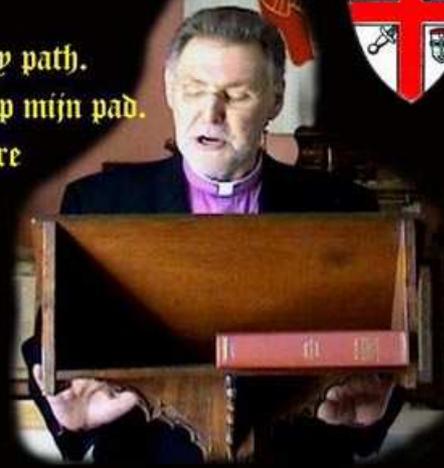
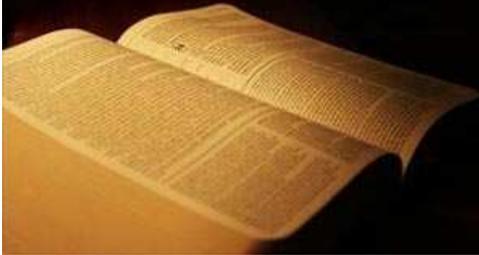


## The Berea School of Theology on Internet (Ecumenical)

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Our Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.  
Het Woord is een lamp voor mijn voet, een licht op mijn pad.  
Ta Parole est une lampe à mes pieds, et une lumière  
sur mon sentier. (Psalm, Psaume 119: 105)



Right Reverend Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.

## The Berea School of Theology on Internet (Ecumenical)

Principal: Right Reverend Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.



Looking unto Jesus (Heb. 12: 2)

<http://levende-water.skynetblogs.be>

# Jesus of Nazareth

## The Periods of Jesus' life in the Gospels

By Right Reverend Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D., author and editor

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Most of the material in our Gospels existed for a considerable time in an oral stage before it was given the written form which we are familiar. The beginning of gospel writing, as we might expect, coincides with the end of the first Christian generation. As those who 'from the beginning were eyewitnesses and

ministers of the word' (Luke 1: 02) were removed by death, the necessity of a permanent written record of their witness would be more acutely felt than before. It is just at this point that the second century tradition placed the beginnings of gospel writing, and rightly so: all four of our canonical Gospels to be dated within the four decades A.D. 60-100. We need not to suppose that the transmission of the apostolic witness had been exclusively oral before A.D. 60 – some at least of the 'many' who, referring to Luke 1: 01, had undertaken to draw up an orderly account of the evangelic events may have done in writing before A.D. 60 – but no document of an earlier date has survived except in so far it has been incorporated in our written Gospels.

God having been pleased to give in His Word four Gospels, it is manifest that He had a design and purpose in doing so, which it is well to endeavour to discover. If it is accepted that God is really the author of them all, it at once sweeps away all questions of anterior documents, from which one evangelist selected certain events, and another chose events somewhat different; and also the unworthy hypothesis that after the first, each writer had before him the gospel or gospels that had been previously written, and then sought to supply their insufficiencies. In all such thoughts God is forgotten. It is generally agreed, however, that John wrote his gospel last as a supplement to the other gospels. It is surprising that the mass of modern commentators do not see any design in the differences in the gospels, and that each gospel has its own particular characteristics. As early as Irenaeus (A.D. 120-200) this was seen: he compared them with the four cherubim in the book of Revelation; and in several of the old books a *man* is portrayed with Matthew; a *lion* with Mark; an *ox* with Luke; and an *eagle* with John. Why they were put in this order is not easy to see, for in the book of Revelation the lion is mentioned first, and the calf second; though the above is the order of the faces in Ezekiel. In the four gospels we have, as it were, four divine portraits of the Lord Jesus.

Since the data afforded by the four Gospels are not complete in the sense that they are exhaustive, a full biography of Jesus cannot be reconstructed from them. Of the four, Luke is perhaps the most representative, but does not include the early Judean ministry, which is mentioned by John. None of these attempts a physical description of Jesus' person, although some facts about it must have been known to the writers. Only Luke gives a glimpse of his youth; for the most part, the thirty years of his life are passed over in silence. John alone follows any definite chronological scheme that is observable to his allusions to the feasts Jesus attended; and one of those is ambiguous (John 5: 01). The order of unfolding in any Gospel is not necessarily chronological, for each Gospel has its own objective and gathers its material for effect rather than for temporal sequence. It is an interpretation, not a chronicle. For this reason there are some differences of opinion on the preferred order of events in the life of Christ.

