of literary dependence between the synoptics.

Differences – Each author wrote independently using their own personalities and styles and with a particular purpose and audience. Each author was directed by the Holy Spirit to present their account from a particular viewpoint.

Similarities – Each author was either an eyewitness to the events or was directly connected with an eyewitness (1 Pet 5:13; Mark 14:51-52; Acts 12:12; Col. 4:10, 24; Phil 24); each author was acquainted with extensive oral tradition (John 21:25; Acts 20:35), and each author was guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20-21; John 14:26).

There is no need for theories of literary dependence. The apostles were themselves eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus. At the time of the writings many of the original followers of Jesus were still alive and could have been consulted. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were at the very least familiar with one another and most likely had a close relationship. There were teachings of Jesus that were passed on orally. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit brought to these men's remembrance the teachings and deeds of Jesus and then moved them to write it down without error while utilizing their own personalities.

Theories of literary dependence between the Synoptic Gospels are extremely widespread. Liberal scholars as well as many Evangelicals hold to some view of literary dependence. The ramifications of accepting these views are serious. Literary dependence is based on anti-supernaturalism; the rejection or limiting of the Holy Spirit's work in writing the Scriptures. Moreover, literary dependence undermines the historicity and reliability of the Scriptures and destroys the ability to accurately know the person and work of the Jesus.

A Comparison of the Four Gospels				
	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Audience	Jews	Romans	Greeks	World
Purpose	Explain the kingdom	Impress the power of the Gospel	Set in historical order	Emphasize the plan of salvation
Special Emphasis	Discourses	Miracles	Parables	Personal interviews
How Savior Seen	Promised Savior	Powerful Savior	Perfect Savior	Personal Savior
Key Text	2:2	10:45	19:10	20:30-31
Date of Writing	50-60 AD	55-64 AD	60-63 AD	85-95 AD
Place of Writing	Judea	Rome	Caesarea	Ephesus
Theme	Jesus is the rejected Messiah of the Jews	Jesus is the powerful Servant of God	Jesus is the ideal Son of Man	Jesus is the eternal Son of God

The Geographical Setting

The land of Israel is located in a strategic location in what is called the Fertile Crescent. A mountainous region is located to the north and the Arabian Desert is situated to the south. Israel is located on the West side next to the Mediterranean Sea. The Fertile Crescent is made up of the Nile and Mesopotamia River Basins. Israel is often called the Land Between, the Land Bridge, or the Point of Balance. This is because the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian Desert forces traffic through the narrow land area of Israel. The land of Israel is split into four main longitudinal zones (running north to south):

1. The Coastal Plain: A flat well watered plain along the coast about 8-15 miles wide. It provides the easiest and most natural route for travel from the areas of Babylon/Assyria/Syria to Egypt.
2. The Hill Country or Central Mountains: This is a range of mountains that rise over 3,000 feet in elevation in places. It runs from Galilee in the north to the Negev Highlands in the south. Jerusalem is located here at 2600 feet and receives about 25" of rain annually.
3. The Jordan Rift valley: This is a deep depression in the earth that stretches 3700 miles from Southern Turkey into Africa. It is part of what is known as the Syro-African rift. The Sea of Galilee (~690 ft below sea level) and the Dead Sea (~1388 ft below sea level) as well as the Jordan River are located in this zone.
4. The Transjordan Plateau: East of the Rift Valley rises the mountains of the Transjordan. This area has somewhat rugged, steep slopes and receives quite a bit of rain and even some snow.

Five Political Religious Parties

None of these parties were very large.

1. **Pharisees** (Religious Conservatives) – There were about 6000 Pharisees in the time of Christ. They would be classed as a conservative, ritualist party and were more popular with the people because of their anti-foreign attitude and high regard for the Scriptures. In the Sanhedrin, they held a majority. They held the oral law with its many interpretations and traditions to be just as binding as the OT. They went to great lengths to keep themselves separated from all that they considered unclean, and to perform all religious duties. Their great sin was hypocrisy. The Pharisees kept the Messianic hope alive, although their concept of the Messiah was perverted. They believed in a future state and the resurrection of the dead. They considered the common people as cursed because they did not know the law (Luke 18:9; John 7:49).

