

## INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR GOSPELS

### Review:

- after finishing studying the 39 books of the OT – one each week –
  - spent a couple of months in some transitional studies – covering the intertestamental period – the political context and the Jewish institutions and identity groups, etc.
  - in preparation for studying the 27 books of the NT – beginning with the 4 gospel accounts – one week of introduction and then we will pick up again with studying one NT book each week – regardless of how long or short it is
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The 4 gospels are **good news** about the most significant events and teachings in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Everything focuses on the culmination of His redemptive work as He goes to the Cross and then rises from the dead before ascending back to his Father in heaven. Remember how He sets His face to go to Jerusalem – knowing the opposition that He will face there. But nothing can deter Him from performing the will of His Father. These gospel accounts are not biographies as such since they are **selective** in their presentation. E.g. not much written about Jesus before His public ministry.

### COMPARISON OF THE 4 GOSPELS

- 3 Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke – mainly Galilean ministry
- Gospel of John – stands by itself – focuses on ministry in Judea

Prior to Passion Week, Only 2 events in common:

- Jesus walking on the water
- Feeding of the 5,000

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 3 SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

#### A. Understanding the Purpose of the Synoptic Gospels -- Overview

Called “synoptic” (from Greek *synopsis*, meaning “seen together” or share a common point of view) because they present very similar accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus and can be read side-by-side.

Important text: *A Harmony of the Gospels* – **A.T. Robertson** – includes all 4 gospels

- Presents the earthly life and ministry of Christ in chronological order
- Side-by-side comparisons of how the 3 accounts treat the same incidents
- You can see what is unique to each of the 3 gospels as well

Importance of 2-3 witnesses agreeing from the standpoint of historical verification

The purpose of the Synoptic Gospels was **to proclaim Jesus as the Savior, preserve his message, build faith, and guide believers in living as his disciples.**

#### B. The Synoptic **Problem**

Even that characterization reflects a liberal bias – No real Problem here – Rather the Synoptic **Synchronization** or **Meshing**

The question of how to explain the similarities and differences in the 3 gospels is called the Synoptic Problem.

Main View of modern biblical scholars: **Mutual Literary Dependence** – Two-Source theory

- Mark written first; then Matthew and Luke relied on this account as well as on an extra-biblical source called the Q document (from German word = source)
  - Arguments against this theory –
    - o No manuscript of Q has ever been found
    - o early church tradition up until the nineteenth century supports Matthew being written first
    - o Matthew was an apostle and eyewitness while Mark was not; why would Matthew rely on Mark?
    - o Long section in Mark (**6:45 – 8:26**) which Luke omits – suggests that Luke had not seen Mark's gospel
- Simplest Solution: 3 gospel writers wrote independently under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

- How to deal with supposed contradictions

That is not to say that there are not **apparent contradictions** that the liberal critics like to jump on and try to magnify. But there are legitimate answers to their objections.

#### 1) Differences in Quotation

There were a number of languages spoken in first-century Palestine. Throughout the region, you'd likely hear Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and even Latin. Jesus likely spoke Aramaic. It's thought to be the primary language spoken by most Jews throughout Palestine during this era. When you realize that the gospels were written in **Greek**, the fact that Jesus probably spoke **Aramaic** becomes very significant. This means that most of his words had to be translated into Greek—making every quote an interpretation. Plus we can't project our modern Western world emphasis on exact quotation on the ancient cultural context of the time of Jesus. It is not like they were recording everything on their I-phones. If we expect that each other gospel writers are going to give us Jesus' words verbatim, we're holding the gospels to a historical standard that no other historical document would be able to meet.

Example: At the foot of the cross. Both Matthew and Mark quote the centurion as saying "*Surely this man was the Son of God!*" (**Matt. 27:54, Mk. 15:39**), but that's not how Luke records it. In **Luke 23:47**, the centurion says, "*Surely this was a righteous man.*" Maybe the centurion said both ... or maybe in Luke's theological emphasis he interpreted the comment with a slightly different focus.

So in some cases there may be some paraphrasing or interpretative additions:

*Blessed are the poor*

*Blessed are the poor in spirit*

Jesus could have said both on different occasions ... or Matthew could have been providing some inspired gloss to enhance the meaning.