Anyway, several strands of tradition can be distinguished in the four Gospels. In this respect, as in some others, John stands apart from the other Gospels and is best considered as we do on this website, independently. The other three Gospels are inter-related to the point where they lend themselves excellently to ‘synoptic’ study.

## Introducing the Synoptic Gospels

### MATTHEW

**Author.** There is early support suggesting that Matthew, the tax collector, originally wrote in Aramaic, an important testimony for the priority of Matthew. About A.D. 150, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, claimed: “So then Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could.” Origen (c. 185-254) stated that Matthew was prepared for the “convert of Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language.” Irenaeus stated that Matthew wrote while Peter and Paul were still alive; Mark wrote after they had died.

**Date.** Recognising that Matthew wrote to a Jewish community, an early date for Matthew can be argued from the standpoint of need. It is reasonable to suggest that there were twenty-thousand Jews in Jerusalem who believed in Christ. These believers would need an explanation concerning the Messiahship of Jesus, encouraging their faith from a Jewish standpoint and also confuting their opponents. The quick growth of the number of Jewish believers constituted a primary and immediate need for a gospel written distinctively to Jewish believers.

The view of the early church was that “Matthew” wrote his Gospel before the other Evangelists composed theirs. This testimony is so determined and unanimous that it ought to have some weight in deciding this question. Matthew was likely written about A.D. 50.

**Addressees.** The addressees of Matthew’s gospel are linked to the nature and growth of the early church. Because it had not separated from Judaism, it is clear that the early church was predominantly Jewish: soon after Pentecost five thousand Jewish men believed and were converted. There would have been an early need to justify why, if Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the kingdom had not come. Matthew wrote to explain this to his Jewish addressees.

**Theological Arguments.** Matthew develops the Messianic hope and expectation of the Jews. He teaches his readers that the true Messiah, the Son of

David, has indeed come. While the gospels, Marc, Luke and John, recognise Jesus as the promised Messiah, it is Matthew who presents Him as exclusively for the Jews. The intentions of Matthew's gospel are twofold. Firstly, to prove Jesus as the Messiah. (Messiah is a Jewish title for Israel's king who will bring salvation to them at the end of the age.) Matthew presents Jesus as Israel's Anointed One or Messiah, who fulfils the function of prophet, priest, and king all in one Person. The second intention is to present the kingdom plan of God. Since Jesus is Israel's Anointed One and since the nation rejected Him as the Messiah, Matthew explains that while the kingdom has been offered to the Jews, it has been delayed because of Israel's rejection. The Messiah's earthly kingdom will be established at His Second Advent.

## **MARK**

**Author.** The primitive church gave strong witness to 'John Mark's' authorship of the second gospel. Papias writing about A.D. 150 wrote: "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered. Irenaeus writing about A.D. 185 stated: "Now after their passing (Peter and Paul) Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing what Peter had preached."

**Date.** Because Irenaeus claimed that Mark wrote after the death of Peter and Paul, and because the apostle Paul probably died in the summer or fall of A.D. 66, Mark likely wrote his gospel in A.D. 66 or 67. As the destruction of Jerusalem is not mentioned, it is absolutely certain that Mark wrote before A.D. 70.

**Addressees.** Writing about A.D. 195, Clement of Alexandria claimed that Roman people asked Peter to write an account of the life of Christ. It is likely that Mark helped Peter to fulfil that request from the Romans. Internal evidence, through a translation of Aramaic terms, does indicate non-Jewish addressees.

**Theological Arguments.** The Romans being a people of action rather than thought, Mark presents Christ as "the mighty Worker rather than the profound Thinker, or the conqueror by doing. Mark's style, as well as his content, reflects the theological argument just stated. Because Mark presents Christ as a man of action, he omits the genealogy and birth accounts, beginning with the baptism of Christ, moving directly into the public ministry of our Lord. The importance of Mark's emphasis of Jesus is his portrayal of Christ as the Servant who came to minister and give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10: 45). Mark's goal was

to present his Roman readers with the forcefulness of the Son of Man as Servant, thereby producing faith in Him.

## LUKE

**Author.** External evidence is absolutely clear in affirming Luke the physician as the author of the third gospel. The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 160-200) reports that Luke, a physician and travelling companion of Paul, traced the matters and compiled a gospel of the life of Christ. Irenaeus (about A.D. 185) also testified: ‘Then Luke, the follower of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel as it was preached by him.’ Clement of Alexandria and Origen also ascribe authorship to Luke.