2. **Sadducees** (Religious Compromisers) – The Sadducees were the priestly party and were smaller in number than the Pharisees. They were mostly from wealthy influential priestly families. They were the rationalists of the day, only believing what they thought was reasonable. They denied the authority of the oral law, the resurrection, future punishment and rewards. It is a paradox that these very same unbelieving priests were the ones who ministered in the temple and offered the sacrifices, yet as a class they did not personally believe in the value or necessity of those sacrifices. It was their "business" that the Lord interfered with when He cleansed the temple. But Christ died for them too and "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).
3. **Essenes** (Extreme Separatists) – The NT does not mention the Essenes. They withdrew from ordinary society and lived near the Dead Sea. They practiced a monastic type of life. By adhering to an ascetic discipline and the simple life, they sought communion with God and purity of life. Because of the recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some of which at least were deposited by them, they have become the object of recent study of archaeologists.
4. **Zealots** (National Jewish Party) – The Zealots were the national Jewish party which arose after the Romans took over Palestine in 63 BC. They tried to arouse the people to fight for their deliverance. They were responsible for several minor clashes with Rome and were active in the final clash in AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. In many cases they had degenerated into outlaw bands that terrorized the land. Barabbas was probably a Zealot. He was in prison for insurrection (Mark 15:7). The two thieves (correctly translated "robbers") that were crucified with Jesus may also have been Zealots (Matt 27:44). One of Jesus' disciples was a Zealot, "Simon the Canaanite" (Matt 10:4). "Canaanite" should be translated "Cananaean." This is the Aramaic name for Zealot.
5. **Herodians** (Jewish Supporters of Herod) – The Herodians were a small political party that was trying to further the power of the Herod family. Judea and Samaria had been taken from Herod's control and were governed by a Roman procurator. The Herodians and Pharisees were bitter enemies, but they did conspire together to try to kill Jesus. Pilate and Herod Antipas were enemies until after the trials and death of Jesus (Luke 23:12).

Four Cultural Institutions

1. **Synagogue** – The Greek word means "a congregation, or assembly." It was a place of prayer and instruction in the Scriptures. It possibly originated in the time of Ezra and might be referenced to in Psalm 74:8, "*the meeting places of God.*" This is where the Rabbis taught from.
2. **Sanhedrin** – It means "a council or assembly session." It is first mentioned in Jewish history in the time of Antiochus the Great from 223-187 BC. It was an aristocratic body with the High Priest as its head. In the time of Christ it was the supreme civil and religious authority. It was made up of 71 members (24 chief priest, 24 elders, 22 scribes and the high priest) made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees. It lost power in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem.
3. **Publicans** (tax collectors) – They were collectors of Roman revenue. They were hated and regarded as traitors and apostates by their frequent contacts with the heathen. They were considered to be tools of the oppressor and frequently overcharged for their own personal gain.
4. **Scribes** – They were keepers and registers of public documents. They studied and interpreted the Law to people. They were considered the highest form of teacher and were primarily Pharisees.

Outline of Jesus' Life and Ministry

The outline of Jesus' life is patterned after John 16:28.

²⁸I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father. John 16:28

²⁸I came forth from the Father ...

Jesus is the pre-existence Second Person of the Trinity.

... and have come into the world; ...

This section encompasses Jesus birth up to the passion week.

1. Jesus' birth, infancy, and boyhood.
2. Jesus emerges into public life with His baptism by John; temptation for 40 days in the wilderness; gathering His first disciples; and working a miracle in Cana.
3. Jesus gains attention in Judea and Samaria. This phase of Jesus' ministry lasted about six months, but it is recorded only by John. It was because of opposition generated during this time that Jesus left Judea and ministered in Galilee.
4. Jesus' 18-month ministry in Galilee is characterized by open announcement of His Messiahship; miraculous proof of His claim to Messiahship and deity; and ever increasing public amazement and official hatred. During this time Jesus traveled to Judea once for a feast, but most of the time was spent traveling throughout Galilee offering Himself as Messiah to the Jews which was ultimately rejected.
5. The training of the twelve occurs during the first 6 months of the last year of His public ministry. Jesus will soon be taken and put to death. Thus, He begins to prepare His disciples for that event.
6. The final six months before the passion week and primarily in and around Jerusalem. The events of this period are best understood in relation to three trips to Jerusalem made during this time.

TRIP #1 – to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2-10:21). After the Feast, Jesus remained in Judea, though He avoided Jerusalem.

TRIP #2 – to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-39). After this feast, Jesus journeyed to Perea, that area beyond the Jordan River.

TRIP #3 – to Bethany (2 miles from Jerusalem) in order to raise Lazarus from the dead. After this miracle, Jesus finds seclusion in Ephraim, a little town north of Jerusalem some miles. Here He remains with His disciples, hidden from His enemies until He goes for the final time to Jerusalem for the Passover season (John 11:54).

... I am leaving the world ...

This period involves the passion week – Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, His arrest and trials, His crucifixion, and burial.

Sun	The triumphal entry.
Mon/Tues	The fig tree is cursed, the second cleansing of the Temple, Temple preaching.
Wed	A silent day in the Gospels.
Thurs	Passover preparation; the last supper; the upper room discourse; the betrayal; arrest.
Fri	A series of trials of Jesus; the crucifixion; burial in a borrowed.
Sat	Jesus' body lays in the tomb; the Sabbath is observed.