- 2) Differences in Perspective – reporting on the same historical event but not highlighting the same details.

What about when one gospel mentions two individuals while another only speaks of one?

- There are two demon possessed men in **Matthew 8:28**, but only one in **Mark 5:2**.
- There are two blind men in **Matthew 20:30**, but only one in **Mark 10:46**.
- Two angels appear at the tomb in **Luke 24:4**, but only one in **Mark 16:5**.

Mark never insists that there's only *one* person present. He simply shines a spotlight on one individual. It's very likely that he's highlighting the most important player and ignoring the other.

Sometimes you might see minor differences in chronology – which again reflect the author's thematic type of presentation rather than what we might expect in terms of strict chronology.

So some events might be reordered for topical or theological reasons.

Cf. different ordering of the 3 temptations of Jesus -- **Harmony of the Gospels**

Matt.: stones / pinnacle of the temple / mountain

Luke: stones / mountain / pinnacle of the temple

Did Jesus cleanse the temple at the beginning of His ministry (John) or at the end of His ministry (Synoptics) or twice?

- 3) Reporting of similar sayings and events and miracles.

Jesus likely repeated the same themes in a number of different contexts and settings. Just because you see two events that are similar you cannot assume that only one event is in view.

**Key:** Hermeneutic of Trust – expecting there to be consistency and answers to apparent contradictions or Hermeneutic of Suspicion – denying the divine inspiration of the text

### **C. Uniqueness of Presentation – unique perspective / unique audience focus**

Each Gospel emphasizes different aspects of Jesus' identity and mission:

- Matthew – Jewish emphasis -- Jesus as **Messiah-King** – fulfillment of OT prophecy  
Used phrase “kingdom of heaven” because of political misunderstanding associated with  
Parallel term “*kingdom of God*”
- Mark -- Likely written for Christians facing persecution, encouraging perseverance through the example of the **suffering Christ**. Likely written for Gentile audience, especially Romans.
- Luke – broader Gentile emphasis – Jesus as Savior for all peoples = **Son of Man**  
As a more educated Greek, he used the most sophisticated Greek language of any of the writers. He was a careful researcher and esteemed historian. Jesus is the one who came to seek and save lost sinners -- **9:56**

The differences are not contradictions, but make the eyewitness accounts complementary.

The Synoptics support one another.

### **D. Unity of Presentation**

They share many of the same stories, parables, teachings of Jesus and miracles

## 1. Shared Narrative Structure with similar Episodes

All three follow a **similar storyline** of Jesus' ministry:

1. Preparation (ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism and temptation by Satan)
2. Ministry in **Galilee** (teaching, miracles, calling disciples)
3. Journey toward **Jerusalem** in the face of rising opposition
4. Passion week, crucifixion, and resurrection

This common framework gives the three accounts a **coherent narrative pattern**.

## 2. Consistent Portrait of Jesus

Across the Synoptics, Jesus is consistently presented as:

- The Son of God yet fully human
- A compassionate **miracle worker**
- One who speaks in **parables** and both teaches and models the **righteousness of God**
- The **Messiah who is focused on necessary suffering for sin and victorious future glory**

This shared theological portrayal contributes strongly to their unity.

## 3. Shared Teaching Themes

Important teachings recur across the three:

- The **Kingdom of God**
- Discipleship and following Jesus
- Ethical teachings (e.g., love of neighbor, humility)
- Warnings about hypocrisy and judgment

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

While the Synoptic Gospels give a shared historical portrait, John provides a deeper theological reflection on who Jesus is.

### A. Defined Theological Purpose Statement – John 20:31

*“These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name”*

- **John is more theological and reflective**, while the Synoptics are more narrative and story-based.
- John includes **long discourses** (extended speeches of Jesus), rather than short parables. No parables found in John, but uses **symbolic imagery** – like the great “I am” declarations
- About **90% of John's content is unique** and not found in the Synoptics.
- Greek style is very simple and direct, but packed with theological meaning and depth

### B. Stronger Emphasis on Jesus' Divinity

- John opens with a profound theological statement: vs. human genealogies  
*“In the beginning was the Word (Logos)... and the Word was God.”*
- Jesus speaks openly about his unity with God (*“I and the Father are one”*).