**Date.** The date of the writing of Luke is linked with the writing of the Acts of the Apostles. Acts was probably written in A.D. 63 because the book closes abruptly, describing Paul’s imprisonment, whereas his release, which occurred in A.D. 63, is not mentioned. The statement of Acts 01:01 indicates the gospel of Luke was written before the Acts of the Apostles, the fifth book of the New Testament. Luke probably wrote near the end of his time in Palestine, perhaps between A.D. 58 and 60.

**Addressees.** Although Luke addressed his gospel to Theophilus, this was most probably a dedication; a Gentile addressee is undoubtedly in view to whom Luke preached. Because of Paul’s three missionary journeys there was a great need for a gospel distinct from the others, meant particularly for the Greek thinker. There is considerable evidence for a Greek public.

- (1) The genealogy of Jesus is traced to Adam, the father of the entire human race, rather than to a Jewish patriarch.
- (2) Fulfilled prophecies occur in the sayings of Christ addressed to the Jews, not as ‘account’ apologetics (*defensive arguments*) as in Matthew.
- (3) Jewish terminology as “rabbi” is avoided.
- (4) Greek names are substituted for Hebrew names (compare Luke 6: 16, 23: 33).

**Theological Arguments.** Luke has a multi-ethical emphasis as it were, stressing the universality of the gospel and that Jesus is the redeemer of the world. This is emphasised through linking the genealogy of Jesus with Adam, the common ancestor of all mankind. This emphasis is mainly seen in Luke’s use of parables. “Admission to the Kingdom is open to Samaritans (9: 51-56; 10: 30-37; 17: 11-19) and gentiles (2: 32; 3: 06 and 38; 4: 25-27; 7: 09; 10: 01; 24: 47) as well as to the Jews (1: 33; 2: 10); to publicans, sinners and outcasts (3:

12; 5:27-32; 7: 37-50; 19: 2-10; 23: 43) as well as to highly regarded and respectable people (7: 36; 11: 37; 14: 01); to the poor (1: 53; 2: 07; 06: 20; 07: 22) as well as to the wealthy (19: 02, 23: 50); and to women as well as to men.” This stresses the purpose for Luke’s writing: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19: 10)

## **The Life of Christ outlined following the four Gospels**

<b>Harmony of the Life of Christ</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
<b>I. <i>Parentage and Infancy</i></b>				
<b>Genealogy</b>	<b>01: 01-17</b>		<b>03: 23-38</b>	
<b>Birth of John the Baptist</b>			<b>01: 05-25, 57-80</b>	
<b>Annunciation</b>	<b>01: 18-25</b>		<b>01: 26-38</b>	
<b>The Birth of Jesus</b>	<b>02: 01</b>		<b>02: 01-07</b>	
<b>The Angels</b>			<b>02: 08-20</b>	
<b>The Circumcision and Presentation</b>			<b>02: 21-39</b>	
<b>The Wise Men</b>	<b>02: 01-12</b>			
<b>The Flight into Egypt</b>	<b>02: 13-23</b>			
<b>Childhood and visit to Jerusalem</b>			<b>02: 40-50</b>	
<b>The Silent Years</b>			<b>02: 51-52</b>	
<b>II. <i>Preparatory Action</i></b>				
<b>The Ministry of John</b>	<b>03: 01-12</b>	<b>01: 01-08</b>	<b>03: 01-20</b>	<b>01: 19-37</b>
<b>The Baptism of Jesus</b>	<b>03: 13-17</b>	<b>01: 09-11</b>	<b>03: 21-22</b>	
<b>The Temptation</b>	<b>04: 01-11</b>	<b>01: 12-13</b>	<b>04: 01-13</b>	
<b>III. <i>The Early Galilean Ministry</i></b>				
<b>The Wedding at Cana</b>				<b>02. 01-12</b>
<b>IV <i>The Early Judean Ministry (Passover)</i></b>				
<b>A cleansing of the temple</b>				<b>02: 13-25</b>
<b>Interview with Nicodemus</b>				<b>03: 01-21</b>
<b>Competition with John the Baptist</b>				<b>03: 22-36</b>
<b>Withdrawal through Samaria</b>				<b>04: 01-42</b>
<b>V. <i>The Return to Galilee</i></b>				
<b>The Arrival</b>	<b>04:12</b>	<b>01: 14</b>	<b>04: 14</b>	<b>04: 43-45</b>
<b>Healing of the</b>				