... and going to the Father.

This section presents the resurrection, 40-day post-resurrection ministry, and ascension to the Father.

Appendix 1



All Scripture are from the NASB '95 Update unless noted.

Appendix 2 – A Proposed Harmony of the Life of Christ (Terry Riley)

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Unit One: <i>"I came forth from the Father..."</i> (John 16:28a)				
An Introduction to the Life of Christ			1:1-4	
A Theology of the Life of Christ				1:1-18
Unit Two: <i>"...and have come into the world..."</i> (John 16:28b)				
Focus #1 The Nativity & Childhood				
The Announcement of John the Baptist's Birth			1:5-25	
The Birth of John the Baptist			1:57-80	
The Announcement of Messiah's Birth to Mary			1:26-56	
The Announcement of Messiah's Birth to Joseph	1:18-25			
The Genealogies of Jesus	1:1-17		3:23-28	
The Parents' Journey to Bethlehem; The Nativity of the God-Man			2:1-7	
The Worship of the Shepherds			2:8-20	
The Circumcision of Jesus			2:21	
The Presentation of the Child in the Temple			2:22-39	
The Visit of the Wise-men	2:1-12			
The Family's Flight to Egypt; The Slaughter of Bethlehem Children; The Return to Nazareth	2:13-23			
Jesus' Childhood in Nazareth			2:40	
The End of Jesus' Childhood			2:41-52	
Focus #2 The First Months of the Public Ministry of Jesus				
The Ministry of the Forerunner	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-18	
The Baptism of Jesus	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-23	
The 40 day Temptation of Jesus	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
The Forerunner's Testimony before a Sanhedrin Committee				1:19-28
The Baptist's Identification of Jesus as the Messiah				1:29-34
The Gathering of the First Disciples				1:35-51
Emergence into Public Notice: The Miracle at Cana				2:1-11
The Early Transfer from Nazareth to Capernaum				2:12
Jesus Asserts His Messianic Authority by Cleansing the Temple				2:13-22
Jesus is Interviewed by Nicodemus				2:23-3:21
Jesus Joins Forces with John the Baptist				3:22-36
Jesus Leaves for Galilee via Samaria	4:12	1:14		4:1-45
His reasons for leaving Judea	(4:12)	(1:14)		4:1-4
His dealing with the woman at the well				4:5-42
His arrival in Galilee				4:43-45
Focus #3 The Great Galilean Ministry of Jesus				

