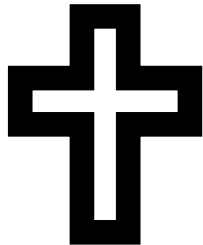


**Twelve Lessons**  
*on*  
***New Testament Survey***

*by*  
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## **THE FOUR GOSPELS – LESSON ONE**

**Introduction:** In this twelve lesson study we will seek to perform an impossible task. We will attempt to complete a survey of the New Testament. We begin our study with the first lesson being on the Four Gospels. The subject of the New Testament is redemption. In the Old Testament we begin with the fall and see how man lost it all in Adam. But in the New Testament there comes One in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ who redeems everything we lost.

The purpose of the New Testament is to make us wise unto salvation and service, and to reveal what God has done for us and with us in Christ that we might be conformed to the image of His dear Son. The Old Testament reveals human need. The New Testament supplies that need.

In the gospel accounts we find Christ's gospel of redemption that is provided through His death, burial, and resurrection. The book of Acts is the promulgation, the sending forth of this gospel to the world. In the Epistles the gospel is exposed in its doctrinal and practical aspects, and in the Revelation all of God's redemptive purposes are culminated for all time.

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. To understand the New Testament was written in the common language of the people.
2. To give account of the harmony of the four Gospels.

### **Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:**

1. Papyrus – A paper made from the pith, or the stems, of the papyrus, used in ancient times as a writing material; also a written scroll made of papyrus. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Gospels – The four accounts at the beginning of the New Testament about the saving work of God in His Son Jesus Christ. The writers of the four gospels introduced a new literary category into literature. The gospels are not exactly biographies, because apart from certain events surrounding His birth, (Matt 1-2; Luke 1:1-2:52) and one from His youth (Luke 2:41-52), they record only the last two or three years of Jesus' life. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

## **I. THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **A. The Critics**

1. It is often argued by critics of the Bible that the New Testament was written in a style which no literary man of that time would have permitted himself to use.
2. The New Testament is written in *Koine* Greek (the vernacular) just everyday, common language.
3. It was not written in the classical Greek of that day and scholars had a field day ridiculing its authority.

### **B. The Comeback**

1. I Corinthians 1:20-28
2. The gospel has never been for the proud, arrogant know it all. It's for that one that knows he's a sinner and knows that he is nothing apart from the grace of God
3. In 1899, two men B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt were excavating in Ancient Tebtunis (southern Egypt). They discovered a crocodile cemetery. In disgust, a workman flung a mummified crocodile against a rock. Out popped some papyrus. Other crocodiles were opened, and it was discovered that they had been stuffed with papyri to help hold their shape. All kinds of documents were included in these findings, including ancient classics, royal ordinances, petitions, contracts, accounts, private letters, and for the most part they were dated in the first and second century A.D. Before the papyri were found nobody had ever read a manuscript of a first century scribe that had been written in the language of the common people of Egypt and Palestine. In making a study of these papyri, it was discovered that they were written in the exact language of the New Testament. The New Testament books were written in the dialect of the middle class in the vernacular of the home and shop. They were written by both the learned and unlearned, to working men, in the tongue of the working man. Christianity from its beginning spoke the tongue of the peasant. It is no wonder that Mark 12:37 reads, "*the common people heard him gladly.*"

## **II. WHY ARE THERE FOUR GOSPELS?**

### **A. The Inspiration of the Gospels**

1. We know that each of these gospels was written by the inspiration of God, yet we are told in other portions of the Bible that there is only one Gospel.
2. Galatians 1:8 – "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that*

*which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”*

3. God did not place the four gospels in the Scriptures just to take up space; neither did God have men write the four gospels in order that one might be able to corroborate the others.
4. The Word of God does not need to be corroborated. If Luke declares a thing to be true, then it is not necessary for Mark to affirm that Luke was correct.

### **B. The Inspection of the Gospels**

1. The reason for having the Gospels is to reveal how God accomplished the work of redemption, and to give us a foundation for the doctrines of the epistles: Romans 4:25; Galatians 4:4-6
2. The question is why have four instead of one. There has to be a reason. God is a God of order. The Holy Ghost has done nothing at random in producing the Scriptures and the answer to the question lies in the word of God.
3. In the Tabernacle that Moses set up in the wilderness, and in the Temple that replaced the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies where God dwelt was separated from the other parts of the structure by a great veil or curtain.
  - a. This veil remained closed, barring the way of approach to God’s presence, except on the annual Day of Atonement, when the High Priest entered with the blood for his own sins and for the sins of the people.
  - b. This veil, according to the testimony of scripture itself, was a type of Jesus Christ in His manifestation as Son of Man and Son of God, the living Word, who, *“became flesh and dwelt among us.”*
  - c. When Jesus was crucified on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent in two from top to bottom, which signifies that by His death the way into God’s presence is open for all who come unto God by Him.
  - d. Under the old covenant it would have been sure death to enter into the Holy Holies, but now under the new covenant it is sure death to remain without.
  - e. Heb. 10:19-22 – *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”*
4. The veil was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - a. It was displayed on *four* pillars of shittum wood overlaid with gold.
  - b. Jesus was displayed in *four* gospels pillars for the entire world to see.
  - c. Those pillars had no crown. Each one was abruptly cut off just as each gospel ends as though his work was not finished.
  - d. He had no crown while He was on this earth. He was mocked as King. But one day He’s coming as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### **C. The Indicative Gospels**