Nobleman's Son				04: 46-54
The Imprisonment of John and the move to Capernaum	04: 13-16			
The First Galilean Tour	04: 17			
The Call of the First Disciples	04: 18-22	01: 16-20		
A Day of Work	08: 14-17	01: 21-34	04: 42-44	
Miracles and Discourses	08: 01-04	01: 40 - 03: 12	05: 01 - 06: 19	
	09: 01-17			
	12: 01-21			
The Appointment of the Twelve		03: 13-19a	06: 12-16	
The Sermon on the Mount	05: 01-07: 29		(06: 20-49)	
The Centurion's Servant	08: 05-13		07: 01-10	
The Widow's Son			07: 11-17	
The Inquiry of John the Baptist	11: 02-30		07: 18-35	
The Anointing of Jesus			07: 36-50	
Another preaching tour			08: 01-03	
The Protest of the Family	12: 46-50	03: 31-35	08: 19-21	
Parables	13: 01-53	04: 01-34	08: 04-18	
Miracles	08: 18, 23-34; 09: 18-26	04: 35-05:43	08: 22-56	
<i>VI. A Third Tour: The Peak of the Ministry</i>				
Second Journey to Jerusalem				05: 01-47
Rejection at Nazareth	13: 54-58	06: 01-06		
The Tour of the Twelve	09: 36-11:01	06: 07-13	09: 01-06	
The Death of John	14: 01-12	06: 14-29	09: 07-09	
The Return of the Twelve	14: 13	06: 30-32	09: 10	
The feeding of the 5,000	14: 13-21	06: 33-44	09: 11-17	06: 01-14
The Retirement and the Walking on the Sea	14: 22-33	06: 45-52		06: 15-21
Discourse on the Bread of Life				06: 22-71
The Discourse in the Synagogue	15: 01-20	07: 01-23		
<i>VII. The Retirement to the North</i>				
In Tyre and Sidon	15: 21-28	07: 24-30		
In Decapolis	15: 29-31	07: 31-37		
Feeding the four thousand - Discourse	15: 32-16: 12	08: 01-21		
Healing of the Blind Man		08: 22-26		

The Revelation of His Person	16: 13-26	08: 27-37	09: 18-25	
The Transfiguration	16: 27-17: 13	08: 38-09:13	09: 26-36	
Healing of the Demoniac	17: 14-21	09: 14-29	09: 37-43	
Prediction of death and Resurrection	17: 22-23	09: 30, 32	09: 43-45	
VIII. <i>The Last Ministry in Galilee</i>	17: 24-18:35	09: 33-50	09: 46-50	07: 01-09
IX. <i>The Later Judean Ministry</i>				
The Journey to Jerusalem via Samaria	19: 01-02; 08: 19-22	01: 01	09: 51-62	07: 10
The Feast of Tabernacles				07: 11-52
The Woman Taken in Adultery				07: 53-08: 11
Argument with Pharisees				08: 12-59
The Man Born Blind				09: 01-41
Discourse on Good Shepherd				10: 01-21
The Mission of the Seventy			10: 01-24	
The Parable of the Good Samaritan			10: 25-37	
Mary and Martha			10: 38-42	
The Lord's Prayer			11: 01-13	
Controversy with Pharisees			11: 14-54	
<b>Harmony of the Life of Christ</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Public Teachings			12: 01-59	
The Feast of Dedication				10: 22-39 (10: 40-42)
X. <i>The Perea Ministry</i>				
Warnings			13: 22-35	
Dinner with a Pharisee			14: 01-24	
Challenge to the Multitude			14: 25-35	
Teaching publicans and Sinners			15: 01-32	
The Raising of Lazarus				11: 01-44
The Withdrawal to Ephraim				11: 45-54
XI. <i>The Last Journey to Jerusalem</i>				
Ministry in Samaria and Galilee			17: 11-18: 14	
Ministry in Perea:				
Teaching on Divorce	19: 01-12	10: 01-12		
Teaching on Children	19: 13-15	10: 13-16	18: 15-17	