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
An Overview of Jesus' Teaching in Galilee	4:17	1:14-15	4:14-15	
The Son of a Nobleman Healed at Cana				4:46-54
The Initial Rejection at Nazareth			4:16-31	
Jesus' New Home in Capernaum	4:13-16			
Four Fishermen Called as Fishers of Men	4:18-22	1:16-20		
A Demoniac is Healed on the Sabbath		1:21-28	4:31-37	
Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-law and many others	8:14-17	1:29-34	4:38-41	
The First Preaching Tour Through Galilee	4:23-25	1:35-39	4:42-44	
Four Fishermen Become Fishers of Men			5:1-11	
A Leper Healed; Much Excitement	8:2-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
Jesus Heals a Paralytic Lowered through the Roof	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
The Call of Matthew; The Feast in Honor of Jesus	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
Jesus Uses 3 Parables to Defend His Disciples for Feasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
Jesus Attends a Feast in Jerusalem (Heals a lame man on the Sabbath)				5:1-47
The Disciples Pluck Grain in the Fields	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	
Jesus Heals a Man with a Withered Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Jesus Teaches & Heals Great Multitudes by the Sea of Galilee	12:15-21	3:7-12		
The Master Chooses the 12 Apostles		3:13-19	6:12-16	
The Preaching of the Sermon on the Mount	5:1-8:1		6:17-49	
The Place & the Audience	5:1-2		6:17-19	
The Introduction	5:3-12		6:20-26	
The Theme	5:13-20			
The Ethical Teachings of Christ	5:21-48		6:27-30, 32-36	
Real Righteousness	6:1-18			
Full Devotion to God	6:19-34			
Concerning the judgment of others	7:1-6		6:37-42	
Prayer & the Golden Rule	7:7-12		6:31	
The Conclusion	7:13-8:1		6:43-49	
Jesus Heals a Centurion's Son at Capernaum	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Jesus Raises a Widow's Son at Nain			7:11-17	
John the Baptist Asks a Question	11:2-19		7:18-35	
Woes Pronounced upon Two Cities	11:20-30			
Jesus' Feet Anointed by a Sinful Woman; The Parable of Two Debtors			7:36-50	
The Second Preaching Tour Through Galilee			8:1-3	
A Blasphemous Accusation by the Pharisees	12:22-37	3:20-30		
Scribes and Pharisees Demand a Sign	12:38-45			
Jesus' Mother & Brothers Seek to Take Him Home	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The First Great Group of Parables	13:1-3	4:1-2	8:4	
Parable of the Sower	13:3-23	4:3-25	8:5-18	
Parable of the Seed Growing by itself		4:26-29		
Parable of the Tares	13:24-30			
Parable of the Mustard/Leaven	13:31-35	4:30-34		
The Tares Explained	13:36-43			
Parable of the Hid Treasure	13:44			
Parable of the Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46			
Parable of the Net	13:47-50			
Parable of the Householder	13:51-52			
Jesus Stills a Tempest on the Sea	8:18, 23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniac	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
The Healing of Jairus' Daughter; The Healing of the Woman who Touched Jesus	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
Healing of Two Blind Men and a Demoniac; A Blasphemous Accusation Repeated	9:27-34			
The Last Visit to Nazareth	13:54-58	6:1-6		
The Disciples Instructed & Sent out by Two's; Jesus Tours Galilee	9:35-11:1	6:6-13	9:1-6	
Herod's Fears Because of his murder of John the Baptist	14:1-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
The First Retreat from Public Notice; The Feeding of 5,000	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-13
Jesus Refuses to be called King	14:22-23	6:45-46		6:14-15
The 12 in a Storm; Jesus Walks on Water	14:24-33	6:47-52		6:16-21
The Reception at Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
The Collapse of the Campaign; The People refuse the Spiritual Standards of Jesus				6:22-71
The Pharisees Rebuke Jesus concerning Defilement	15:1-20	7:1-23		7:1
Focus #4 The Training of the Twelve				
Retreat to Phoenecia; Retirement in a Private Home		7:24		
Healing of the Daughter of the Syro-Phoenician Woman	15:21-28	7:25-30		
Withdrawal into the Decapolis; Deaf & Dumb Man Healed	15:29-31	7:31-37		
Great Crowds Assemble; Jesus Feeds 4,000	15:32-38	8:1-9		
Brief Foray Back into Galilee	15:39	8:10		
The Pharisees Demand a Sign for the third time	16:1-4	8:11-12		
Jesus Rebukes the Dullness of His Disciples	16:5-12	8:13-21		
A Blind Man is Hastily Healed		8:22-26		
Jesus Tests the Faith of the Twelve; Peter's Confession	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21	
Jesus' First Distinct Prophecy of His Soon rejection, trial, death, and resurrection	16:21-28	8:31-9:1	9:22-27	
The Transfiguration of Jesus	17:1-8	9:2-8	9:28-36	
The Confusion of the Disciples concerning the Resurrection	17:9-13	9:9-13	9:36	
The Demoniac Boy Whom the Disciples could not Heal	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43	

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Returning Privately through Galilee; Jesus again foretells His soon Death & Resurrection	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:43-45	
At Capernaum, Jesus Pays a Tax by means of a Miracle	17:24-27			
The 12 Argue Who shall be Greatest under Messiah's Reign (a lesson on humility)	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48	
The Apostle John is Rebuked for his sectarian spirit	18:6-14	9:38-50	9:49-50	
Instruction Concerning the Settling of Disputes; The Parable of the Merciful Servant	18:15-35			
The Demands of Discipleship are Reiterated as the Death of Jesus Draws Near	8:19-22		9:57-62	
Focus #5 The Last Six Months of The Public Ministry of Jesus				
1. In Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles				
Jesus receives Bitter Counsel from His Unbelieving Brothers				7:2-9
Jesus Goes Privately to Jerusalem through Samaria			9:51-56	7:10
The Coming of Jesus to the Feast Creates a Stir-among friends & enemies alike				7:11-52
An Adulteress is Brought to Jesus				7:53-8:11
Jesus Proclaims Himself the Light of the World				8:12-59
A Man Born Blind is Healed and Converted				9:1-41
Jesus' Discourse on the Good Shepherd				10:1-21
Campaigning in Judea Outside Jerusalem				
The Seventy sent out to Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom			10:1-24	
Jesus Answers a Lawyer's Question Concerning Eternal Life; Parable of the Good Samaritan			10:25-37	
Jesus Visits Bethany, He is a guest for the first time at the home of Mary, Martha & Lazarus			10:38-42	
Jesus Again Instructs Concerning Prayer; The Parable of the Importunate Friend			11:1-13	
The Blasphemous Accusation of League with Beelzebub is Repeated			11:14-36	
Dining with a Pharisee, Jesus Denounces Empty Legalism			11:37-54	
Jesus Speaks to His Disciples			12:1-59	
The Command to Repent; The Parable of the Fig Tree			13:1-9	
Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath; Repeats Parables of Mustard Seed & Leaven			13:10-21	
2. Back in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication				
Jesus Refuses to Openly Proclaim Himself Messiah				10:22-39
Ministering in the Region Beyond the Jordan				
The Pereans Give Jesus a Warm Reception				10:40-42
Teaching in Perea; Jesus Warned about Herod by some Pharisees			13:22-35	
Jesus Dines with a Chief Pharisee on a Sabbath Morning; Heals a Diseased Man			14:1-24	
Great Crowds Follow Jesus and He Warns them to Count the Cost of Discipleship			14:25-35	
Jesus Receives Great Crowds; 3 Parables			15:1-32	
The Parable of the Unjust Steward			16:1-13	
The Parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus			16:14-31	
The Parable of the Unprofitable Servants			17:1-10	
3. Third Trip to Jerusalem (Raising of Lazarus at Bethany)				