- The Synoptics emphasize Jesus as Messiah and Son of Man; John strongly highlights Jesus as the **eternal Son of God**.
- The **“I Am” statements**, emphasizing Jesus’ divine identity.

### The Seven “I Am” Statements with Predicates

1. **“I am the bread of life.”**  
(John 6:35, 6:48, 6:51)
2. **“I am the light of the world.”**  
(John 8:12; 9:5)
3. **“I am the door (or gate) for the sheep.”**  
(John 10:7, 10:9)
4. **“I am the good shepherd.”**  
(John 10:11, 10:14)
5. **“I am the resurrection and the life.”**  
(John 11:25)
6. **“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”**  
(John 14:6)
7. **“I am the true vine.”**  
(John 15:1, 15:5)

### Absolute “I Am” Statements (without a predicate)

The Gospel of John also contains several **absolute uses of “I am”** (Greek: *ego eimi*), which many scholars connect to the divine name revealed in Book of Exodus 3:14. Key examples include:

- John 8:24 – “Unless you believe that **I am**, you will die in your sins.”
- John 8:28 – “Then you will know that **I am**.”
- John 8:58 – “Before Abraham was, **I am**.”
- John 13:19 – “So that when it happens you may believe that **I am**.”
- John 18:5–6 – Jesus says **“I am he”** when arrested.

### **C. Emphasis on Sign Miracles -- The Seven Sign Miracles**

1. **Water turned into wine – John 2:1-11**  
Satisfying the heart of man with the wine of new covenant life and fullness of joy
2. **Healing of the royal official’s son – John 4:46-54**  
Even the most powerful must humbly take Jesus at his Word to experience the rewards of faith
3. **Healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda – John 5:1-15**  
Jesus demonstrates His supremacy over legalism and His equality with God the Father
4. **Feeding of the 5,000 – John 6:1-14**

The creator of the universe can abundantly satisfy any physical need despite the apparent lack of physical resources

5. **Walking on the sea – John 6:16-21**

The presence of the master of the universe should calm all fears and accomplish all objectives

6. **Healing of the man born blind – John 9:1-41**

Opening the eyes of the blind can only be a work of God

7. **Raising of Lazarus from the dead – John 11:1-44**

Resurrection (the ultimate sign miracle) demonstrates both the glory of God and the alue Jesus places on faith

**OVERVIEW OF EARTHLY LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST – THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF GOD**

Kingdom Agenda

**GEOGRAPHIC PROGRESSION OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS**

Many scholars note that the ministry of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew and other Gospels unfolds in **distinct geographic phases**. The movement from place to place is not random—it marks **shifts in audience, mission focus, opposition, and preparation for the crucifixion**. The Gospel writers often insert **transition verses** that signal the start of a new stage.

The ministry of Jesus unfolds in a **south–north–south pattern**, beginning in **Judea**, moving north to **Galilee**, extending briefly into **Gentile territories**, and finally returning south to **Jerusalem**.

Stage	Region(s)	Key Events / Teachings	Theological Significance
1. Preparation and Birth	Nazareth, Bethlehem, Judea	Annunciation, Birth of Jesus, Visit of Shepherds and Magi, Presentation in the Temple	God fulfills His promise to send the Messiah through Israel (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:11).
2. Early Ministry	Judea and Galilee	Baptism by John, Temptation in the wilderness, Calling of disciples, First miracles	Jesus is revealed as the Son of God and begins proclaiming the Kingdom.
3. Galilean Ministry	Capernaum, Naz., Sea of Galilee region	Sermon on the Mount, Healing the sick, Feeding the 5,000, Parables of the Kingdom	The Kingdom of God is proclaimed first to Israel; miracles confirm His divine authority.
4. Ministry Beyond Galilee	Tyre, Sidon, Decapolis (Gentile)	Healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, Feeding of the 4,000	Foreshadows salvation extending to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6).
5. Journey to Jerusalem	Samaria, Perea, Jericho	Parables of mercy (Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son), Healing of Bartimaeus, Raising of Lazarus	Jesus "sets His face toward Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51), showing His mission to die for all.
6. Passion Week	Jerusalem	Triumphal Entry, Cleansing of the Temple, Last Supper, Trials, Crucifixion	Jesus fulfills prophecy as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
7. Resurr. and Ascension	Jerusalem and Mount of Olives	Resurrection appearances, Great Commission, Ascension into heaven	Jesus conquers death and commissions His disciples to be worldwide witnesses -- (Acts 1:8).