The Rich Young Ruler	19: 16-20: 16	10: 17-31	18: 18-30	
Prediction of Death	20: 17-19	10: 32-34	18: 31-34	
Ambition of James and John	20: 20-28	10: 35-45		
Approach to Jerusalem	20: 29-34	10: 46-52	18: 35-19:28	
Arrival at Bethany				11: 55-12:11
<b>XII. <i>The Passion Week</i></b>				
<i>Sunday</i>				
The Triumphal Entry	21: 01-09	11: 01-10	19: 29-40	12: 12-19
Jesus' view of the City	21: 10-11	11:11	19: 41-44	
<i>Monday</i>				
Cursing of the Fig Tree	21: 18-19	11: 12-14		
Cleansing of the Temple	21: 12-13	11: 15-19	19: 45-48	
Healings in the Temple	21: 14-17			
<i>Tuesday</i>				
The Withered Fig Tree	21: 19-22	11: 20-25		
Controversy	21: 23–22: 46	11: 27-12:37	20: 01-44	
Condemnation of Scribes and Pharisees	23: 01-39	12: 38-40	20: 45-47	
Jesus' Observation of the Widow		12: 41-44	21: 01-04	
The Visit of the Greeks				12: 20-36
Jewish Rejection of Jesus				12: 37-50
The Apocalyptic Discourse	Ch. 24-25	13: 01-37	21: 05-38	
<b>Harmony of the Life of Christ</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Prediction of the Cross	26: 01-05	14: 01-02	22: 01-02	
Anointing by Mary	26: 06-13	14: 03-09		12: 02-08
The Betrayal	26: 14-16	14: 10-11	22: 03-06	
<i>Wednesday (no record)</i>				
<i>Thursday</i>				
The Passover Meal	26: 17-29	14: 12-25	22: 07-30	13: 01-38
Farewell Discourse				14: 01-31
Discourse on Way to Gethsemane				Ch. 15-16
The High-Priestly Prayer				Ch. 17
In the Garden	26: 30, 36-46	14: 26, 32-42	22: 39-46	18: 01
Betrayal and Arrest	26: 47-56	14: 43-52	22: 47-53	18: 02-12
Trial Before Annas				18: 12-14
				18: 19-23
Trial Before Caiaphas	26: 57, 59-68	14: 53, 55-65	22: 54, 63-65	18: 24
The Denial of Peter	26: 58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	22: 54-62	18: 15-18, 25-27

<b>Trial Before the Sanhedrin</b>	<b>27: 01</b>	<b>15: 01</b>	<b>22: 66-71</b>	
<b>Death of Judas</b>	<b>27: 03-10</b>			
<i>Friday</i>				
<b>Trial Before Pilate</b>	<b>27; 02, 11-14</b>	<b>15: 01-05</b>	<b>23: 01-05</b>	<b>18: 28-38</b>
<b>Before Herod</b>			<b>23: 06-12</b>	
<b>Return to Pilate</b>	<b>27: 15-26</b>	<b>15: 06-15</b>	<b>23: 13-25</b>	<b>18: 39-19: 16</b>
<b>Mockery By Soldiers</b>	<b>27: 27-30</b>	<b>15: 16-19</b>		
<b>The Way to Calvary</b>	<b>27: 31-34</b>	<b>15: 20-23</b>	<b>23: 26-32</b>	<b>19: 16-17</b>
<b>The Crucifixion</b>	<b>27: 35-36</b>	<b>15: 24-41</b>	<b>23: 33-49</b>	<b>19: 18-30</b>
<b>The Burial</b>	<b>27: 57-60</b>	<b>15: 42-46</b>	<b>23: 50-54</b>	<b>19: 31-42</b>
<i>Saturday</i>				
<b>The Women at the Tomb</b>	<b>27: 61</b>	<b>15: 47</b>	<b>23: 55-56</b>	
<b>The Guard</b>	<b>27: 62-66</b>			
<b>XIII. The Resurrection</b>				
<i>Sunday</i>				
<b>The Women's Visit</b>	<b>28: 01-08</b>	<b>16: 01-08</b>	<b>24: 01-12</b>	<b>20: 01-10</b>
<i>The Appearances of Jesus</i>				
<b>Mary Magdalene</b>		<b>16: 09-11</b>		<b>20: 11-18</b>
<b>Other Women</b>	<b>28: 09-10</b>			
<b>Report of the Guard</b>	<b>28: 11-15</b>			
<b>The Two Disciples</b>		<b>16: 12-13</b>	<b>24: 13-32</b>	
<b>Peter</b>			<b>24: 33-35</b>	
<b>The Ten Apostles</b>		<b>16: 14</b>	<b>24: 36-43</b>	<b>20: 19-25</b>
<b>The Eleven Apostles</b>				<b>20: 26-31</b>
<b>By Sea of Galilee</b>				<b>21: 01-14</b>
<b>Harmony of the Life of Christ</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
<b>Conversation with Peter</b>				<b>21: 15-25</b>
<b>Disciples in Galilee</b>	<b>28: 16-20</b>	<b>16: 15-18</b>		
<b>Eleven at Olivet</b>			<b>24: 44-49</b>	
<b>The Great Commission and Ascension</b>	<b>28: 18-20</b>	<b>16: 19-20</b>	<b>24: 50-53</b>	

## Symposium of Synoptic Theology

### Doctrine of God

It has always been necessary to study systematic theology to arrive at a biblically understandable picture of the nature and attributes of God. (Even then the infinite God remains impenetrable.) However, while the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke provide just one portion in the study of God, the writers of the New Testament (27 books) all share the view of God which is seen in the Old Testament. Many of God's attributes are portrayed in the synoptics, as the following makes clear.