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Miracle of the Raising of Lazarus				11:1-44
The Effects of the Miracle				11:45-53
The Retreat to Ephraim				11:54
UNIT THREE: "...I am leaving the world again..." (John 16:28c)				
Focus #6 The Passion Week of Jesus (Friday-Sunday)				
Jesus' Final Trip to Jerusalem:				
On the Way, 10 Lepers are Healed			17:11-19	
Teaching Concerning the Imminence of the Kingdom of God			17:20-37	
2 Parables on Proper Prayer (the importunate widow/ the Pharisee and the publican)			18:1-14	
In Perea, Teaching Concerning Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12		
Teaching Concerning Children & The Kingdom of God	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17	
Jesus Teaches Concerning the Perils of Riches	19:16-20:16	10:17-31	18:18-30	
Jesus Clearly Foretells His Death & Resurrection privately to the Twelve	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34	
James & John Rebuked for Selfish Ambition	20:20-28	10:32-34	18:31-34	
At Jericho, Blind Bartameaus and Companion are Healed	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Jesus Visits Zaccheus, Speaks the Parable of the Pounds, and sets out for Jerusalem			19:1-28	
Friday: A Quiet Weekend at Bethany, in the home of Mary, Martha & Lazarus				
Jesus Arrives in Bethany on Friday Night				11:55-12:1
Saturday:				
Jesus is Served a Feast by the Villagers of Bethany; Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-6
Judas, Corrected by Jesus after his Rebuke of Mary, devises a sinister plan	26:14-16	14:10-11		12:7-8
Sunday: A Day of Messianic Presentation				
The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem	21:1-11, 14-17	11:1-11	19:29-44	12:9-19
The Praises of the Pilgrims	21:1-19	11:1-10	19:29-38	
The Pharisees Object and are rebuked			19:39-44	
Jesus Arrives at the Temple	21:10-11, 14-16	11:11		
Jesus Quietly Returns to Bethany	21:17	11:11		
Monday: A Day of Messianic Power				
The Barren Fig Tree is Cursed	21:18-19	11:12-14		
The Second Cleansing of the Temple	21:12-13	11:15-18	19:45-48	
Some Greeks See Jesus; Jesus foretells His death				12:20-50
Tuesday Morning & Afternoon: A Time of Messianic Controversy				
The Barren Fig Tree found to have withered	21:19-22	11:19-26	21:37-38	
Jesus' Authority is challenged; He appeals to John's Baptism, and speaks three hard parables	21:23-22:14	11:27-12:12	20:1-19	
Concerning the tribute to be paid to Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26	
A puzzling question concerning the resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40	
A Pharisaic lawyer asks a legal question: Which is the greatest commandment?	22:34-40	12:28-34		