1. Upon the veil were embroidered figures of cherubim, and because the veil itself is a type of Christ we must assume that they have a definite relation to Him.
  - a. The cherubim appear elsewhere in scripture, and always in connection with the manifestation of the glory of God.
  - b. In Ezekiel and Revelation the cherubim are seen as *four* living creatures.
  - c. John saw them, *“in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne.”*
  - d. The first living creature was like a lion, the second like a calf (or ox), the third had a face as a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle.
2. We have here the answer to the question as to the reason for *four* gospel accounts instead of just one, and the key to the interpretation to the four.
3. Just as these four creatures are typical of our Lord Jesus Christ, showing forth the glory of God, so the four gospels are four representations of Christ as He lived and walked among men, revealing the glory of His Father.
4. He is seen as the King, the Servant, the Son of Man, and the Son of God.
5. In Matthew He is seen in one aspect of His ministry as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, *“King of the Jews.”*
  - a. Only in Matthew do we find John the Baptist preaching that the “kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”
  - b. Only in Matthew does Jesus Himself declares that the “kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”
  - c. The question arises “How could the Kingdom of Heaven, the millennium, be at hand?” Because the King was there!

- d. Matthew said that Jesus was crucified because He was the King of the Jews. John declares that He was crucified because He said He was the Son of God. Both statements are correct!
- e. The first thing you discover in Matthew is the genealogy of the King.
  - 1) Every King must have a genealogy.
  - 2) The King who is to assume the throne over Israel must come from David.
  - 3) Matthew presents Christ as of the lineage of David.
- 6. In Mark He is shown as the devoted servant, toiling as an ox according to His Father's will.
  - a. There is no genealogy in the Gospel of Mark.
  - b. Christ is presented as a servant, and servants have no need of a genealogy.
    - 1) A person hiring a servant cares little about background, but is interested in recommendation.
    - 2) The Gospel of Mark begins, "*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" That's a pretty good recommendation!!!
- 7. In Luke He appears as the Son of Man, the representative of lost men, bearing their sins.
  - a. In Luke we find a genealogy of the Lord Jesus.
  - b. Luke's genealogy traces Christ's ancestors back to the first man.
- 8. John describes Him as the Son of God who, like a "flying eagle," came down from heaven and returned to heaven the eternal God incarnate.
  - a. There is no genealogy found in the Gospel of John, since John represents Jesus as the Son of God.
    - 1) God does not have a genealogy.
    - 2) God does not have a beginning.
- 9. Even though the gospels are speaking of one person, each one is distinct in the representation of that one person. Each one has it's own personality.
  - a. Matthew records everything about the Lord in a Kingly manner, even His healings.
    - 1) When Jesus healed even the lowest, He did it in a Kingly manner.
    - 2) He healed by the touch of His hand or the sound of His voice, like a King.
  - b. Mark presents the personality of a Servant.
    - 1) He was revealed as the servant of Jehovah rather than the servant of man.
      - a) There is no Bethlehem, nor any boyhood of Christ.
      - b) The words "*straightway*" and "*forthwith*" are found forty times in this gospel. These show His characteristics as a perfect servant.
      - c) He is not called Lord until after His resurrection.
      - d) The expression "Our Father" is not found in Mark.
      - e) Thirteen out of the sixteen chapters begin with the word "and" showing continuous action of Jehovah's servant.
  - c. Luke's Gospel has been called "the most beautiful book ever written." It is the gospel of the perfect man.
    - 1) It appeals to the lovers of beauty and song.
    - 2) It begins with a song, continues with songs and ends with a song.
    - 3) The humanity comes to the forefront in this book.
      - a) The parable begin, "*A certain man*" in the gospel of Luke
      - b) The phrase, "*sweat was as it were great drops of blood*" can only be found in this book.
  - d. John emphasizes the deity of Jesus.
    - 1) The others acknowledge Him to be the Son of God, but John stresses His pre-existence.
    - 2) Christ is presented in John as the "I AM" which is an Old Testament title of Jehovah.
    - 3) In this gospel, Jesus claims equality with the Father when He states, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also.*"

#### **D. The Instrumentation of the Gospels**

- 1. No one is of the opinion that the arrangement of the Books of the Bible is inspired, yet it is a historical fact that Godly men supervised the arrangement of both the Old and New Testament Canon.
- 2. The New Testament, like the Old is not arranged chronologically. Why then do we have the order like we have it, especially the order of the gospels?
- 3. The Jews had been entrusted with the "sacred oracles of God" Romans 3:2. The coming of Messiah was chiefly a Jewish subject.
- 4. Since Matthew is filled with Old Testament quotations it seems logical to introduce the New Testament with a book that placed so much emphasis on the Old Testament Scriptures.

- a. One writer I read said, “It’s like opening the New Testament door with an Old Testament key.”
- b. The genealogy that Matthew gives show Christ as the son of David and the son of Abraham, two of the most familiar persons to the Jews.
5. Mark may have been placed second because he enters right into the earthly ministry of Jesus as a Servant.
  - a. This Gospel shows Jesus as a servant that had a job to do.
  - b. It shows that he had a purpose to fulfill.
  - c. Mark 10:45 – *“For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, a ransom for many.”*
6. Luke may have been placed third because of how his genealogy ends.
  - a. It ends with Mary, the virgin who bore the man, Christ.
  - b. It shows how He, as the Son of Man came to be identified with man that He might be able to seek and to save man.
7. John is last because his emphasis is on the Deity of Jesus Christ.
  - a. His Gospel shows how the Old Testament prophecies relate to His coming and His mission.
  - b. It shows that everything we have is based on the fact that Christ was GOD IN THE FLESH!

**Conclusion:** In the gospels He is:

1. The Sovereign Saviour
2. The Serving Saviour
3. The Sinless Saviour
4. The Sure Saviour