*The providence of God*

Is seen in His provision for the birds (Matt. 06: 26; 10: 29).

*The fatherhood of God*

Emphasises His provision for His children (Matt. 06.32).

*The grace of God*<sup>[1]</sup>

Is given to believers and unbelievers alike (Matt. 05: 45).

*The kingship of God*

Is stressed: He has a throne (Matt. 05: 34; 23: 22). He is Lord (Matt. 04: 07, 10; Luke 04: 08, 12).

*The judgment of God*

Is equitable to all (Matt. 03: 07; 07: 01, 02; Luke 03; 07); greater privileges will call for greater judgment (Matt: 22-24); He will avenge His own (Luke 18: 07)

*The glory of God*

Was revealed to the three on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 01-08; Mark 09: 02-08; Luke 09: 28-36).

*The goodness of God*

Matt. 19: 17; Mark 10: 17; Luke 18: 18-19.

*The power of God*

Is exhibited in His ability to raise the dead (Mark 12: 24-27). With Him all things are possible (Mark 10: 27; Luke 01: 37 and 18: 27).

*The Trinity of God*

Is revealed at the baptism of Christ (Mark 01: 09-11) and at the commissioning of the apostles (Matt. 28: 19).

## Doctrine of Christ

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.  
Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,  
But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.  
And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and

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<sup>[1]</sup> The favour and graciousness shown by God to guilty man. It stands in contrast to law, John 01: 17; Galatians 05: 04; also to works and to desert or reward, Romans 04: 04; 11: 06: 'by grace you are saved.' Ephesians 02: 05 and 08. The grace of God is vouchsafed to the saints (believers) along the way. We find nearly all the epistles begin and end with the invocation of grace on the churches: whereas when individuals are addressed MERCY is added. 1 Timothy 01: 02; 2 Timothy 01: 02; Titus 01: 04; 2 John 03. The different aspects of grace and mercy have been set forth: "Grace refers more to the source and character of the sentiment; mercy to the state of the person who is its object. Grace may give me glory; mercy contemplates some need in me. Mercy is great in the greatness of the need; grace in the thought of the person exercising it."

became obedient to the point of death,  
even the death of the cross.  
Therefore God also has highly exalted  
Him and given Him the name which is  
above every name,  
That at the name of Jesus every knee  
should bow, of those in heaven, and of  
those on earth, and of those under the  
earth,  
And that every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory  
of God the Father; (Philippians 2: 05-  
11)

### *Virgin Birth*

Matthew and Luke both emphasise that the Holy Spirit generated the humanity of Christ (Matt. 1: 18; Luke 1: 35). Matthew greatly emphasises that Mary had no involvement with a man prior to the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1: 18-25). Mark too, emphasises that Jesus is “the son of Mary” rather than the son of Joseph (Jewish tradition usually used the father’s name).

### *Humanity*

All three gospels emphasise the humanity of Jesus. Matthew emphasises his human genealogy (1: 1-17), his human birth (1: 25) and his infancy (2: 01-23). Luke also emphasises his birth and lowly estate (2: 01-20), his conformity to Jewish tradition (2: 21-24), and his growth as a young boy (2: 41-52). Mark emphasises the humanity of Jesus more than Matthew and Luke through his emphasis on the work, life, and activities of Jesus. All three stress His humanity in the temptations (Matt. 4: 01-11; Mark 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 01-13). Things like manipulating fishing boats, paying taxes, talking with different people, sweating blood, crying because of abandonment on the cross, all reflect the humanity of Jesus. Yet He was not an ordinary man; He forgives sin, has authority over nature, reveals the Shekinah<sup>2[2]</sup> of God – these things “place him in a class of his own.”

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<sup>2[2]</sup> Shekinah, Shechi’nah. A name not found in Scripture, but used by the Rabbis and others for the visible symbol of the presence of God, as was seen at the dedication of the temple built by Solomon, and at the transfiguration.

## *Sinlesness*

Although the synoptic gospels present Jesus as a man, they also indicate He is not an ordinary man, as He is virgin born and sinless. Because He was virgin born He did not have the sin nature nor the inclination to sin (note James 1: 14-15). Jesus called men to repentance but there is no record that He ever confessed sin or repented. His baptism was ‘to fulfill all righteousness’ (Matt. 3: 15), not for confession (Matt. 3: 06). The temptations also emphasise that while He was tested in all areas that we are, yet He was sinless (Matt. 4: 01-11; Mark 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 01-13). In His rebuke of Peter He revealed His complete disassociation from sin (Matt. 16: 23).