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus proves His Messiahship by an appeal to David (Psalm 110)	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	
The last public discourse; Jesus denounces the Scribes & the Pharisees	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47	
Jesus comments on the widow's mite		12:41-44	21:1-4	
The Olivet Discourse	24 & 25	13:1-37	21:5-36	
Tuesday Evening & Night: A Time of Sinister Intrigue				
Jesus privately foretells His crucifixion	26:1-2			
The Jews plot to kill Jesus as soon as the Passover season is past	26:3-5	14:1-2	22:1-2	
Judas stung by Jesus' rebuke at the feast in Bethany bargains to betray Jesus to the Jews	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6	
Wednesday: A Day of Messianic Silence (No record in the Gospels of events on Wednesday)				
Thursday Afternoon & Evening: A Time of Messianic Preparation				
Preparation is made for the Passover Meal	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	
Jesus partakes of the meal with His disciples	26:20	14:17	22:14-16	
During the meal, Jesus washes the feet of the disciples				13:1-20
At the meal, Jesus informs John that Judas is the betrayer	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30
Jesus rebukes the disciples for their greed and jealousy for position			22:24-30	
After Judas departs, Jesus warns concerning desertion	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:31-38
The Lord's Supper is instituted	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:17-20	
The Upper Room Discourse				14
Late Thursday Night: Jesus and His disciples leave the upper room and go to Gethsemane.				
The discourse on the way to Gethsemane-The True Vine, The Ministry of the Holy Spirit				15 & 16
The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus				17
Jesus suffers long in agony in the Garden; the disciples are unable to watch with Him	26:30-46	14:26-42	22:39-46	18:1
Friday: A Day of Messianic Perfection				
Long before dawn, Jesus is betrayed, arrested and forsaken	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
The first Jewish trial: Jesus is examined by Annas, the former High Priest before dawn.				18:12-14, 19-23
The second Jewish trial: A hasty, illegal trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; Jesus is condemned, mocked and buffeted.	26:57, 59-68	14:53, 55-65	22:54, 63-65	18:24
Meanwhile, Peter denies Christ three times, just as Jesus had foretold.	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22:54-62	18:15-18, 25-27
The third Jewish trial: Jesus is formally condemned by the Sanhedrin after dawn.	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	
Meanwhile, the remorse and suicide death of Judas Iscariot	27:3-10			
The first Roman trial: before Pilate, Jesus remains silent	27:2, 11-14	15:1-5	23:1-5	18:28-38
The second Roman trial: before Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (Jesus again remains silent).			23:6-12	
The third Roman trial: before Pilate a second time; Pilate reluctantly surrenders to the demands of the Sanhedrin	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39-19:16
The Roman soldiers mock Jesus (Friday 6:00-9:00am)	27:27-30	15:16-19		
Jesus on the way to Golgotha (before 9:00 am Friday)	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-33	19:17

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The First 3 hours on the cross (9:00am-noon)- 3 sayings, the soldiers gamble for His garments, the inscription is affixed amid much scoffing.	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33-43	19:18-27
The 3 hours of darkness (noon-3:00pm), 4 more sayings, the death of Jesus.	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44-46	19:28-30
Physical phenomena at the death of Jesus	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:47-49	
Jesus' body buried after proof of His death (before sundown, Friday)	27:57-60	15:42-46	23:50-54	19:31-42
The watch of the women at the Tomb of Jesus	27:61-66	15:47	23:55-56	
UNIT FOUR: "...and going to the Father." (John 16:28d)				
Sunday: A Day of Messianic Pronouncement				
The visit of the women to the Tomb	28:1	16:1		
The earthquake, rolling away the stone, fright of the soldiers	28:2-4			
The visit of the women and the angel's glad message	28:5-8	16:2-8	24:1-8	20:1
The women report to the apostles; Peter & John visit the tomb			24:9-12	20:2-10
Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene		16:9-11		20:11-18
Jesus appears to the other women	28:9-10			
Meanwhile, some of the soldiers report to the Jewish authorities what has come to pass.	28:11-15			
Jesus appears to 2 disciples traveling to Emmaus		16:12-13	24:13-32	
Jesus appears to Simon Peter			24:33-35	
Jesus appears to the astonished disciples (Thomas is absent)		16:14	24:36-43	20:19-25
Jesus appears to the disciples again (Thomas is present and convinced)				20:26-31
Jesus appears to 7 disciples beside the Sea of Galilee; a miraculous catch of fish.				21
Jesus appears to above 500 brethren gathered in Galilee; The Great Commission	28:16-20	16:15-18		
Jesus appears to James, His half brother (1 Cor. 15:7)				
Jesus appears to the assembled disciples			24:44-49	
The last appearance and ascension (from Mt. Olivet, between Jerusalem & Bethany)		16:19	24:50-51	
The disciples return to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit		16:20	24:52-53	

