

# Jesus and the Gospels:

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## Introduction:

We have been studying the Kingdom of God over the last few months, taking a short break during the Season of Advent. Last week's message on **John 15** and the exhortation to abide in God was to bear fruit for his glory – **“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”** This passage of Scripture is all about the King and his Kingdom being fruitful through his church – you and me. As well, in our studies of the Kingdom we looked at various aspects:

- The past, present and future reality of the Kingdom. This is an important aspect of God's Kingdom as seen in **Hebr 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**
- We looked at a spiritual authority and God's Kingdom; Jesus has all authority and we are to grow in spiritual authority.
- We talked about *“consecrated empowering”* which describes how we are to live in holiness in order to see the fullness of God's power released.
- We also studied three kings, King Saul, David and Absalom, who all had their joys and struggles with authority as God's leaders.

At the end of last year I was praying about what to preach on in 2012. I believed the Lord was saying to preach through the Gospels while looking at Jesus Christ and how he revealed the Kingdom of God to us. I did not know this but the international Foursquare Gospel Church president, Glenn Burris Jr. initiated a 2012 Bible reading plan for those interested. He recently wrote: *“The church is often known more for what it stands against than what it stands for. My prayer is that The Foursquare Church will be known ... as a movement that contends for the entrance of the power of the Spirit into every facet of our lives and ministries. May our fellowship rediscover who He is and, in so doing, find our voice again as Salt and Light to this generation.”*

Over the coming months we have the opportunity to read through the Gospels together and then come together on Sundays to discover Jesus and what he has to say about the Kingdom of God.

## Points to ponder:

As I begin this morning there are a number of things I would like to say before we look at the Jesus and Gospels. A little history lesson first. The early church began with a foundation based on Jesus' post resurrection encounters with the disciples as we see in **Acts 1:1-3 - The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, <sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.**

The church had an organic beginning; in other words it was untested, pure and raw in its formation. Over the years as numbers were added to those who followed The Way, they developed organization to help facilitate church life and activities. In my opinion both are needed today, the organic and the organized, in order for the church to grow. To some degree the younger generation is crying out for less organization and more emphasis on the organic.

Then along comes Emperor Constantine who legalizes church and state, for better and for worse. The Catholic Church is born and for many centuries dominates the political and religious scene.

Then along comes the reformers in the 1500's and their attempt to bring righteous and integrity back into the church and to release the Holy Bible to the masses.

The point here is that over the centuries the founding message of Jesus Christ to the disciples as read in **Act 1:1-3** has been watered down, interpreted and re-interpreted. Over the years the Kingdom of God has been thoroughly studied however, the Kingdom of God is not about gaining more information about God – it is a love story. It is my hope that as we look more closely at the person of Jesus in the Gospels we can regain some idea of what it is to be a lover of Jesus, and a follower of The Way.

## **Gospel Beginnings:**

Let's start in the beginning of the Gospels to discover some key thoughts about Jesus Christ. As I have been praying I want to look at four points, one from each Gospel that describes Jesus and the Kingdom of God. So let's begin...

### **Matt 1:18-23**

**<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”**

**<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”**

First and foremost Jesus is our **SAVIOUR**. He will save his people from their sins which includes you and me. The burden of sin and guilt is removed in Jesus.

Next we see the Gospel of Mark revealing so much action especially as seen in the first chapter:

- John the Baptist comes baptizing and preaching.
- Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan River.
- Jesus is tempted by the devil.
- Jesus begins preaching the kingdom of God; repent and believe.
- Jesus begins calling his disciples to follow him.
- Jesus casts out demons and heals the sick.

### **Mark 1:32-39**

<sup>32</sup> At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered together at the door. <sup>34</sup>

**Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons;** and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

<sup>35</sup> Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. <sup>37</sup> When they found Him, they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.”

<sup>38</sup> But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”

<sup>39</sup> And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Our Lord and Saviour is now revealing himself as our **HEALER**. There is so much in our lives that needs healing, what a blessing to know that Jesus is just that – our Great Physician.

Turn with me now to **Luke 1:39**.

<sup>39</sup> Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, <sup>40</sup> and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> **And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.** <sup>42</sup> Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

This amazing passage of Scripture describing Mary's visit to Elizabeth is something to behold. Both ladies are expecting their child; John the Baptist and Jesus. Upon meeting the baby in Elizabeth's womb jumps for joy and she is filled with the Holy Spirit. How is this possible? She is in the presence of Jesus Christ – **THE BAPTIZER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Lastly we see in the Gospel according to John Jesus represented as the Lamb of God. The exact phrase "Lamb of God" only appears two times in the New Testament – **John 1:29-36.**

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" <sup>30</sup> This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

<sup>35</sup> Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

To some degree John is describing Jesus as the Passover Lamb as seen in **Exodus 12:3**, or maybe Jesus as the lamb before its shearers, or possibly the lamb of God whose blood makes us spotless and blameless.

The Apostle John also wrote the Book of Revelation and in that book he uses a special word for lamb a minimum of 29 times; 28 times referring to the exalted Christ and victor over sin, death and Satan.

**Rev 5:6 - Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.**

**Rev 5:12-13 -In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"**

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

**Rev 17:14 - These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."**

**Rev 21:22-27 - I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light,**

**and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

As I read through this book with the Lamb of God in mind I can only conclude that the Lamb of God as revealed by the Apostle John is the **SOON-COMING KING**.

### **In conclusion:**

As we read through the Gospels in the months ahead, let's remember to see Jesus as our Saviour, our Healer, our Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and our Soon-Coming King. Let's discover in a fresh and new way our relationship with Jesus Christ is personal and intimate.

It is my desire that our organized world of Christianity can unearth new dimensions of the life of Christ. I hope to see in my own life first love for Jesus blossom once again, bearing fruit that remains. This is a New Year – let's get up-to-the-minute with Jesus, allowing our lives to interact with him moment by moment. Let's regain that first love with Jesus and show him and the world around us our passion for Jesus and life.

### **In application:**

How do we engage with Jesus in a new way?

- Let's read through the Gospels together.
- Take time to abide with Jesus daily.
- Fellowship with the saints.
- Worship and pray.
- Share Jesus.