The **geographic progression** of Jesus' earthly ministry is not random—it reveals the unfolding of God's redemptive plan, moving from **Israel's covenant people** to **all nations**, in perfect fulfillment of prophecy. Each geographic phase marks a **transition in salvation history**, showing how the light of the gospel expands outward, just as Isaiah foretold (**Isaiah 9:1–2; 49:6**).



**STAGE 1 – Preparation and Birth**

REGIONS: Nazareth, Bethlehem, Judea

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Annunciation, Birth of Jesus, Visit of Shepherds and Magi, Presentation in the temple

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: God fulfills His promise to send the Messiah through Israel (**Micah 5:2; Luke 2:11**)

### **STAGE 2 – Early Ministry**

REGIONS: Judea, the Wilderness and Galilee

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Baptism by John, Temptation in the wilderness, Calling of disciples, First miracles

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Jesus is revealed as the Son of God and begins proclaiming the kingdom

- The ministry begins **after John’s arrest**, symbolizing a **transfer of prophetic mission**.
- The wilderness echoes **Israel’s testing in the desert**, presenting Jesus as the faithful representative of Israel.

### **Transition: From Judea to Galilee — The Light Dawns in the North**

*“Now when He heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee. . .*

*From that time Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”*  
(**Matt. 4:12, 17**)

- The repeated phrase **“From that time...”** (**Matthew 4:17; 16:21**) acts as **structural markers** dividing the Gospel into major sections.

### **Context & Implication:**

This moment marks a **new phase** in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus’ move to Galilee fulfills **Isaiah 9:1–2**, which foretold that light would dawn in *“Galilee of the Gentiles.”* This was a time of teaching and healing and the calling of the first disciples.

- **Theological Implication:** The gospel is not confined to Jerusalem’s religious elite but shines first in a region known for its mixture of Jews and Gentiles.
- **Spiritual Meaning:** Jesus, the *“light of the world”* (**John 8:12**), begins to abolish spiritual darkness and reveal God’s truth to all who will hear.
- **Historical Note:** This shift also shows **divine timing**—John’s arrest signals the end of the forerunner’s ministry and the beginning of the Messiah’s public proclamation.

### **STAGE 3 – Galilean Ministry – Growing Popularity**

REGIONS: Capernaum, Nazareth, Sea of Galilee

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Sermon on the Mount, Healing the sick, Feeding the 5,000, Parables of the Kingdom

- Rising criticism from religious leaders like the Pharisees

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: The Kingdom of God is proclaimed first to Israel; miracles confirm His divine authority

### **Transition: From Galilee to the Gentile Regions — The Gospel’s Reach Expands**

*“And Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.”*

(**Matt. 15:21**)

### **Context & Implication:**

This move takes Jesus **outside Israel's traditional boundaries**. In Tyre and Sidon, He heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman—a Gentile (**Mark 7:24–30**).

- **Theological Implication:** This anticipates the inclusion of the **Gentiles** in God's covenant blessings.
- **Spiritual Meaning:** The woman's faith demonstrates that salvation is **by faith**, not ethnicity (**Romans 3:29–30**).
- **Prophetic Fulfillment: Isaiah 49:6**—"*It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*"

### **STAGE 4 – Ministry beyond Galilee – Time of Withdrawal and Focus on the Disciples**

REGIONS: Tyre, Sidon, Decapolis (Gentile areas), Caesarea Philippi

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, Feeding of the 4,000

**Key Turning point** in the revelation of Who Jesus is – **Confession of Peter – Matt. 16**

Jesus then clearly predicts His death and resurrection

- This is one of the **clearest structural turning points in Matthew**.
- The focus shifts from **public miracles to preparing the disciples for the cross**.