## *Deity*

Matthew stresses Jesus as the Son of David (Matt. 9: 27; 12: 23; 15: 22; 20: 30 and 31; 21: 09 and 15; 22: 42). In Matthew 9: 27 it is clear that the blind men understood the Son of David to be the Messiah who could do the work of Messiah – such as open the eyes of the blind (Isaiah 35: 05), which is a work of God (Psalm 146: 08). The use of the name in Matthew 21: 09 reveals its significance as the coming Redeemer who would bring salvation to the nation and rescue her, bringing in a time of blessing (Psalm 118: 25-26).

## *Jesus as the Messiah*

Matthew continually presents Jesus as the *Messiah* inasmuch as He fulfils the Old Testament predictions concerning the Messiah (1: 22-23; 2: 05-06; 3: 03; 4: 14-16; 8: 16-17; 11: 05; 12: 17-21; 13: 34-35; 21: 04-06, 09, 16, 42; 23: 39; 24: 30; 26: 31, 64). In Matthew 16: 16 Jesus promptly accepts Peter’s confession of Him as the Christ, the Anointed One. In Mark 14: 61-62 Jesus answered the high priest’s question as to whether He is the Messiah by the affirmative “I am.”

## *The term “Son of Man”*

The origin of the term *Son of Man* is *Daniel* 7: 13 where He is pictured as triumphantly delivering the kingdom of the Father. The position of the Son of Man at the right hand of the Father relates it to Psalm 110: 01 and the One who is Lord. Matthew 26: 63-64 indicates the term is basically

synonymous with Son of God. The term emphasises various themes: authority (Mark 2: 10); glorification (Matt. 25: 31); humiliation (Matt. 8: 20); suffering and death (Mark 10: 45); relationship with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12: 32); salvation (Luke 19: 10). Jesus came forward as a heavenly messenger fulfilling on earth a ministry on men's behalf which would end in scenes of final glory.

### *Jesus, the Son of God*

Jesus was the *Son of God* in a totally unique sense. "Jesus spoke of God as 'the Father', 'my Father', 'my heavenly Father', and 'your heavenly Father' – for a total of fifty-one times. Jesus indicated His awareness of the unique relationship (Matt. 11: 27), as did the Father (Matt. 3: 17; Mark 1: 11). The Son is of the same nature and essence as the Father. In affirming Jesus as His Son, God the Father was saying that Jesus, His Son, is deity because He is of the same essence as the Father.

### *Atoning Work*

Following His rejection by the nation Israel, Jesus foretold His suffering in Jerusalem (Matt. 16: 21; 17: 22; 20: 18-29; 26: 01-05; Mark 8: 31; 9: 31; 10:32-34; Luke 9: 22 and 44; 18: 31-33). In these passages the Lord foretold who would start His death, who would kill Him, how He would be killed, that He would suffer additional things, and that He would raise the third day. Jesus Christ taught the disciples that His death would be a substitutionary atonement (Matt. 20: 28; Mark 10:45). The statement that the Lord would give His life as a ransom for many implies substitution. In this statement He also used the word 'ransom' which meant the ransom money paid to free a slave. Our Lord paid the price – His death – to free many from the bondage of sin. At the institution of the Lord's Supper, Christ specified that the bread and cup depicted His body and blood. The blood would be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 15-20). The price of redemption is described as His blood; the extent of redemption is many; and, the

result of redemption is forgiveness. Through His death our Lord effected a New Alliance providing forgiveness that the Old Alliance or Covenant (the mosaic law) could not achieve.

### *Resurrection*

Our Lord predicted His resurrection: Mary Magdalene and the other women (Mark 16: 02-08; John 20: 01); Peter and John (John 20: 02-10); Mary Magdalene (John 20: 11-18); the other women (Matt. 28: 09-10); two disciples travelling to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-32); the ten disciples gathered together in the Upper Room (John 20: 19-25); the eleven disciples gathered a week later (John 20: 26-31); the disciples fishing at Galilee (John 21: 01-25); the eleven in Galilee (Matt. 28: 16-20); the disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24: 44-49). John described the handkerchief “folded together” (John 20: 07). The body of the Lord Jesus has passed through the wrappings, confirming His resurrection: “He is risen”.

