



The unfolding purposes of God in the whole Bible

Session 6 The gospel and the gospels

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The story so far...

At the end of the Old Testament we are still waiting for God to fulfil all of his key promises:

- A serpent crusher who will undo the curse of Genesis 3 and defeat Satan
- The giving of a people, a land and blessing to all nations through Abraham's descendent
- The arrival of a King in David's line who will reign forever over God's people.

In this session

- How Jesus sorts out the issues of God's people, God's place and God's rule.
- How each of the four gospels helps us understand different things about Jesus.

Promise and Fulfilment

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Matthew 13:16-17

beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:27

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 5:39

The Old Testament never encourages to look for the fulfilment of any part of its predictions and promises other than in the person of Jesus.

So... we aren't waiting for a new temple in Jerusalem!

What are the gospels?

- A totally new kind of literature.
- A mixture of biography, printed sermon and religious tract.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:1-4

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:30-31

Why Richard Dawkins is wrong (again)

"Jesus, if he existed (or whoever wrote his script if he didn't)..."

As the gospel went around the world to people in many different places it became increasingly necessary to have authoritative documents from which to preach

Theme 1: God's People

Read Matthew 4:1-11

- What are the temptations Jesus faces here? What kind or type of temptation is each one?
- What bits of the Bible does this section remind you of or refer to?

Elsewhere in the gospels we are told the following things that suggest Jesus is the "true" people of God:

Matthew 2:15 – out of Egypt I called my Son.

Matthew 10:1-4 – Jesus called 12 disciples.

John 15:1 - I am the true vine.

God's Place

- What was God's "place" in the Old Testament?

- Read John 2:13-22. What is Jesus' understanding of the temple?
- What functions did the temple fulfil? How are those things now fulfilled in Jesus?

God's Rule or Blessing

- Read Genesis 2:2-3. What kind of world did Adam and Eve live in?
- Read Matthew 11:28-30. What does Jesus promise to those who come to him? What does this mean for us?

So Jesus fulfils the "rest" theme of rule/blessing. But he also fulfils all the other promises in the OT that relate to God's rule.

- He institutes a "new covenant" (Luke 22:21)
- He is a new king – big theme in Matthew's gospel (Matthew 27:11)
- He gives perfect judgment – he is a perfect judge (John 5:30)
- People are amazed at his wisdom – like Solomon's (Matthew 13:54)
- He can give a new birth (John 3:1-16)

HOW it is that Jesus can do these things?

The Bible's answer: the Cross. It's all about salvation through substitution.

Why four gospels?

The *evangelists*.

Matthew, Mark and Luke – the synoptic gospels. They give a *synopsis* or summary of Jesus' life and ministry. Each of these gospels appears to use a common written source as their basis, but each also has things that do not appear in the other gospels.

John's gospel is quite different. John has a particular interest in Jerusalem so he doesn't include lots of things that were in the synoptic gospels (the bits in Galilee) and he does include things that are not in them.

It is thought that Mark was the first of the gospels to be written around the early 60s AD – about 25-30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Matthew then covers 92% of the same things as Mark and gives quite a lot of extra material too and gives much more detailed theological framework.

Luke seems to have quite a lot of other additional material that is not found in Matthew or Mark.

Mark

The shortest and "pacy-est" of the gospels. Mark makes extensive use of words like "immediately" to keep the story moving along. It's really a gospel of two halves each asking a different question.

1:1-8:30 – The first half of the gospel asks "who is this Jesus?"

8:31-16:8 – The second half of the gospel asks "what kind of Christ is Jesus?"

The early chapters are then full of demonstration of kingly authority...

- Calling disciples
- Power over evil
- Power over disease
- Power to forgive sin
- Lord of the Sabbath
- Power over nature
- Power over death

All leads up to the question to the disciples in 8:29. “Who do you say I am?”

Jesus teaches that he is a Messiah who suffers and dies:

- 8:31-34
- 9:31
- 10:33-34

A foreigner is the first to really see who he is – “surely this man was the Son of God” (see 1:1!).

Matthew

Particularly concerned with the Jewish people and how Jesus relates to Old Testament. The two big ideas are **the kingly rule of Jesus** and **Jesus as Israel’s teacher**.

21:9 – Hosanna to the Son of David.

The kingly role dominates the whole narrative of his death.

27:11

27:27-29

27:37

27:42

The teacher of Israel: Matthew orders his gospel in five teaching units:

Chapters 5-7 – the sermon on the mount

Chapter 10 – he instructs the disciples about their mission

Chapter 13 – parables of the kingdom

Chapter 18 – life in the kingdom

Chapters 24-25 – parables about the end times, the nature of the kingdom and its coming in power

The huge number of Old Testament quotations in Matthew show us that Matthew is concerned to prove that everything it spoke about has now come to fulfilment in Jesus.

Luke

Luke is particularly concerned how Jesus relates to **the whole world** and how he is a **saviour**. This is most obvious in a long section from 9:51-19:28 where Jesus is going up to Jerusalem over a long period of time.

19:10

- Who has Jesus come to save?

The **Holy Spirit** also gets a bigger emphasis in Luke.

John

Jesus makes God known

Jesus makes God knowable

Chapters 1-12: The book of signs – Jesus makes God known.

Chapters 13-21: The book of suffering – Jesus makes God knowable.