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Foreshadows salvation extending to the Gentiles (**Isaiah 49:6**)

### **Transition: From Galilee to Jerusalem — The Journey to the Cross**

*"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem..."*

**Matt. 16:21**

*"And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem;" (Lk. 9:51)*

*"And it came about that when Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee, and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan;: (Matt. 19:1)*

### **Context & Implication:**

This verse marks the **turning point** of Luke's Gospel. Jesus' ministry now focuses on His coming passion, death, and resurrection.

- **Theological Implication:** The **cross** is the center of God's redemptive plan. Every miracle and teaching now points toward the atonement.
- **Spiritual Meaning:** Jesus' determination ("*He set His face*") shows His obedience to the Father's will (**Philippians 2:8**).

### **STAGE 5 – Journey to Jerusalem**

REGIONS: Samaria, Perea, Jericho

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Parables of mercy (Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son), Healing of Bartimaeus, Raising of Lazarus

- Teaching emphasizes **discipleship, humility, and judgment.**

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Jesus “sets His face toward Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51), showing His mission to die for all

**STAGE 6 – Passion Week**

REGIONS: Jerusalem

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Triumphal Entry, Cleansing of the Temple, Last Supper, Trials, Crucifixion

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Jesus fulfills prophecy as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)

**Transition: From Jerusalem to the Nations — The Church’s Mission Begins**

“but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

**Context & Implication:**

After His resurrection and ascension, Jesus commissions His disciples to continue His mission.

- **Theological Implication:** The gospel’s expansion follows the same geographic pattern as Jesus’ ministry—**Jerusalem → Judea → Samaria → the world.**
- **Spiritual Meaning:** The Holy Spirit empowers believers to carry the light of Christ to every nation.
- **Connection to Prophecy:** This fulfills the promise of **Luke 24:46–47**, “and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’”

**STAGE 7 – Resurrection and Ascension**

REGIONS: Jerusalem and Mt. of Olives

KEY EVENTS / TEACHINGS: Resurrection appearances, Great Commission, Ascension into heaven

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Jesus conquers death and commissions His disciples to be worldwide witnesses (Acts 1:8)

Another way of tracking the progression of the ministry of Jesus: **Popularity vs. Opposition**

OBSCURITY		↗ POPULARITY ↘			OPPOSITION		
Galilee, Judea & Samaria		Mainly Galilee			Beyond G	Judea	Perea
?	8 mths	4 mths ←	12 mths →	←	6 mths →	3 mths	3 mths

## Ministry Purposes

The four Gospels—Gospel of Matthew, Gospel of Mark, Gospel of Luke, and Gospel of John—do more than record events. They reveal **why Jesus came**. Let's look at the three main purposes we see worked out in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

- Revelatory Purpose – To **Reveal** the Father through His embodiment of the truth and His teaching ministry

*“No one has seen God at any time . . . He has explained Him”*

*“Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father”* **John 14:9**

Embodiment of Truth

**John 1:14** *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory”*

**John 14:6** *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”*

**Col. 2:9** *“In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form”*

Teaching with Authority

Proclaiming the Kingdom -- *“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me... to proclaim good news to the poor”* (**Luke 4:18**).

Jesus both shows us and teaches us that God is love, God is sovereign, powerful, merciful, forgiving, patient, just, holy, wise,

- Relational Purpose – To **Restore** people to God and to one another through compassion and mercy – He called common people like fishermen to become disciples and to personally **Follow Him**

Compassion towards the Insignificant and undeserving

- Examples of those He ministered to and healed: women, children, the poor, the outcasts of society like lepers and the Samaritan woman, the injured and broken – the lame and the blind
- He broke ethnic barriers, moral barriers, social barriers
- He condemned hypocrisy and self-righteousness and all the ways that mankind tried to cover up their sins and their broken relationship with God

- Redemptive Purpose – To **Recover** lost sinners through His sacrifice on the cross  
Betrayal / Trials / Crucifixion / Resurrection / Appearances / Ascension

- **Fulfill the Law and the Prophets** – *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”*  
**Matt. 5:17**

- **Seek and Save the Lost** – *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost”* **Luke 19:10**

*“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* **Mark 10:45**

- **Establish the New Covenant** – *“This cup is the new covenant in My blood”*  
**(Luke 22:20)**

## **The Unity of the Three Purposes**

These three purposes are inseparable.

Jesus **revealed God** so we could **know Him relationally**,  
and He **redeemed us** so that relationship could be restored forever.