Appendix 3 – Chronology of Jesus’ Ministry and Apostolic Age

Date	Event
5/4 BC	Birth of Jesus of Nazareth
AD 0-10	Birth of Saul of Tarsus
29	Beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry
Fri, 3 Apr 33	Crucifixion of Jesus
Progress of the Early Church (AD 33)	
Sun, 24 May 33	Pentecost (Acts 2)
33	Peter’s second sermon before the Sanhedrin (Acts 3:1-4:31)
33	Death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32-5:11)
33	Peter brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:12-42)
33	Seven men of good reputation selected (Acts 6:1-7)
33	Saul stoned Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60)
Expansion of the Early Church into Judea and Samaria (33 AD)	
33	Saul’s persecution of the church (Acts 8:1-3)
33	Philip’s ministry in Samaria & Judea
Expansion of the Early Church to the Ends of the Earth (33/34-100AD)	
33/34	Saul encounters Jesus on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-21)
33/34	Saul went away to Arabia to be with the Lord (Gal 1:17)
36/37	Back in Damascus preaching Jesus (Acts 9:22-35)
36/37	Saul Goes to Jerusalem to become acquainted with the Apostles (Acts 9:26-29)
37	Saul Goes to Caesarea, then to Tarsus (Acts 9:30)
~41-43	Barnabas and Saul minister in Antioch for one year (Acts 11:19-26)
44	Apostle James martyred under Agrippa’s persecution
44	<i>James written by Jesus’ brother</i>
47	Barnabas and Saul take the contribution for the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:30)
47	Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:24-25)
48-49	First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-14:28)
48	Barnabas and Saul set apart by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3)
48	Ministry in Cyprus; Saul referred to as Paul (Acts 13:4-12)
49	Paul’s ministry in Galatia: Perga (John Mark leaves), Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lycaonia, Lystra (perhaps Timothy converted), and Derbe (perhaps Titus converted) (Acts 13:13-14:20)
49	Paul returns to Antioch (Acts 14:21-28)
49	<i>Galatians written from Antioch</i>
49-50	Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29)
49/50	Paul took Titus to Jerusalem (Gal 2:3)
49/50	Paul returns to Antioch (Acts 15:30-34)
50-52	Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)
50	Dispute between Barnabas and Paul over Mark; Paul chooses Silas (Acts 15:36-40); apparently takes <i>Titus</i> along
50	<i>Timothy</i> joins Paul and Silas at Lystra (Acts 16:1-3)
50	Paul’s Macedonian call at Troas (Acts 16:6-10)
50	Paul’s ministry at Philippi (Acts 16:11-40), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), Berea (Acts 17:10-15), Athens (Acts 17:16-34), and Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)
~51	<i>1 Thessalonians written from Corinth</i>
~52	<i>2 Thessalonians written from Corinth</i>
53	Paul’s journey to Antioch; stop at Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22)
53-57	Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:26)
53	Paul’s journey through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23-28)
53	Paul’s extended ministry at Ephesus [Churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis “all who lived in Asia”, founded though not by Paul; 19:10] (Acts 19:1-41)
55/56	<i>1 Corinthians written from Ephesus</i>
	Paul’s journey through Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2)
56	<i>2 Corinthians written from Macedonia</i>
	Paul’s three months in Greece (Acts 20:1-2)
56/57	<i>Romans was written from Corinth</i>
57	Paul’s return to Jerusalem through Macedonia and then by sea (Acts 20:3-26)
57	Paul’s arrest

Date	Event
57-60	Paul's Caesarean imprisonment
~58	<i>Gospel of Matthew written</i>
59/60	Paul's journey to Rome
60-62	Paul's first imprisonment in Rome
60-62	<i>Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon written from Rome</i>
60/61	<i>Gospel of Mark written</i>
61	<i>Gospel of Luke written</i>
62	<i>Acts written</i>
62	James, the Lord's brother martyred
62-65	Paul is release from Roman imprisonment and "Fourth Missionary Journey"; Apparently Paul visited several cities in which he had ministered including Ephesus, where he left Timothy, and traveled through Macedonia (northern Greece) from where he wrote 1 Timothy (1 Tim 1:3) and Crete where he left Titus (Titus 1:5). He then traveled to Nicopolis in Achaia (southern Greece) from where he wrote Titus (Tit 3:12).
62	<i>1 Timothy and Titus written after release from first Roman imprisonment</i>
63/64	<i>1 & 2 Peter written from Rome</i>
64	Peter martyred
66-67	Paul visits Troas (2 Tim 4:13) where he was suddenly arrested and taken to Rome (second imprisonment in Rome); Paul sent for Timothy to "come before winter". Titus joins Paul in Rome before being sent to Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10)
67/68	<i>Hebrews written</i>
67/68	<i>2 Timothy written from Rome</i>
68	Paul is martyred in Rome
68	<i>Jude written</i>
70	Destruction of Jerusalem
85	<i>Gospel of John written from Ephesus</i>
85-90	<i>1, 2, & 3 John written from Ephesus</i>
95	John exiled to Patmos
95	<i>Revelation written by John</i>
96	John liberated after Domitian's death
96-100	John ministers in and around Ephesus
~100	Apostle John dies of old age

Appendix 4 – Old Testament Book Summary

History

The Pentateuch (Law)

Genesis is the book of beginnings and describes primeval history (1-11) (Four events: Creation, Fall, Flood, Babel) and patriarchal history (11-50) (Four people: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph). Bondage of the Jewish people was used for salvation from famine (41:50) and from corruption by idol worshippers (34, 38). The result is that God meant it for good. 50:20).

Exodus describes how God delivered His people from oppression (1-12), separates the nation from their pursuing enemies and separates them unto Himself with the giving of the Law (13-24), and sanctifies them by giving them the tabernacle (25-40).