### *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as hereunder:*

#### *Virgin Birth*

Matthew and Luke relate the conception of Jesus in Mary’s womb to the Holy Spirit coming upon her (Matt. 1: 18; Luke 1: 35).

#### *Baptism of Christ*

At Jesus’ baptism the Holy Spirit came upon Him to fill Him with power for His public ministry. The Holy Spirit also revealed the origin of our Lord ministry (the Father) and Jesus’ unity with the triune God. Jesus did not work independently from the Father.

#### *Temptation of Christ*

Mark 1: 12 emphasises that it was the Spirit who drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. The confrontation would prove the invulnerability of the Son.

#### *Ministry of Christ*

Matthew 12: 38 reveals that the ministry of Jesus Christ was done through the holy Spirit – a public witness to all that His power came from heaven ( see Luke 4: 18-19).

#### *Inspired Scripture*

In quoting Psalm 110: 01, Mark 12: 36 states, “For David himself said by the Holy Spirit,” entailing that the Holy Spirit guided David to write the correct words as he wrote Psalm 110.

### *Doctrine of the Church*

This example indicates the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of the Holy Scripture.

There is no developed doctrine of the church in the synoptic gospels. The word “church” (*ekklesia* in Greek) is used only three times in Matthew, and not in the others Mark and Luke. Probably, the only incidence in Matthew where it is used in a technical sense is Matthew 16: 18 where it is seen still as a future happening.

### *Doctrine of Last Things*

The synoptic gospels provide a wide range of material concerning the last things. The word “kingdom” is major in the synoptic gospels, occurring fifty-six times in Matthew, twenty-one times in Mark, forty-six times in Luke, (and only five times in John.) Matthew also uses the term “king” more times (twenty-three) than any other New Testament book. The synoptic gospels stress that Jesus came to establish the millennial kingdom. The first occurrence of the term is found in Matthew 3: 02 where John the Baptist preached, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Jesus preached the same message (Matt. 4: 17), urging the people to repent in anticipation of Messiah’s kingdom. He revealed His qualifications through His words (Matt. 5-7) and through His works (Matt 8-10). In the light of this evidence, the nation’s leaders gave their evaluation: “Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” (Matt 12: 24) The King had been rejected by His subjects; therefore, as a result, the kingdom would be held in wait. Jesus described the temporary period between the rejection of the Messiah at His first advent and His reception at His second advent in the parables of Matthew chapter 13. Before the King’s return to establish the millennial kingdom Jesus revealed the calamities that would take place with Israel and the world. The Tribulation will take place (Matt. 24: 04-28; Mark 13: 05-23; Luke 1: 08-23), followed by the Second Advent of Christ (Matt. 24: 29-51; Mark 13: 24-37; Luke 21: 24-36.

Israel will be held responsible for the privileges and knowledge the nation has had (Matt. 25: 01-30); the gentiles will also be judged according to their response to the message in the Tribulation (Matt. 25: 31-46).

## Epilogue:

### What is the Victorious Life?

The Victorious life is manifested in the Lord Jesus' grace manifested through us to the world. It is our privilege to serve through prayer, faith and in loving patience to the Lord. The world around may be grieving over their own failures, or they may be blind to them. And they may see weakness and failure in us that we are just as blind to. However, looking unto Jesus, we see that the victorious life was not a theory to Him. He paid the price moment by moment and lived it. His perfect love for the Father and for man, His humility and self-abnegation, His prayer life and faith and utter dependence upon God, His silence before His accusers, His patience and unfailing love towards His disciples, His perfect obedience to the Father and yielding of Himself to death, even for those who hated and reviled Him, were not theory; they were His life.

His life in us will be that same life. It will not be theory. It will be no easier; it will cost no less. Without it we are and have nothing.

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul explains the principles and the objective of the overcoming life. In the sixth chapter he tells us that sin must not have dominion over us. He writes: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourself slaves (*instruments*) to obey, you are that one's slaves (*instruments*) whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves (*instruments*) of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves (*instruments*) of righteousness." (Romans 6: 13-18)<sup>2</sup>

The triumphing in Christ does not mean a freedom from temptation, testing and trial. It does not mean the cessation of Satan's attacks and efforts to discourage, to ensnare and bring to defeat. The warfare did not cease in the Apostle Paul's life; rather, he triumphed in the warfare. He testified: "We are pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the

dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. (2 Corinthians 4: 08-12)

The victorious life in Christ means the fulfilling of the basic commandment to love God with all the heart, mind and strength and our neighbour as oneself. That is the victorious life that our Lord lived. For us to do this, Christ must live in us.

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