Revelation leads to relationship.  
Relationship is made possible through redemption.

### **Application**

The ministry of Jesus still speaks today.  
Because of His **revelatory purpose**, we know what God is like.  
Because of His **relational purpose**, we are invited into fellowship with Him.  
Because of His **redemptive purpose**, our sins can be forgiven.  
The question the Gospels ask every reader is simple:  
**What will you do with Jesus?**

## **Jesus' Methods of Teaching**

### **a. Parables**

Jesus often taught in parables—short, symbolic stories that revealed truth to the humble and concealed it from the proud (**Matthew 13:10–17**).

- Example: The Parable of the Sower (**Matthew 13:1–23**) illustrates how hearts respond differently to God's Word.
- Parables invited listeners to self-examination and repentance.

### **b. Sermons and Discourses**

Jesus also taught through extended sermons, such as:

- The **Sermon on the Mount** (**Matthew 5–7**) – outlining kingdom ethics.
- The **Olivet Discourse** (**Matthew 24–25**) – describing end-time events.
- The **Upper Room Discourse** (**John 13–17**) – preparing His disciples for His departure and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

### **c. Questions and Dialogue**

Jesus frequently used questions to provoke thought and reveal motives (**Mark 8:27–29; Luke 10:25–37**).

### **d. Lifestyle Discipleship**

### **Characterization of His life**

- Well pleasing to the Father
- Fulfilled all righteousness
  - Not just external commands of the law, but internal righteousness
- Fully performed the will of His Father
- Confrontational towards hypocritical religious leaders

### **Pattern for Discipleship**

Jesus' discipleship model was relational and transformational:

- **Calling** – “*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men*” (**Matthew 4:19**).

#### **Cost of Discipleship**

- **Training** – He taught them privately, explaining parables and demonstrating ministry (**Mark 4:34**). Key Text: *Training of the Twelve* – **A. B. Bruce**
- **Sending** – He commissioned them to preach, heal, and cast out demons (**Luke 9:1–6**).
- **Multiplying** – After His resurrection, He commanded them to make disciples of all nations (Key Mission Statement: The Great Commission -- **Matthew 28:19–20**).

Discipleship was not academic—it was life-on-life apprenticeship under the Master.

- Key Commands
  - Love God Completely
  - Love Mankind without partialityKey Study: Series **The Commands of Christ**

#### ***“teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”***

Based on this I have developed a discipleship course oriented around the command of Jesus in the gospels. Similar to the red letter bible that highlights just the words spoken by Christ. This is not to minimize the importance of Jesus' teachings as a whole – but just trying to focus in on His specific commands that He gave.

Others have written books on this same approach – cf. **John Piper's** book What Jesus Demands from the World.

Easy to perform this study on your own. Take 4 X 5 cards and go thru the gospels and record each command. Then group them into categories. Then organize the categories into some type of thematic presentation. Then you do the hard work of exegeting and making application for each of the categories.

1. You must be born again (**John 3:1-21**)
2. Repent (**Luke 13:1-9**)
3. Come to Me (**Matthew 11:25-30**)

4. Believe in Me (**John 14:1-14**)
5. Love Me (**John 14:15-31**)
6. Listen to Me (**Luke 10:38-42**)
7. Abide in Me (**John 15:1-11**)
8. Follow Me (**Matthew 16:24-27**)
9. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (**Mark 12:28-34**)
10. Rejoice and leap for joy (**Matthew 13:44-46**)
11. Fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in Hell (**Matthew 10:28**)
12. Worship God in spirit and truth (**John 4:20-24**)
13. Always pray and do not lose heart (**Luke 18:1-8**)
14. Do not be anxious about the necessities of daily life (**Matthew 6:25-34**)
15. Humble yourself by making war on pride (**Matthew 23:1-12**)
16. Humble yourself in childlikeness (**Matthew 18:1-6**)
17. Do not be angry (**Matthew 5:21-22**)
18. Love your enemies (**Matthew 5:43-48**)
19. Do not take an oath (**Matthew 5:33-37**)
20. Render to Caesar (**Matthew 22:15-21**)
21. Be salt and light (**Matthew 5:13-16**)
22. Make Disciples (**Matthew 28:18-20**)