Leviticus is the “Worship Manual of Israel” and describes how the way to God is by Sacrifice (1-10) and the walk with God is by sanctification (11-27)

Numbers describes how the nation is organized and journeys up to the gates of Canaan (twice). It describes the old generation (1-19) and new generation (19-36).

Deuteronomy describes how the nation makes final preparations to enter the land; Moses exhorts them to not repeat their earlier mistakes. Moses reminds the nation of their history (1-4); reminds how to love and obey God (5-26); and looks to the future of Israel (27-34).

Joshua is an historical account of the claiming (1-5), conquest (6-12) [central campaign (6-8); southern campaign (9-10), and northern campaign (11)], and division (12-24) of the land of Canaan.

Judges describes the historical period between Joshua and the monarchy under Saul. A turbulent, tragic time in Jewish history described by the phrase, “the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.” The book describes Israel’s wars (1-2); Israel’s woes (3-16) [6 cycles of rebellion, subjection, repentance, and restoration]; and Israel’s evil ways (17-21) of apostasy, immorality, and anarchy.

Ruth shows how faith in the true God changes one’s life; the example of the Prov 31 woman.

1 & 2 Samuel describes the beginning of the monarchy with Saul and David and eventually shows the fame and shame of David.

1 & 2 Kings describe Solomon’s fame and shame and the split of the nation, then the continued apostasy until captivity – first Israel (north) then Judah (south).

1 & 2 Chronicles is a summary of Jewish history from Creation to Cyrus. Chronicles focuses on history from the temple’s perspective, so it deals with the southern kingdom, Judah.

Ezra and Nehemiah describe the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon and the subsequent restoration of Jerusalem, its Temple, and its walls. Ezra and Nehemiah are of special importance, since they contain nearly all of the direct information known of the post-Exilic period of Hebrew history.

Esther describes how Esther became the queen of Xerxes and risked her life to save her people from total destruction. God’s providential care is shown throughout, though the word “God” never appears in the book.

Poetry

Job asks the question, “Why should anyone love and serve God?” The answer is because He is God.

Psalms is the “hymnal of Israel”.

Proverbs is the “wisdom manual” of Israel looking at things like relationships, honesty, work ethic, money, moral absolutes, and spiritual maturity.

Ecclesiastes is the purpose statement of the believer, “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.”

Song of Solomon – celebrates the joy of love between man and woman as God intended it to be.

Prophecy

Major Prophets

Pre-Exilic

Isaiah declared that judgment must fall on the nation that fails to fulfill its God ordained mission in the world. He, however, pointed to a day of victory under a Servant Messiah that would, through personal suffering, bring ultimate triumph.

Jeremiah was God's voice in the midst of darkness and disaster. He delivered his message of punishment and promise through great personal suffering and was totally rejected by the people. He was, humanly speaking, a failure, but he was faithful and therefore a spiritual success.

Exilic

Lamentations is Jeremiah's lament over the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple

Ezekiel bore testimony to the glory of God in the dark days of exile. He had an especially hard message because he spoke of restoration of the nation when they were in bondage and their deepest apostasy.

Daniel was also a prophet of hope in the dark years of exile. He teaches the sovereignty of God, the failure and judgment of the people, and the great and glorious future of victory yet to come.

Minor Prophets

Pre-Exilic

Hosea through his own experience and broken heart revealed the sin of spiritual infidelity and adultery in Israel.

Joel saw Judah as a nation under their rightful king, God. His message proclaimed "the day of the Lord."

Amos was in tune with the people of both Israel and Judah and His message was one of need for their national accountability to God and separation from surrounding heathen nations.

Obadiah was concerned with the hostile attitude of the Edom toward Israel, and confronted that attitude in the name of the Lord.

Jonah is a prophetic story teaching that God desires to include Ninevah, a heathen nation, into His kingdom if they will forsake their sin and follow Him. Using Jonah, Israel is taught a lesson about God's mercy and their own bigotry.

Micah commented on the false rulers who were in authority in Judah by contrasting them to the true and righteous rulers.

Nahum was a follow-up for the ministry of Jonah one hundred years later. Ninevah, which was spared because of the repentance brought by Jonah's teaching, was now returning from its own captivity and needed a warning and encouragement of its own.

Habakkuk gave an account of his own personal faith as he delivered God's message. He himself was puzzled by the circumstances of his time, but he found and proclaimed a great solution for the nation.

Zephaniah knew God intimately and declared that not only justice and punishment but also grace and mercy were attributes of God.

Post-Exilic

Haggai understood and taught that a right relationship to God was the secret to national strength. He lobbied for the rebuilding of the temple.

Zechariah worked in concert with Haggai and became the foremost prophet in all of Jewish history in the area of eschatology (last things).

Malachi condemned the corruption of living lives of form without substance. He ends with predictions of the Messiah, "the One to come."